



**University of Fort Hare**  
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**NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE 2016 #FEEMUSTFALL STUDENTS'  
PROTESTS IN EASTERN CAPE UNIVERSITIES: A CONTENT  
ANALYSIS OF DAILY DISPATCH**

**AYODEJI-FALADE MONISOLA BOLAJOKO**

**2018**

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IN EASTERN CAPE UNIVERSITIES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DAILY DISPATCH**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN COMMUNICATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
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**FEBRUARY 2018**

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## DECLARATIONS

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been submitted, and will not be presented at any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

Name: Ayodeji-Falade Monisola Bolajoko

Signature.....

Date: .....

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Signature.....

Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty,  
The Alpha and Omega  
and  
The giver of every good and perfect gift, who gave me the wisdom needed for this  
study.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I humbly and sincerely appreciate God, the giver of every good and perfect gift for the gift of life and for blessing me with the needed wisdom throughout the period of my study for without Him I can do nothing.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. O. O. Osunkunle for accepting me as his Master's student and critically supervising this study despite his tight schedule. His moral support, encouragement, guidance and prayers are hereby acknowledged. May the Almighty God bless him.

I am also indebted to all other Lecturers in the Department of Communication for impacting in me the right knowledge, in particular Prof. M. Caldwell for teaching me the basics of Communication Research. This has in no small measure contributed to the success of this study. Likewise, I wish to express my gratitude to members of staff of the University Library for their guidance and providing me with relevant information on the available E-library resources that facilitated this study.

Furthermore, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to my parents, Chief and Mrs Ayodele Omotayo, my mother-in-law, Mrs Victoria Ajibola Falade, my brothers: Ope, Seun, Lekan and Tubosun Omotayo and my sister from another mother: Mrs Funmilayo Olaitan for their prayers and financial contributions towards the success of my study. May the good Lord reward their labour of love in Jesus name. I also wish to thank my uncle, Chief Wole Olanipekun, SAN. for his financial support towards this study.

I want to sincerely thank my lovely kids, Praise and Caleb for their understanding and endurance during the period of this study. I love you. This acknowledgement will not be completed without specially appreciating my husband, friend and mentor, Mr Ayodeji Falade for his love, care, guidance, prayers and support throughout the period of my study. I love you.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AMPS	All Media and Product Survey
ANC	African National Congress
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CAT	Coding Analysis Toolkit
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DDN	Daily Dispatch Newspaper
FH	Freedom House
MLHSA	Media Law Handbook for South Africa
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
RWB	Reporters Without Borders
SAGFAS	South African Government Financial Aid Scheme
SASCO	South African Student Congress
SPJ	Society of Professional Journalists

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
Title page.....	i
Declarations.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of acronyms and abbreviations.....	v
Table of contents.....	vi
List of tables.....	x
List of figures.....	xi
Abstract.....	xii
<b>CHAPTER 1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. The research problem.....	2
1.3. Aim of the study.....	3
1.4. Objectives of the study.....	3
1.5. The research questions.....	3
1.6. Research methodology.....	4
1.7. Delimitations of the study.....	4
1.8. Significance of the study.....	4
1.9. Ethical considerations.....	5
1.10. Structure of the dissertation.....	5
1.11. Summary.....	6
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>7</b>
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. Communication.....	7
2.3. The press.....	8
2.4. Role of the press in the society.....	9
2.4.1. Information.....	10

2.4.2. Education.....	10
2.4.3. Entertainment.....	11
2.4.4. Socialisation.....	11
2.4.5. Opinion moulding.....	12
2.4.6. Surveillance.....	12
2.4.7. Mobilisation and integration.....	13
2.5. Normative theories of the press.....	14
2.5.1. Authoritarian theory.....	14
2.5.2. Libertarian theory.....	15
2.5.3. Social responsibility theory.....	16
2.5.4. Soviet-communist theory.....	18
2.6. Freedom of the press.....	18
2.7. History of South African Press.....	21
2.8. Newspaper as a form of media.....	23
2.9. Daily Dispatch Newspaper.....	24
2.9.1. History of Daily Dispatch Newspaper.....	24
2.10. Professional ethics in journalism.....	25
2.11. Influence of media ownership on media content.....	27
2.12. Framing of news and its impact on readers.....	29
2.13. South African (SA) Universities.....	31
2.14. Overview of students' protests globally.....	35
2.15. Students' protests in SA Universities.....	36
2.15.1. #FeeMustFall students' protest.....	37
2.16. Theoretical framework.....	40
2.16.1. Agenda setting theory.....	40
2.16.2. Framing theory.....	42
2.17. Summary.....	43
<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>44</b>
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	44
3.1. Introduction.....	44
3.2. Research design.....	44



3.3. Research method.....	46
3.3.1. Quantitative research method.....	47
3.3.2. Qualitative research method.....	48
3.3.3. Triangulation method.....	49
3.4. Study population.....	50
3.5. Sample and sampling technique.....	50
3.5.1. Purposive sampling technique.....	51
3.6. Data collection.....	52
3.6.1. Focus group.....	52
3.6.1.1. Focus group interview procedure.....	53
3.7. Data analysis.....	54
3.7.1. Content analysis.....	54
3.7.2. Thematic analysis.....	55
3.8. Research validity and credibility.....	56
3.9. Summary.....	58
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>59</b>
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS....	59
4.1. Introduction.....	59
4.2. Quantitative content analysis.....	59
4.2.1. Frequency and category of #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN.....	59
4.2.2. Position of the #FeeMustFall stories in the DDN.....	60
4.2.3. Space covered by #FeeMustFall stories in the DDN.....	61
4.2.4. Tone of the #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN.....	62
4.2.5. Framing analysis of the #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN.....	63
4.3. Qualitative data analysis.....	78
4.3.1. Focus group discussion.....	78
4.3.1.1. News frame.....	78
4.3.1.2. Measures.....	79
4.3.1.3. Thematic analysis of participants' perceptions.....	80
4.3.1.3.1. Attribution of responsibility news frame.....	81
4.3.1.3.2. Conflict news frame.....	83

4.3.1.3.3. Human interest news frame.....	85
4.4. Summary of findings.....	87
4.4.1. Research question 1.....	87
4.4.2. Research question 2.....	88
4.4.3. Research question 3.....	89
4.5. Summary.....	90
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>91</b>
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	91
5.1. Introduction.....	91
5.2. Discussion of findings.....	91
5.2.1. Extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests.....	91
5.2.2. Degree of objectivity in the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests.....	93
5.2.3. Effect of framing of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories on readers' perceptions.....	94
5.3. Conclusion to the study.....	95
5.4. Recommendations.....	96
5.5. Limitations of the study.....	96
5.6. Suggested areas for further research.....	97
5.7. Summary.....	97
References.....	98
Appendix.....	112

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Comparison of press freedom indicators established by FH and RWB rankings.....	20
Table 2.2. Names of universities and technikons in South Africa.....	34
Table 4.1. Frequency table of paragraphs of #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.....	61
Table 4.2. Average space covered by #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.....	62

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1. Research plan for the study.....	45
Figure 4.1. Pie chart showing the categories of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by DDN.....	60
Figure 4.2. Position of #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.....	61
Figure 4.3. Tone of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by the DDN.....	63
Figure 4.4. Framing analysis of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by DDN.....	64

## ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by the Daily Dispatch, which is a daily newspaper published in the Eastern Cape Province. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed through content analysis of the Daily Dispatch Newspaper while the qualitative data collected through focus group discussions among selected students of the University of Fort Hare were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that 31 stories were published by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper during the period of the protest. The tone of the stories suggested that the Daily Dispatch Newspaper was objective in its reportage. Furthermore, framing analysis of the stories showed that conflict news frame was most prominent in the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories followed by the attribution of responsibility and human-interest frames. Thematic analysis of the focus group discussions revealed that the type of news frame used for the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories influenced the thoughts and perceptions of readers as the news frames generated similar audience frames. These findings confirm the views highlighted by the agenda setting and framing theories, which underpin this study. This study indicates that news framing plays a significant role in readers' perception and as well, defines the way information is presented by readers.

**Keywords:** Agenda setting, content analysis, focus group, framing, press, students' protest, thematic analysis.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1. Introduction

Students, as stakeholders in the educational sector of the Nation's economy play an important role in steering and shaping higher education through institutional governance mechanisms. Apart from dialogue, peaceful demonstration and protest are the major tools employed by students to press home their demands. However, what is tagged 'peaceful' is fast evolving into 'violence'. South Africa has a long history of students' protests; on April 8, 1965, the first ever student protest happened at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and University of Cape Town (UCT) by conservative Afrikaans students who showed their grievances on the importance of mother-tongue education and the removal of liberal lecturers in a peaceful demonstration (McClelland, 2015). In contrast, the recent students' protests in South African Universities have been marked with varied levels of violence.

The protest was largely marked with violence, disruption of academic activities, looting, closure of institution, loss of lives and properties which had negative impact on the economy of the affected universities, investors and the nation. Furthermore, students' protest has the tendency of hampering the transformation of higher education, one of the critical economic thrusts of South African Government. Hence, the need for urgent intervention of stakeholders at all levels in preventing recurrence of students' protests in South African Universities.

Student protest is not only limited to South Africa, it has also been recently reported in Venezuela (Lugo-Ocando *et al.*, 2015), Chile (Scherman *et al.*, 2015) and the United Kingdom (Cammaerts, 2013). The role of media in some of the reported protests had been studied. Lugo-Ocando *et al.* (2015) examined the relationship between social media, political mobilization and civic engagement in the context of the students' protests in Venezuela in 2014 in a study on Social Media and Virality in the Students' Protests in Venezuela in 2014: Rethinking Engagement and Dialogue in Times of Imitation. Scherman *et al.* (2015) studied the role of social media in student and environmental

protests in Chile. Furthermore, Cammaerts (2013) in his article on the Mediation of Insurrectionary Symbolic Damage: The 2010 UK Student Protests did a content analysis of the 2010 UK student protests using four UK newspapers. However, the role of the press in the coverage of the 2016 #FeesMustFall protests in South African Universities has not been studied. Nonetheless, the press remains the most powerful channel of communication in the country that cuts across all publics; its impact is made through the columns of newspapers (Gupta, 2006). The press has the effective force to motivate the people to embrace developmental efforts; this means that the press is an instrument of change and improvement in the society.

It is asserted that the press in every nation performs sacred duties (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). Its functions hinge on its willingness and ability to daily relay information about the happenings in our society to the large heterogeneous audience through the mass communication channels. The agenda setting theory of the press as posited by Daramola (2003) says that “there is a relationship between news coverage and the public perception of the importance of an issue”. In essence, the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the agenda and determining of what people talk and think about. Therefore, this study aims at evaluating the newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students’ protests in Eastern Cape Universities through a content analysis of Daily Dispatch.

## **1.2. The research problem**

During recent years, various South African Universities have fallen victim to students’ protests. The degree of violence involved, as well as the frequency and duration of such protest action have varied from university to university. Before the recent students’ protests which started in October 2015 and cut across almost all the universities in South Africa, students’ protest has become a recurring decimal in South African Universities, to an extent that is now becoming a norm and also an annual occurrence in some universities. Moreover, most of the recorded students’ protests have been largely marked with violence which had negative impact on the students and the affected universities. Furthermore, students’ protests have the tendency of hampering the transformation of higher education, one of the critical economic thrusts of South African Government. Hence, the need for urgent intervention of stakeholders at all levels in preventing

recurrence of students' protests in South African Universities. The press, as a major stakeholder should play a significant role in relaying accurate information on the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in South African Universities. Therefore, this study seeks to check if the press is indeed playing its role ethically, or trying to fulfil its own agenda, which otherwise would become a problem.

### **1.3. Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to evaluate the Daily Dispatch's coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities.

### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To determine the extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest by Daily Dispatch Newspaper.
- To determine the degree of objectivity in the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest by Daily Dispatch Newspaper.
- To determine the frame of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories as presented by Daily Dispatch Newspaper and evaluate its effect on readers' perception.

### **1.5. The research questions**

- To what extent has the Daily Dispatch Newspaper covered the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest?
- What is the degree of objectivity of Daily Dispatch Newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest?
- How does the framing of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest through news presentation influence readers' perception?



### **1.6. Research methodology**

This study adopted a mixed method of research, wherein a quantitative method such as quantitative content analysis was used to evaluate the extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper and the degree of objectivity of the press while a focus group discussion, a qualitative method, was used to assess the effect of framing of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories on readers' perception.

The researcher considered the use of mixed approach to increase the reliability and validity of observations, analyses and findings as well as enhancing the credibility of the research results. Quantitative data collected through the content of Daily Dispatch Newspaper were analyzed using content analysis and findings presented in frequency table, simple percentages, pie charts and bar charts while qualitative data collected through focus group were analyzed using thematic analysis. The detailed methodology adopted for this study is discussed in Chapter three.

### **1.7. Delimitations of the study**

The study evaluated the newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by Daily Dispatch. Particular focus was on the Daily Dispatch Newspaper, which is published in the Eastern Cape Province. The participants of the focus group discussion were selected students of the University of Fort Hare, Alice campus who read Daily Dispatch regularly and witnessed the protest.

### **1.8. Significance of the study**

Since the world we inhabit and interrelate in is vastly mediated, the available information provided by the press daily, will go a long way to increase the understanding of the people in our society (Christina, 2013). #FeeMustFall students' protest is a national issue as it cuts across all the universities in South Africa. Hence, its coverage should be prioritized by the press, which functions as the eyes, nose and ears of the people and the government. More so, considering the impact of #FeeMustFall students' protests on South African educational system, students and government, the public rely on the press for accurate information as well as balanced reportage on this topical issue. It is therefore

anticipated that the findings from this study will help to ascertain if the press is actually fulfilling its role of relaying accurate information to the publics. It is further anticipated that the findings of this study will assist the Daily Dispatch Newspaper in improving on its coverage of issues of national interest.

### **1.9. Ethical considerations**

The main data for this study was from content analysis of Daily Dispatch Newspaper while very few selected focus group participants were exposed to the newspaper by the researcher. Consequently, an ethical clearance was sought from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) who opined there was no need to issue an ethical clearance certificate for the study as the focus group participants only reviewed and reflected on the selected newspapers given to them by the researcher. However, a letter of approval to conduct this study was issued by the committee (see appendix 1 for the approval letter). Furthermore, the researcher ensured that a representative sample was drawn for the content analysis and all participants of the focus group discussion selected objectively. Also, the participants' consent was sought by clearly explaining the purpose of the study and assuring them of information confidentiality. Moreover, the researcher ensured that the participants were not exposed to any form of risk, emotionally or physically.

### **1.10. Structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation comprises five chapters. **Chapter 1** provides the introduction and background to this study. It also gives a general overview of the study in terms of the problem statement, aim and objectives, the research questions, methodology, delimitations of the study, significance of the study, ethical considerations as well as the structure of the dissertation.

**Chapter 2** presents an overview on the press and its role in the society with reference to previous and related studies. It also reviews related literature on students' protests in tertiary institutions in South Africa and globally. A brief history and background on South African Universities is as well considered. This chapter in the overall gives a deeper understanding of the subject of this research, and also review related literature. It also

discusses the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, which include the agenda-setting theory and framing theory.

**Chapter 3** gives an outline of the research methodology: research design, research method, study population, sampling technique, data collection and analysis.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings from the research. It deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings from the research while **Chapter 5**, the final chapter, gives a discussion on the research findings with reference to past and recent related studies. It also presents the conclusion and recommendations.

### **1.11. Summary**

This chapter looked at the introduction and background to this study and the problem statement. It also clearly outlined the aim and the objectives of the research as well as the research questions that are meant to be answered by the study. More so, the methodology to be adopted for data collection, analysis and presentation was highlighted. In addition, the chapter discussed the significance of the study as well as the delimitations of the study and ethical considerations. It also gave a brief summary on the structure of the dissertation. The next chapter will focus on reviewing related literature and the theoretical framework that supports this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the press, its role in the society and students' protests in South African Universities and universities around the world with reference to previous and related studies. It also discusses the various theories on which this study is based: the agenda setting theory and the framing theory. As well, the effect of framing of news on readers' perceptions, professional ethics in journalism and influence of media ownership on media content were also presented. A brief history and background of the South African Press and South African Universities were also considered. This chapter in the overall will give a deeper understanding of the subject of this research, and also review related literature.

#### 2.2. Communication

According to Shannon and Weaver (1949), communication "is the exchange of ideas. It is not the mechanical transfer of facts and figures as the mathematical mode of communication would appear to indicate". Communication is an interactive process that functions in a circular, on-going and dynamic manner (Hiebert *et al.*, 1985). In other words, communication does not have a permanent sender and receiver since the information is interactive. Communication can also be defined as a transactional and symbolic process in which messages are exchanged and interpreted with the aim of establishing mutual understanding between parties (Angelopulo, 2013).

Furthermore, communication can be best described as the two-way process in which both participates, not only exchange information or ideas but create and share meaning for the benefit of our societies. Communication can either be verbal or nonverbal, through writing, speaking, body language, gesture, how you dress or act. Even our scent or smell passes a message across. You can also communicate through letters, e-mails, books, magazines, internet and newspapers among others. There is also visual communication i.e. graphs and charts, maps, logos, billboards. For every communication, the desired outcome or goal is to understand and decode the message. Communication is essential

for human and society development as is used for empowerment purposes so that people can own their various opinion and understanding about an occurrence, debate, negotiate and come to a logical conclusion.

### **2.3. The press**

The press is used to represent radio, television, magazine, email, journal, wire services, newspaper and such channels of communication involved in the collection and dissemination of information. The press is the fourth estate of any democratic society (Cohler *et al.*, 1989), while the other three estates are legislative, executive and judiciary. Then the media as an agent of independent journalism was involved in the scene as the “fourth estate of government” (Nordenstreng, 2006). This is because they need to serve as a check on the power of all other estates of government.

Since the world we inhabit and interrelate in is vastly mediated, the available information provided by the press daily, will go a long way to increase the understanding of the people in our society (Christina, 2013). Notwithstanding the concept of the press, either as surveillance, fourth estate, opinion moulder, educator or a pillar of democracy, they are an indispensable component of the society (Christina, 2013). McQuail (2005) defines the press as the organized means for communicating openly and at a distance to many receivers within a short space of time. In other words, the press is a medium that operates on a large scale reaching and involving virtually the heterogeneous population of the society. More so, the press facilitates development, disseminates information and also serves as an agent of change in the society (Mehraj *et al.*, 2014). The researcher agrees with Dwivedi and Pandey (2013) who stated that people in societies would be remote from the rest of the world and also from the total development of admirable world if the press is absent. Even though, modernization has increased the activities of the press and made it an indispensable sense of human activity, features like age, status, education, economic situation, personal needs and availability of appropriate machineries determine the quantum and frequency of press use (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). At this point, it is good to understand that the press and the media are used interchangeably.

According to the Media Law Hand Book for South Africa (MLHSA) (2017), when one thought of the press traditionally, they are newspapers, magazines, radio and television

but, this is no longer the case. The researcher noted that the 'new media' has taken over from the traditional media. The 'new media' involves the use of web-based and mobile platforms. Examples of such platforms include but not limited to mobile television, e-news, online newspapers and radio on mobile phone. New media has brought a paradigm shift in the way people and the media relate as social media platforms like twitter, instagram and facebook have played a substantial role as sources of news and information in tyrannical countries (MLHSA, 2017).

#### **2.4. Role of the press in the society**

The basic role of the press in the society is to inform, educate, entertain, socialize, mobilize and engage in opinion moulding (Mehraj *et al.*, 2014). The role of the press in the society is vital as it serves as a link between people and institutions. It also brings information and happenings in the society to the door steps of the people using different forms of media including newspaper. The researcher noted that the role of the press in the society cannot be overemphasized as the press is described as the all-powerful tool because of its ability to bring about positive changes in the society through its reports. Besides, Nordenstreng (2006) also highlighted the following as normative roles of the press in the society: monitoring role, facilitative role, radical role and collaborative role. Furthermore, the press plays the role of social control by providing a common body of knowledge, the internalization of which enables people to operate as effective members of the society (Daramola, 2005). The researcher believes that the press performs a helpful role in our society today as Chowdhury (2014) noted that the press increases public consciousness and gathers the opinions, information and attitudes of people toward a particular matter. The press is the most powerful means of communication in the developing world to improve the awareness and presents the real state of society (Virginia *et al.*, 2013) and as such, it gathers, composes and disseminates accurate and comprehensive information on issues of public interest in an ideal democratic society (Dwivedi and Pandey, 2013). Also, the press in every society is viewed as a mirror of that society: performing sacred duties (Chowdhury, 2014). Its roles hinge on its willingness and ability to daily relay accurate information about the on-goings in the society to the heterogeneous audience. The press is loaded with the ability to deliver information and

communicate news of events that took place overseas and locally quickly and easily through the help of the various media. With the aid of the press, someone can see and know places they have never visited and know people they have never met before. The press can serve as a bridge between traditional societies transition toward a modern society (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). Some of the major roles of the press are discussed in the succeeding section.

#### **2.4.1 Information**

The press should provide the public with information on events and conditions in society and worldwide (McQuail, 2000:79-80). They must always remember that the public have the right to know. They should be free to gather information on facts and happenings in the society without interference, threat or punishment. When determining what to report and how to report it, they should use their editorial judgment freely. Any interference on this process may constitute a form of censorship on the story (Media Council of Kenya, 2007: 3). The press should disseminate information that can be opinionated, objective, subjective, primary and secondary. Since information is knowledge and knowledge is power, the press offers reliable and timely facts and opinions about various event and situations to heterogeneous audience as informative items (Chowdhury, 2014). Audience should obtain factual information about public affairs from the press (television, radio, newspaper among others), they also learn how much importance to place on a topic on the basis of emphasis placed on it by the press (Bunton, 1998). The press also provides people with the required circumstances to make an informed choice, ranging from evidence to compare and appraise both reflective records, approaching policies and leadership features of parties and candidates (McQuail, 2000).

#### **2.4.2 Education**

The press, through various means and programs such as dramas, documentaries, science writing, interviews, and feature stories, is daily educating the masses. The press educates the general public about a wide range of topics including but not limited to nutrition, health (particularly in relation to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and diabetes), basic money management and budgeting, developmental issues and

agriculture. The media campaign on the need for mothers to immunize their children under the age of zero to five years against of polio is an example of the way the press is used to educate the masses (Mehraj *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, in the developing countries, the press is involved in creating public awareness and eradicating various traditional and evil superstitious practices from society through continuous advocacy (Norris, 2006). This has eventually led to an informed-public capable of contributing effectively to political affairs and other developmental practices.

Besides, the press also performs educative role during an election. Apart from giving report on election matters, the press can help to support independent procedures by instructing the public authorities to hold a free and fair election and schooling the people on what would be involved. Nevertheless, the researcher is of the opinion that the press should also educate the people on what an independent election is and as well provide necessary data on a proper means of conducting an election which include the following: the significance of having an up-to-date voters' roll, a secret ballot, election observers, multiparty officials at different ballot stations, security of the ballot boxes, an independent electoral commission.

### **2.4.3 Entertainment**

Entertainment is a form of presentation that gives pleasure by providing amusement and assist in reducing tension to a large degree (McQuail, 2005). The press designs special messages and programs of interest to entertain and amuse the audience by exposing them to culture of art, music, cartoon, horoscopes, short stories, gossips stories, films, serials, comics, sports, news, film review, columns on art and fashion among others (Severin and Tankard, 2001). The entertainment function of the press is shown in its ability to present messages that help in escapism, relaxation, relief from boredom, stimulates emotions, fill leisure times, keep company and expose an individual to event that could not be attended in person (Daramola, 2005).

### **2.4.4 Socialisation**

The press is a socialization agent that work closely with other agents of socialization like the family, church, school and peer group to internalize values, norms and acceptable



behavioural pattern in the society (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). It performs this function by communicating information, values, norms, from one generation to the other, thereby causing gradual movement from traditional to modern life and also increasing social cohesion in a society (Severin and Tankard, 2001). The press relays information on different aspects of life, exposing children to the good aspect of their culture and in the process, eradicate the barbaric ones (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). The press through its various media can express the dominant culture and recognize subculture and new cultural developments, forge and maintain commonality of values (McQuail, 2005).

#### **2.4.5 Opinion moulding**

The freedom of the press gives it the power to hold and impact opinion on the society. The press can argue for or against an issue of public interest through advertisement, editorial views, commentarial, opinion page and feature articles so as to help the publics take their decisions on such matter. The researcher noted that press contents shape opinions and sets agendas in the public mind. I noted further that It influences votes, changes attitudes and moderates behaviour. Take for instance, when the petroleum price is fixed by the government, it is the press that publicizes this information. It also explains the effect this will have on other sectors and the public at large. It is the civic responsibility of the people to discuss and agree on the type of government they need. This discussion can take different forms and most especially communicated through the press (Bratton, 2010).

#### **2.4.6 Surveillance**

Surveillance here means to watch or observe the government and society thoroughly. The press has traditionally been regarded as a major check and balance on other estates of government, strengthening the course of democratization, good governance and people's growth (Siegle *et al.*, 2004; Przeworski *et al.*, 2000). The press watch-dog functions include: to promote accountability, transparency, aid informed electoral choices, set agenda for policymakers and increase government awareness on social problems, public scrutiny of decision-makers in power, highlight policy failures, expose maladministration by public officials, and deal with corruption and scandals in the

corporate sector among others (Donohue, 1995; Norris, 2000). Political leaders get to know about problems in the rural areas more accurately and in time when journalist function as an intermediary by reporting happenings at the grassroots. The press's role as an agenda-setter can also force the government to react to rural problems (Norris, 2000). Moreover, the notion of having the press as the fourth estate of government was to serve as a check on the excesses of the other estates (legislature, executive and judiciary), but now the press has taken on the watchdog role on other institutions as well as powerful individuals (Stone and O'Donnell, 1997). Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that the press, in most cases, is not living up to its responsibility of checking the excesses of government.

The surveillance/watchdog role can be performed depending on the media or the level of growth in a specific nation. The researcher believes that the press is the eyes, ears, nose and mouth of the people: observing, listening, perceiving and correcting the happenings in society as they come up. I also concur with Chowdhury (2014) who included notifying the populace of impending danger or natural disasters like eruption, hurricane, volcanoes, earthquake, and flood among others as part of the surveillance role of the press. Moreover, the press watches and reports the government activities on the national economy by reporting about depressed economy, increasing inflation, deforestation, stock exchange prices, banned products, government mismanagement of fund and corruption generally. Other surveillance roles include: crime, news on girls and women trafficking, drug abuse, deforestation etc (Chowdhury, 2014).

#### **2.4.7 Mobilisation and integration**

People of the society are mostly influenced by the press, by persuading them to use a particular good or service, luring them to support a certain political ideology or party (Virginia *et al.*, 2013). The press is an instrument of campaign for social objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic development, work and sometimes religion (McQuail, 2005). According to Mehraj *et al.* (2014), the term “global village” has been achievable with the speed at which the press brings people around the world together. For instance, when you watch a football match between Brazil and Argentina or between Manchester United and Chelsea live on television set, this scenario integrates countries and people

and make us feel that the entire world is one big family (Mehraj *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, the press performs the role of tying the different rudiments of the society together. The use of advertisement to connect the needs of various people to the sellers of such goods is remarkable. The press can also serve as a bridge between different groups of people (Chowdhury, 2014).

## **2.5. Normative theories of the press**

The normative theories were articulated during the intense period of the cold war in the United States. These theories were first proposed by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their book titled “Four Theories of the Press”. They argue that the press in a particular society takes its political and social structure and that this structure reflects the ideology of the government and country (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). These theories are based on the nature of press control and ownership in a particular country. They are distinct from other theories because they did not in any way make scientific descriptions or deductions and were developed by various people, academics, practitioners and critics (Saqib, 2017).

### **2.5.1. Authoritarian theory**

Authoritarian theory is the first and oldest theory of the press, this theory states that the monarchs, dictators and administrators control the press and all forms of information in the country. The press under this authoritarian system serves the government and not the citizens (Siebert *et al.*, 1956; Severin and Tankard, 2001:309). The authoritarian theory states that all manners of communication must be controlled by central authority or powerful administrator, monarch or dictator. The proponents of this theory believe that the governing authority should be in charge so as to direct the press to protect the people from any form of threat that may be as a result of unguarded communication (Siebert *et al.*, 1976:2). The researcher believes that the authoritarian uses the press as a mechanism to improve its power but not as a threat on the citizens.

The authoritarian theory is referred to as the original or perfect example and the most prevalent of all the other theories (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). This means that, regardless of the model subscribed to by the government, the authoritarian model continues to influence

the press activities directly or indirectly. The authoritarian press symbolizes only the ideology, opinion and culture of the government. The government solely dictates what the public read, watch or hear because the press ownership is that of the government or power individuals. They are responsible in issuing license to the press owners as well as revoking it when they deem necessary. They also put in place some kind of censorship (Saqib, 2017; Firdaus, 2012). For instance, the government can restrict the press from publishing any delicate information in order to maintain order and safety in the country. Which otherwise means that the journalists do not have the liberty to comment, judge or criticize the government freely, but the authoritarian can allow few thoughts that do promote their ideology.

### **2.5.2. Libertarian theory**

The libertarian theory is the direct opposite of authoritarian theory as this theory allows the press to have control over what they write and publish. The government no longer dictates for the press rather, the press adopted libertarian standards that enabled the people to gather as well as disseminate information freely in the society. In contrast to the previous theory that controls the activities of the press, this model stipulates that the press is an instrument used by the people to put the government to check. The libertarian theory is seen as the perfect model that allows the society to project and improve the interest of its people (Siebert *et al.*, 1956:40). The critics of this theory believe that loyalty to libertarian system will make individual not to trust in the ability of the government rather the press major concern will be to surveil the activities of the government (Wright, 1986). Also, in a capitalist society where individuals maintain the existence of the press through sponsorship like the advertisers and big companies, they tend to influence the content of the press as in the authoritarian system (Firdaus, 2012).

Libertarianism in a simple form means that “information is knowledge and knowledge is power”. In other words, the press is free to publish anything both positive and negative contents in as much as it is meaningful and can impact knowledge (Saqib, 2017). The researcher agrees with the libertarian theory as the press should be an independent body owned by the citizens and serving their interest.

Siebert *et al.* (1956) listed the following principles as the basis of libertarian theory.

- ❖ The citizens always want to hear the truth in order to guide their thoughts or decision-making process.
- ❖ To achieve number one above, ideas and information must be free and open for discussion.
- ❖ Therefore, citizens having different ideas, thought or opinion should be allowed to advance it individually.
- ❖ The logical and accurate ideas are then accepted.

Furthermore, this theory is based on concept of a “free market place of ideas” which means that ideas, opinions and information are free to flow in from any one through any channel and that truth will always win in the market place of ideas (Severin and Tankard, 2001). The most crucial aspect of libertarian system is that the press functions as a vigilant watchdog on every activity of the government. There is also freedom of expression which enabled the press to carry out its obligation without fear of censorship by the government (Firdaus, 2012).

### **2.5.3. Social responsibility theory**

Social responsibility theory was developed in the United States of America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Evolving from media practitioners, media codes, and the work of the commission on freedom of the press (Hutchins’ Commission), hold that while the media inform, entertain and sell, they must also raise conflict to the plain of discussion (Siebert *et al.*, 1956; Severin and Tankard, 2001). This theory posits that the press has the right to criticize government and any institution and everyone who has something to say like community opinion, consumer action and professional ethics can use the press to achieve that, but at the same time, the press must also be responsible to maintain stability in the society (Daramola, 2003: 72).

Social responsibility was developed as a result of some faults discovered in libertarian theory, like allowing the publication of uninvestigated news contents and the growth of the elite class (Firdaus, 2012). Although, social responsibility model encompasses variety and multiplicity in the press, it ensures that the press sticks to its obligation of informing,

educating, entertaining and mobilizing the people than focusing on freedom of expression (Rubenstein, 2012). As a result of this, press contents are products of well investigated process and objective reporting which do not contain any contaminated object that is detrimental to the society. Firdaus (2012) explained that the social responsibility model “ensures that the press maintains high moral obligation to safeguard social peace and stability, and to create an informed citizenry. This obligation would be met through self-regulation of the media through media councils and codes or ethics, as well as public opinion and consumer reactions”. Nevertheless, the researcher noted that social responsibility theory still allows the government to monitor the press activities to be assured that they are actually serving the interest of the people, otherwise, they will be held responsible for their actions (Van Blerkom, 2008; Firdaus, 2012).

McQuail (1987:116-118) identified the following as the major tenets of social responsibility theory:

- ❖ The media need to embrace certain responsibilities towards the society
- ❖ The responsibilities are mainly to be met by setting high professional standards of information backup with the truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
- ❖ In accepting and applying these responsibilities, the media should be self-regulatory within the framework of laws of the land.
- ❖ The media should be accountable to the society as a whole by avoiding publicizing information that can lead to crime, violence or social disruption, as well as information that can offend ethnic or religious minorities.
- ❖ The media should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of the society, giving access to various points of view and right to reply.

In summary, social responsibility theory exponent agreed that anyone can express himself through the media but control should be exercised by means of opinions, views, actions and professional ethics. In relation to this research, the theory states that the press is obligated to criticize any institution and government in view of public interest while avoiding libel in its reportage. The researcher therefore believes there is need for the press to be objective in their reporting rather than being subjective. This is corroborated by Sambe (2005:264) who stated that in a democratic society where social responsibility

theory is applicable, there is need for the press to provide adequate and accurate information to the people to assist them make an informed decision. In other words, the press should be like a chameleon: always reflecting different views to enable the public make an informed decision. According to the view of Fourie (2007:194), this theory provides solutions to the difficulty of reconciling freedom with social responsibility of the press by enabling regulatory bodies that are independent of government and the establishment of professional bodies which should advance and support balanced and unbiased news presentation.

#### **2.5.4. Soviet-communist theory**

The soviet-communist theory of the press is what Schramm conceptualized as the Soviet Union logical application of the authoritarian theory with a slight demarcation stating that, it is to cater for the welfare of the citizens and not to serve the ruler alone. The communist system focused on the press being used as an instrument of impacting, implementing and spreading the state's policy, ideology, doctrines and propaganda (Firdaus, 2012). This model also viewed the press as a mechanism of contributing to the success and continuation of the soviet system (Severin and Tankard, 2012). More so, the soviet communist theory is based on the idea of the government controlling all activities and communication of the press for the purpose of serving the interest of the working class. According to Saqib (2017), soviet-communist theory "is seen as an extreme application of authoritarian ideas, in that media are totally subordinated to the interests and functions of the state". The theory states that, the essence of the press is to educate, inform, entertain, mobilize and motivate the working class in the society.

#### **2.6. Freedom of the press**

The history of the press is different from one country to another; it also differs based on the mode of appearance, content, periodicity and format (Barker and Burrow, 2002). Likewise, they have various stories of their independence from government and public authority. According to Glasser and Gleason (2013), the philosophy about freedom of speech and of the press is described by these two metaphors: the "marketplace of ideas" and the "watchdog press". The General Assembly of the United Nations during its first

meeting in 1946 adopted the freedom of information as a fundamental human right in its constitution section 59 (I), which served as the basis for the derivation of the freedom of the press. Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and also the standard of other freedoms. Freedom of information means; right to collect, convey and circulate news items widely without any restrictions (Guseva *et al.*, 2008).

Furthermore, the article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers”. Chapter 2 of the 1996 constitution of the Republic of South Africa states the freedom of expression also as the basis of the fundamental human right in which everybody is allowed to exercise their freedom. Section 16 of the bill of rights further contains an exhaustive provision on freedom of expression, stipulating that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas”. The researcher agrees with Freedom House (2015) who stated that press freedom has contributed immensely to the improvement of good governance, accountability and economic enhancement. The efficiency of the press, perhaps, can also be attributed to their professionalism, access to information, freedom of expression and ethical conduct of their investigative journalism (Freedom House, 2015).

Norris and Zinnbauer (2002) highlighted three major roles of the press as; watchdog role, civic forum role and agenda setting role. These roles are essential to any free press for the growth of the society. The researcher noted that the press need to be independent of governmental control of any content relevant for publication and dissemination; there should be diverse numbers of newspapers and media organization reflecting the comprehensive range of opinion in the society. Although measuring the levels of press freedom is not an easy task, in the past years, there have been only two indicators of press freedom developed by Freedom House (FH) in 1979 and more recently Reporters Without Borders (RWB) in 2002 (Guseva *et al.*, 2008). The Freedom House directory identified the following three major measures for weighing press freedom in 194 countries all over the world:



**Legal environment-:** This includes checking those laws and regulations that can influence press contents as well as the government predisposition to use those laws to constrain the press' capacity to operate.

**Political influence-:** This involves the degree of political power, decree and control the ruling government have over information and press contents.

**Economic pressures-:** The economic influence includes the inflation rate, impact of corruption, exchange rate and other economic barriers to entry into the press sector.

Using the above as gauge, the Freedom House allotted to each country the range of 0 - 100 measures depending on the level of restrictions placed on press freedom, setting the following standards: 0-30 (free press), 31-60 (partly free) and 61 above (not free). On the other hand, the Reporters without Borders used a varied approach to measure press freedom in 167 countries based on the level of attacks and intimidations against journalists. Imprisonment rates, number of murders and tortures with the press censorship, seizure, legal condition and government conduct were checked. The method adopted by the RWB was comparative and made it possible to assess the amount of freedom of the press of one country from the other avoiding the random ranking of the Freedom House. Even though the Freedom House and RWB final ranking results are different, they still share some element of similarities. Table 2.1 compares the press freedom indicators established by Freedom House and RWB rankings in 2003.

**Table 2.1. Comparison of press freedom indicators established by FH and RWB rankings**

	S	Be	Fin	De	Li	D	N	P	E	I	F	UK	A	G	It
<b>FH</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	9	9	9	11	12	13	14	14
<b>RWB</b>	6	4	1	3	-	5	1	11	13	8	9	10	7	12	14

Adapted from Guseva *et al.* (2008). FH: Freedom House, RWB: Reporter Without Border, S: Sweden, Be: Belgium, Fin: Finland, De: Denmark, Li: Lithuania, D: Dublin, N: Netherlands, P: Poland, E: Estonia, I: Ireland, F: France, UK: United Kingdom, A: Austria, G: Greece, It: Italy.

## **2.7. History of South African Press**

The publication of newspaper started in 1952, during the era of the colonial administrator called Jan Van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope (Fourie, 2007:28), even though news and views were published through a Netherland newspaper as a result of the fear of the Dutch East India who believed the press is an instrument of revolution. Nevertheless, the first locally published newspaper in South Africa was the Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser which came out on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1800 by Alexander Walker and John Robertson, who were also famous as a corrupt slave-dealer. These papers were printed in English language and used the government owned press at the castle (Fourie, Ibid). After twenty-two years, George Greig broke the government monopoly of the press by publishing the first private owned newspaper called “The South African Commercial” on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 1824. Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn were the famous editors and the paper was printed in English. This paper was short-lived by the then Governor, Lord Charles Somerset who was afraid that the news of his spurious activities might be reported (De Kock, 1982:42).

After the departure of the then Governor on March 5, 1826 and the appointment of the new Governor General, Richard Bourke, who favoured a free press and with the arrival of 5,000 British settler in South Africa in 1820, the South African Press was greatly improved and later there came the approval of press freedom, although the South African Press was still battling with a lot of challenges like libel laws, high tariff on telegraphic service, poor infrastructure and limited audience that were literate (Fourie, 2007:30). On 27<sup>th</sup> of November, 1882, twenty-six newspaper men organized themselves to form the Newspaper Press Union (NPU). They met in Grahams town now in Eastern Cape to discuss the above challenges and how to protect the common interest of South African Press. The beginning of the black press in South Africa is closely linked to the effort of the missionaries and black residents in the Eastern Cape. The then missionaries through the residents’ literacy, provided skills and equipment necessary for publication and also transferred the tenet of western culture (Johnson, 1991:16). The first set of newspapers then were “Umshumayeli Wendabu” published by the Wesleyan Mission Society in Grahams town (1837-1841), “Ikwezi” (Morning Star) published by Love Dale Missionary

Institute (1844-1845), “Indaba” (The News), a bilingual Xhosa/English Newspaper, The “Kafi Express” and “Isigidimi Sama Xosa” (The Xhosa Messenger) (Fourie, 2007:37).

The first newspaper to be written, owned and controlled by a black citizen of South Africa was the work of an elite, who received the missionary’s education, John Tengo Jabavu. He resigned his position as editor of “Isigidimi Sama Xosa” in 1884 to found “Imvo Zabantsundu” (African Opinion) at King William’s Town (Eastern Cape) (Cullen, 1935: 81). However, John Tengo Jabavu was seen as too radical: focusing his writing on the growing threat of Afrikaner nationalism and the need for equal right and public education. The newspaper soon ran into problems such as financial issues, internal tensions and experienced competition from Isigidimi (Johnson, 1991:17). Later, as a result of lack of capital, equipment, skilled workers and a reliable distribution channel, the black newspaper gave way for the period of the white owned press. A noticeable transformation occurred with the publication of the African Drum, owned by Jim Bailey, the Son of the mining magnate, Abe Bailey. The name of “African Drum” was later changed to “Drum” (Fourie, *ibid*: 39). The paper introduced new features like sport, sex and crime which appealed to the majority of the literate black South Africans. The newspaper was later moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg under the editorship of Anthony Sampson and Tom Hopkinson (Roelofse, 1996:84).

The “Drum” was notable among other papers for its contribution to the development of modern and colourful English for black urbanites, highlighting the efforts made by the world class black musicians and writers of South African culture, restoring pride in the black population by focusing on social cultural issues, focusing world attention on South Africa by exposing abuses such as exploitation of blacks on many white farms and the appalling prison conditions with the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and its role in fearlessly conducting investigative journalism and addressing the social and political grievance of black South Africans during the apartheid period. The “Drum” was never banned like other newspapers but was reputable for creating lasting impact on black journalism (Fourie, 2007). From late 1970s, after the government closure of the world newspaper and post newspaper, there emerge what is known as the alternative press, which played significant role in the struggle against apartheid and also serve as the voice of the voiceless

(Louw, 1989: 26-27). In the early period of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there arose several newspaper titles such as: The Sun, Sowetan, The Star, Daily Sun, Nova, This Day, Daily Dispatch among others (Sowaga, 2003:14, Harber, 2003:31).

## **2.8. Newspaper as a form of media**

There are different forms of mass media broadly categorized into print media (newspapers, magazines, booklets and brochures etc.), electronic media (television and radio), traditional media and new media (mobile phones, computer and internet). Newspaper is one of the oldest forms of mass media. Newspapers are printed and published to provide information of public interest, advertisement and views on certain issues. Newspapers are issued at regular intervals ranging from daily to weekly. Newspapers play an important role in the lives of the people, to an extent that when someone misses reading it in the morning, it feels very odd. Newspapers perform public service role such as image moulding and opinion information dissemination; they also serve as a channel of both one-way and two-way communication (Cupito and Farrel, 2010).

Newspapers can be categorized based on target audience, geographic coverage, and frequency of publication (O'Guinn *et al.*, 2012). Based on geographic coverage, newspapers can be classified as national, regional or local. National newspapers report both national and international events and news stories as they occurred while regional newspapers cover a bit of international news as well as national events with main focus on the coverage of local events within the region or province where it is published and other nearby towns and cities, an example is the Daily Dispatch Newspaper whereas the major focus of local newspaper is to report the happenings in the local community. Furthermore, newspapers are also categorized into tabloid and broadsheet/quality newspapers ([www.reference.com](http://www.reference.com)). Broadsheet newspapers use broadsheet and quality paper of about 11 to 12 inches wide and 20 inches long. Broadsheet is the most common format employed by serious newspapers while tabloid newspapers which measures 11 x 17 inches is generally filled with articles on entertainment, celebrities and photos but rarely features important news stories found in broadsheets ([www.reference.com](http://www.reference.com)).

The researcher believes that the advent of the internet has taken newspapers beyond the print to digital as different newspapers now have digital or online versions. This has consequently increased news coverage by such newspapers.

## **2.9. Daily Dispatch Newspaper**

Daily Dispatch is a regional newspaper published in East London, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Its choice for this study was motivated by its wide geographical spread and circulation as well as its long-aged operation in the print media.

### **2.9.1. History of Daily Dispatch Newspaper**

Daily Dispatch Newspaper started publication in East London (Eastern Cape Province) on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1872. The newspaper was formerly known as East London Dispatch with Massey Hicks as the first editor ([www.marklives.com](http://www.marklives.com)). East London Dispatch was in tabloid form, carrying advertisement on its front page with a total number of four pages. It was sold then at the rate of three-pence. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1955, the newspaper for the first time in history published news story on the problem in Morocco during the French reign ([www.marklives.com](http://www.marklives.com)). Daily Dispatch price grew from two and a half cents to three cents on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1963. Following this development, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November that same year, the company bought its own building at the Caxton streets which was occupied by its advertisements, circulation and account staff. In 1966, it became the first South African newspaper to use leader page, having a mixture of feature articles, entertainment and advertisement among others ([www.abc.org.za](http://www.abc.org.za)). Daily Dispatch Newspaper acquired a Rolls Royce offset machine at the rate of R587, 501 and was commissioned in the year 1972, the centenary year to enable them offer full colour facilities to both advertisers and readers. Daily Dispatch Newspaper became the second most profitable newspaper in South Africa as its distribution increased from 18,000 to 33,000 in 1977 (Williams, 2017). This feat cannot be separated from the hard work of Donald Woods, the editor between 1965 and 1977 whose efforts also gave the newspaper an international fame (Williams, 2017).

Daily Dispatch sales went through tough times when the government banned the readership of all government workers. The newspaper faced several challenging periods

than any other South African newspapers. This was noted by the then Cape Times editor, Tony Heard when he wrote “The Daily Dispatch has always been between rocks and a hard place”. The difficulties reduced on the release of Nelson Mandela and the removal of ban from the political parties in February 1990 (Williams, Ibid). Daily Dispatch Newspaper faced many other challenges again in the year 1992, like the hijack of van full of newspapers to be delivered, Bisho massacre in that same year, burning down of van at Ilitha and Ciskei among other problems. Throughout these challenging times, the staff showed their persistent support even at the face of risky occurrence and the newspaper continues to flourish. Towards the end of that year, precisely 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1992, a survey carried out by All Media and Product Survey (AMPS) showed that Daily Dispatch Newspaper was the most widely read newspaper in the whole of Eastern Cape. At that time, the readership was about 172, 000, while the profit in half a year was R2.56 million ([www.saarf.co.za/amps-presentations/](http://www.saarf.co.za/amps-presentations/)).

In 1996, the Daily Dispatch Newspaper had everything in place to kick off into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was up-to-date with the cutting-edge technology by procuring an electronic picture desk in its editorial room, having its photographic section computerized and also using computer to plan its pages layout with Quark system. It as well started the online (electronic) version of Dispatch Newspaper on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1997 (Williams, ibid). The newspaper is still in circulation till date and in early 2015, it had about 26, 147 copies. Daily Dispatch is published in English language covering the following areas: sports, community occurrence, business, politics, local news and job vacancies ([www.abc.org.za](http://www.abc.org.za)).

## **2.10. Professional ethics in journalism**

Journalism has a crucial role to play in a society full of denials and problems. As the brain that reasons to shape the people’s opinion and educates them, there is need for journalists to prove that they have the accurate mechanism of change and moral guard to live up to the standard of their mission as the watchdog of the society (Christina, 2013).

The researcher noted professional integrity as the corner stone of any profession’s credibility. According to the code of ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

adopted by the national convention of the body in 1996, a journalist should: (i) seek the truth and report it. In other words, they should be honest, fair and courageous; (ii) minimize harm by treating sources, subjects and colleagues with respect; (iii) act independently by avoiding conflict of interest; and (iv) be accountable to each other and the public i.e. readers, listeners and viewers. It is therefore important for journalists to carry out their duties with high sense of professionalism and ethically too. The details are as discussed below:

(i) **Seeking the truth and reporting it:** Journalists are obligated to report all sides of the story objectively and accurately. In a situation, whereby an inaccurate story is published, there should be immediate publication of the correct version accompanying with an apology (Media Council of Kenya, 2007). Journalists need to carry out their responsibilities to the public in absolute honesty, fairness, truthfulness and courageously too. To achieve this, journalists need to identify their sources and in case of anonymity, always query sources motive before granting their anonymity requests. Journalists should always make clear conditions that accompany their promises made in exchange for information and fulfill it. To be fair, journalists need to give opportunity to the subject of a news story to respond to any allegation (SPJ, 1996). Journalists should make sure that any material used like news stories, promotional material and sound should not distort the context. They should also try as much as possible not to plagiarize.

(ii) **Minimizing harm:** Journalists should treat everyone with respect both their sources, subjects and colleagues. They should also have human feelings for those who their report might have affected adversely. Journalists should be sensitive when dealing with inexperienced sources and children especially. In cases of sexual abuse of under age children, victims should not be facially identified or interviewed. The only exception is when it is of public interest (Media Council of Kenya, 2007).

Journalists should be sensitive in publishing or broadcasting the image or interviews of those affected by grief or tragic occurrence. They should be courteous while gathering or reporting news as some information may cause distress or harm others. Journalists should also note the difference between public

officials and private individuals when sourcing for information. Journalists need to be nose for news stories that are accurate not jargons. Caution should be taken in naming a criminal suspect before the verdict (Media Council of Kenya, 2007).

- (iii) **Acting independently:** Journalists should exercise control over their contents and refuse politely those who want to have authority, influence or right on it like the advertisers, sources, subjects and influential individuals. Journalists should not allow politically powerful people who will want to buy the truth or threaten journalists from gathering and reporting public interest stories but should be motivated always by the public's right to know. They should not allow external opinions to determine their content but only the editorial decision (Media Council of Kenya, 2007).

Journalists need to dissociate from anything that can hinder the fact or damage trustworthiness. When necessary turn down gifts, opportunity, money, favour and many others if it will hamper the truth. Journalists should always realize that everyone in political office or public service should be accountable to the people (SPJ, 1996).

- (iv) **Being accountable:** Journalists should realize that they are answerable to these three: public who has the right to know, their professional ethics and themselves. A journalist should be accountable to the readers, viewers and listeners on a daily basis. Accountability means that the journalist is able to admit his mistakes and correct them immediately; ability to explain news coverage and invite people for dialogue for clarity sake. Journalists should also allow people show or voice their displeasure against any news media. The press man or woman should be able to abide by the same high standards to which they hold others and expose any unethical practices of other journalists (SPJ, 1996).

## **2.11. Influence of media ownership on media content**

In the early days of the press, contents were based on news value of fairness, objectivity, truth, and accuracy, but now the focus has shifted to unethical performance like sensational news, advertisements, sponsored news, press economics and press biases (Mukherjee, 2015). Studies have established that media ownership is an essential factor



in determining media content (Donohue *et al.*, 1985; Zhu *et al.*, 1997; Weaver *et al.*, 2007). The impact of media ownership on media content cannot be over-emphasized. This is corroborated by the media ownership theory postulated by Shoemaker and Reese (1991) which states that media owners, sponsors and central power holder have power to withhold matters, manipulate issues and deliver the contents that serve the best interest of the individual private owner. Moreover, Shoemaker (1987) discovered that media outlets, supported majorly on “interest” grounds are more likely to be partial and focus more on owner desires rather than being objective and impartial. Unfortunately, the press has taken on the role of mass propagandist that is used only to serve the interest of the government, wealthy individual or corporate elite (Chomsky, 2004).

Media outfits are owned by either the government or private individuals. A study by Djankov *et al.* (2001) reported that the government owned press have less freedom and are controlled both politically and economically. Uche (1989) pointed out that “the influence of government is seen in the unflinching support government media organizations give the government of the day. For instance, government officials do not hesitate to remove anyone in charge who fails to offer unquestioned support. An “erring” official risks being sacked with “immediate effect” or faces other punishments for such “heinous” acts. Furthermore, the reporters working in government owned press are not expected to report negative news stories or criticize the government because they have a stronger hold on the editorial decision, while the reporter working in the privately-owned press will be aggressive and relentless in reporting all the activities of the government to the public (McManus, 1994).

As much as the government is not willing to forgo the control it exercises over the press, the government exerts this control more through wicked laws and decree against both private and public media (Ukonu, 2005). More so, government allows defect in these set laws for regulating the media organization purposely to suppress freedom of expression (Okwuchukwu, 2014). According to Parenti (1997:1-3), the following six keys are used by privately owned media to divert contents to favour their interests.

- ❖ Suppression by omission -: this is when media organization intentionally omit to mention some aspect of an important issue so as to manipulate audience.

- ❖ Attacking and destroying the target -: in cases of issues that cannot be ignored or omitted, the media outlet will rather attack.
- ❖ Labeling -: they can also come up with either positive or negative label in order to set the pace for the issue.
- ❖ Face-value transmission -: at times, when reporting such issues, they can come up with official cover up or lies to the audience.
- ❖ False balancing -: this means that when reporting an issue, they give prominence to some aspect over the other.
- ❖ Framing -: they can also create an impression or emotion around some certain issues.

Golding and Murdock (2000:74) pointed out that media owners, to a great length, define the tradition and editorial position of their newspaper organizations. They further stated that this was as a result of increase in press tycoons in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which made individuals like Pulitzer and Hearst in the USA and Northcliffe in England to have various newspaper organizations with enormous distribution stations, to serve their political purposes and are also used to tackle people they have problems with. No wonder, Baker (2007) commented that “concentrated media ownership creates the possibility of an individual decision maker exercising enormous, unequal and hence undemocratic, largely unchecked, potentially irresponsible power”. An example is the case of Silvio Berlusconi who owned three television stations which he used in support of his political party in the 1994 elections in Italy as these television stations had 40% of the Italian audience as their target audience (Graham and Davies, 1997: 32).

Conclusively, the press must ensure that they fulfil their role as the fourth estate of government; and to be able to do this, they need to report accurately, timely and without bias.

## **2.12. Framing of news and its impact on readers**

Framing is used in various fields like management, health, psychology, sociology and communication among others to achieve different purposes and this explains why scholars have plethora of meanings to it. Frame is used to group information, shape it

and process it skillfully or professionally. Chong and Druckman (2007) defined framing as “a process of conceptualizing issues or manipulating thoughts about an issue towards a new meaning”. In other words, to frame an issue means describing and inferring the press effect on rising people’s consciousness for an emerging issue. Also, Tankard (2001) defined a “frame as the important element related to the news story that presents a situation and interprets the issue by choice, exclusion, emphasis and elaboration”.

Goffman (1974) and Tuchman (1978) were the first set of researchers to identify the integral role framing plays in gathering news and processing news by audiences. Framing has been extensively used in the coverage of dispute and protest (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993; Hertog and McLeod, 1995; Baylor, 1996; Nelson *et al.*, 1997; McLeod and Detenber, 1998). Current researchers have identified that frame does not only reduce some contents of news stories, it also affects the interpretation, thought and perception of people as well as influence public opinion (Lecheler *et al.*, 2009).

Dunwoody (1992) stated that “even though framing is not unique to journalism, it is the core of journalistic work and is used as a ‘mental map’ that can be activated quickly and can reduce journalist’s efforts”. Furthermore, frame reduces and explains the message’s meaning by shaping the inferences that a person makes from the message. More so, frame reveals the conclusion made by the message creator or framer. Frame is a form of message or communication that suggests reality and reveals different perceptions of truth (Tuchman, 1978). Frame also lays emphasis on some elements of truth and makes others seem irrelevant (Lecheler and de Vreese, 2013).

News stories can be framed using different types of frame including: (i) conflict frame, which emphasizes conflict between parties or individual; (ii) human-interest frame, this focuses on an individual as an example or emphasizes emotions; (iii) responsibility frame, this attributes responsibility, credits or blames certain political institutions, group, or individuals; (iv) economic consequences frame, which focuses on the economic consequences of an issue for the audience and (v) morality frame, which emphasizes morality and offer social instructions (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg *et al.*, 1999).

Framing has been known as one of the best approaches to understanding news processes and effects. This statement has been confirmed by previous related studies. For instance, in a study by Price *et al.* (1997), the effects of three different news frames were looked into. In the study, some students were given false story to read about the funding of their institution by the State. The students were randomly chosen and given varied version of the story to read. The story had single information, but was introduced differently and ended based on the type of frame used which included conflict, personal consequences, or human-interest. The students were later asked to write down what their thoughts were toward what they read. The findings revealed that the different news frame used greatly affected their perceptions/responses to the news. This study provided very good evidence that news framing actually affects readers' thoughts or responses. Similarly, Valkenburg *et al.* (1999) in a study on the effects of news frames on readers' thoughts and recall sampled two readers. They were both given two different stories; one was on crime while the other was on the introduction of Euro. The two stories were framed in form of a human-interest, economic consequences, conflict and attribution of responsibility. The result of the study showed that the framing in each story affected the thought of each readers. The conclusion of the study was that frames played a significant role in the readers' thought-listing responses and as well, defined the way information was presented by the readers. Therefore, framing of news is capable of affecting readers' perceptions about an issue.

### **2.13. South African (SA) Universities**

The higher education system started during the era of the colonial rule, when the conflict of nationalism of both the Afrikaners and the British formed against the white and black kicked off in South Africa. The higher education sector in South Africa was also flooded with socio-cultural diversity, race and social class (Subotzky, 2002:1). The Dutch government during the 17<sup>th</sup> century at the Cape of Good Hope partially supported the apartheid legacy by the introduction of "Pass Laws", making the black citizens limited to one out of the ten homelands called Bantustans (production and economic poor areas). The homeland system was devised by the then British empire to limit the blacks' right to vote to the Bantustans and to prevent them from staying close to the whites. The

government also separated black education, medical care and some public services replacing them with inferior ones.

The first university to be established in South Africa was the University of Good Hope in 1873 at Cape Town, then South African College in 1829 also in Cape Town, the Victoria College in 1865 at Stellenbosch, School of Mines in 1895, Rhodes University in 1904 and South African Native College in 1916. However, their names were later changed. The role played by politics in the history of South Africa Universities could not be over emphasized. Some racially discriminated universities were established after the extension of the University Act of 1959 which include “Universities Durban-Westville”, “Western Cape”, “Zululand” and “The North”. Badat (2003) described the situation as thus *“A particular higher education system was inherited from apartheid: one that was deeply divided internally, and isolated from the international community of scholars. It was highly fragmented in structural and governance terms, and was far from being a coherent and coordinated system. It was inherently inequitable, differentiated along the lines of ‘race’ and ethnicity, and designed to reproduce ... white and male privilege and black and female subordination in all spheres of society”*.

The higher education institution system was so tensed during the apartheid era that a student from another race was only permitted to study on his successful application to the administering government of that institution. The manner in which the higher education was established was responsible for its differentiation in governance and funding (Bunting, 1989). Apartheid gradually folded up around 1990-1993, while several negotiations were going on. This led to the election of African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 as the ruling party. The new party immediately saw the need to restructure the social system by developing the economy (CHE, 2004:14). The realization of South African Government, that the higher education institutions and programmes are vital to the advancement and development of the country, consequently led to the establishment of national systems for the evaluation of quality and better higher education system (CHE, 2004:14).

The equal right to quality education was given to all, both children and adults as enshrined in the Bill of Right. The new democratic government of the ANC began a complete

transformation of the higher education sector as against the previously broken system characterized by racism and socio-political reign. To eradicate the inefficiency, inequities and ineffectiveness in the higher education system of the last regime, they incorporated a single higher education system to encourage participation in the higher education institutions (CHE, 2004:25). The transformation of the higher education system began from the 1990s, when the post-apartheid government instituted three bodies which are: The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) and the Union of Democratic University Staff Development (UDUSA). The major concerns of these bodies were to ensure that the higher education system enjoys freedom (democracy), equality (redress), impartiality (non-sexism), non-discrimination (non-racialism) and a unitary system (CHE, 2004:24).

Later in the year 1994, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was established. In 1996, NCHE came up with their transformation agenda of the higher education in South Africa which was based on the (IGI) concept meaning increased participation, greater responsiveness and increased cooperation/partnership. The immediate adaptation of the IGI had great effect on the ideologies of South Africa higher education system (Bunting, 2002:93). Many institutions now conform to their institutional vision and mission which must also be in line with the 1997 white paper on higher education transformation. In the year 2001, the former black universities began to have funding problems and this led to reduction in their numbers of enrolment, losing their candidates to the former white universities. This problem occasioned the reshaping and resizing of the various South Africa's institutions in 2004 - 2005 in an exercise referred to as institutional merging (Bunting, 2002:82). The total disbursement of government on higher education in South Africa declined from 1996 to 2013 by 4.9% to 4.7% (Van der Berg, 2014).

**Table 2.2. Names of the universities and technikons in South Africa.**

<b>Merged universities</b>	<b>Current universities</b>	<b>Technikons</b>
The University of the North and Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA).	University of Limpopo (Starting from January 2005).	Durban Institute of Technology-DIT (Mangosuthu Technikon to join DIT).
Not Merged	The University of KwaZulu-Natal.	The Border and Eastern Cape Technikons (Walter Sisulu University of Technology and Science (Starting from January 2005).
Not Merged	The University of Zululand	Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon was merged as Cape Peninsula University of Technology.
East London Campus of Rhodes University and Fort Hare.	*The University of Fort Hare.	Technikon Witwatersrand (University of Johannesburg from January 2005).
Not Merged	*Rhodes University	
University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon and Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista.	*The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Starting from January 2005).	Technikons Pretoria, North West and Northern Gauteng was merged as Tshwane University of Technology.
South African College changed its name to the University of Cape Town.	The University of Cape Town.	Vaal University of Technology.
School of Mines changed its name to the University of the Witwatersrand.	The University of the Witwatersrand.	Central University of Technology, Free State.
Victoria College changed its name to University of Stellenbosch.	Stellenbosch University.	Port Elizabeth Technikon (The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University from January 2005).
Not Merged	The University of the Western Cape.	

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University of Potchefstroom and	North-West University.
University of North West and	
Vista.	
	The University of Free State.
The University of Transkei	*Walter Sisulu University of
	Technology and Science (from
	January 2005).
Rand Afrikaans University and	University of Johannesburg (from
Vista (Soweto and East Rand).	January 2005).
UNISA and Vista Distance	The University of South Africa.
Education.	
University of Pretoria and the	The University of Pretoria.
Mamelodi Campus of Vista.	
	The University of Venda for
	Science and Technology.

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Source: CHE (2004:6). \*Eastern Cape Universities.

## 2.14. Overview of students' protests globally

Students' protest has become a universal phenomenon and the rate of occurrence is on the increase globally. Students' protests have recently been reported in Venezuela (Lugo-Ocando *et al.*, 2015), Chile (Scherman *et al.*, 2015) and the United Kingdom (Cammaerts, 2013). Other prominent students' protests occurred in Germany from (2008-2013), Chile (2010- 2013), Turkey (2013) and Canada (2010- 2013). Similarly, in December 2008, a protest occurred in Greece, where a policeman fired gunshots at a promising young boy of about 15 years old. The youths who were majorly composed of the University students, took the matter up with the police in Athens and later the protest spread all over Greece (Karamichas, 2009).

More so, in 2009, students of the University of California protested for the removal of their Chancellor, Linda Katehi, who they claimed refused to prevent the attack on the first amendment (Blumenstyk, 2011). Another protest was that of the Federation of Indian Student in Australia (FISA) in 2009 which involved a total number of five thousand students who were fighting against racial discrimination at Melbourne in Australia



(Robertson, 2013). In addition, is the Quebec student's movement against the cumulative impact of neoliberalism on North American in 2011 and 2012 (Giroux, 2013). Furthermore, Hong Kong students boycotted classes to take part in the pro-democracy rally, demanding for open selection of leaders and democratic reform in 2014 (Brook, 2016).

It is important to note that the role of the press in some of the reported protests has been studied. Lugo-Ocando *et al.* (2015) examined the relationship between social media, political mobilization and civic engagement in the context of the students' protests in Venezuela in 2014 in a study on Social Media and Virality in the Students' Protests in Venezuela in 2014: Rethinking Engagement and Dialogue in Times of Imitation. Scherman *et al.* (2015) studied the role of social media in student and environmental protests in Chile. Furthermore, Cammaerts (2013) in his article on the Mediation of Insurrectionary Symbolic Damage: The 2010 U.K. Student Protests, did a content analysis of the 2010 United Kingdom student protests using four U.K. newspapers.

### **2.15. Students' protests in SA Universities**

South Africa has a long history of students' protests; on April 8, 1965, the first ever students' protest happened at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and University of Cape Town (UCT) by conservative Afrikaans students who showed their grievances on the importance of mother-tongue education and the removal of liberal lecturers in a peaceful demonstration (McClelland, 2015). Another notable protest was the Soweto student uprising of 1976 which claimed the lives of two students. In the first two decades after the advent of democracy in 1994, there has been an increased rate of students' protests across universities in South Africa, largely on campuses of historically black universities (Hardy, 2016). Students demanded different needs such as transformation, quality accommodation, transportation and free tuition (Hardy, 2016). The origin of students' protest differs from one university to another. A study by Alima (2005) on "lecturer-students' perception of the causes, effects and management patterns of students' unrest in tertiary institutions" has identified the following as some of the factors responsible for students' protest in tertiary institutions: "increase in tuition fees; inadequate facilities for teaching and learning; communication break down between

school authorities and students' representatives; poor leadership style of school authority; rustication and expulsion of union leaders; accommodation problem; and security problem on campus”.

Some of the recorded protests in South African Universities in recent times include the ones at the University of Limpopo in 2009, 2011, 2012; Mangosuthu University of Technology, Durban in 2009; Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in 2012; Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in 2014 (Mokoena, 2014); Walter Sisulu University of Technology in the Eastern Cape Province where a student was reported dead (Timeslive 2012); and two Western Cape FET Colleges: False Bay College and the College of Cape Town in 2012 where students protested against accommodation and National Student Financial Aid schemes (NSFAS) support (Nkosi, 2012; Hardy, 2016). In 2014, South African Universities experienced mass protests that involved virtually all the higher institutions of learning. This occurred when the South African Student Congress (SASCO) President organized a mass protest by South African university students regarding their disagreement on the action of South African Government Financial Aid Scheme (SAGFAS) and refusal by National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to pay up student's unsettled fees in order to register for 2014 academic session. This protest involved students from the following institutions; Durban University of Technology (DUT), Vaal University of Technology (VUT), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Mangosuthi University of Technology (MUT), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). The protest later resulted the arrest of seven students from (UKZN) and twenty students from (UJ) for their violent conduct (Beaver, 2014; Mail & Guardian, 2014).

The recent students' protest tagged “*#FeesMustFall*” which commenced in October 2015 was historic as it cut across all the universities in South Africa. It has since attracted the attention of stakeholders and scholars.

#### **2.15.1. #FeeMustFall students' protest**

The *#FeesMustFall* students' protest did not just begin in mid-October 2015, but was preceded by some other protests. In March 2015, a student at the University of Cape

Town was reported to have thrown dirty substance at the image of Cecil Rhodes, the British imperialist that offered her property to the University, this led to the “RhodesMustFall” protest. Also, it was reported that students from the historically black universities like Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of Fort Hare and the Tshwane University of Technology have constantly been protesting on fees increase since the independence of South Africa (Mail & Guardian, 2016a). Other factors responsible for the emergence of #FeesMustFall students protest include: poor students’ inability to attend university because of fund; elaborate revenue for university manager; government withdrawal from sponsoring higher education; and racism (Bozzoli, 2015; Ranjeni, 2015).

The #FeesMustFall students’ protests started around middle of October, 2015 after the announcement made by the minister of higher education, Blade Nzimande on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015 that all South African Universities fees would be increased by 6% in the year 2016 (eNCA, 2015). The announcement led to students protesting in about 16 campuses across South African Universities: in the University of Witwatersrand (students and few staff restricted and lock down the institution)( Rahlaga, 2015), in the University of Cape Town (protesting students obstructed vehicles from entering the campus by blocking the road with rocks, dustbins, and benches) (Petersen, 2015), in Rhodes University (students filled the university's administration building protesting), in the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (students began protesting and closed down the campus), in Fort Hare University, protesting students refused to separate or write exams while waiting for university management to attend to their demands on fee upsurges and issues of fraud (Koyana and Kekana, 2015), students also ignited bonfires at the gate of the institution and demolished the security offices (eNCA, 2015), in University of Stellenbosch (protesting students gave a memorandum of grievances to institution management stating their complaints), in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth (students obstructed the main streets onto the Summerstrand campuses, in University of Johannesburg (argument between students and private security guards occurred (Kekana *et al.*, 2015).

These protests, which started on 14<sup>th</sup> October did not last for a very long time as a result of the quick intervention by the South African Government who declared no fee increase in 2016 (Daily Maverick, 2015; Times LIVE, 2015; Onishi, 2015). The most significant effect of the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests was the President's establishment of a commission of inquiry into higher education and training in January 2016. The commission was to look at the possibility of having a free higher education system in South Africa. In August 2016, the #FeesMustFall students' protests resumed when the minister of higher education, Blade Nzimande announced the fee arrangements for 2017 (Greg, 2016). The minister's pronouncement activated the protests in some of the universities while police were sent to some other institutions in anticipation of protest (Claymore, 2016). There was interruption of academic programmes in the University of KwaZuluNatal and Mangosuthu University of Technology (Xola, 2016). Also in Butterworth, at the Ibika Campus of Walter Sisulu University and Nelson Mandela drive campus in Mthatha, large numbers of students were reported to storm the town rioting and throwing stones at moving vehicles. Mthatha Police Officers came to the rescue by releasing teargas to dismiss the students (Chabalala, 2016; Hendrick, 2016), whereas at the University of Witwatersrand, students organized themselves to close down the university permanently (Ngcobo, 2016). The department of education calculated the total amount of property damaged in 2015 protests to around R600 million (Rand Daily Mail, 2016). Considering the cost of damage by the 2015 protests and the overall negative effects, the South African President, Jacob Zuma called the minister of finance, Pravin Gordhan to make provision on how there would be no increment in 2017 fees in all South African universities (S'thembile, 2016). Later, the minister of higher education restated that no concrete decision had been reached on the 2017 fees increment (AllAfrica.com, 2016). The minister of finance was mentioned from a reliable source that if corruption could be eradicated from the system, South African Government would be able to pay for all university students from poor family (Pillay, 2016). The minister of higher education stated that while the government still engaged stakeholders in discussion on how to cater for the financial assistance of students from poor homes: with annual income of less than R600,000, the universities fees would definitely be increased by 8% in 2017. He further stated that each institution's council would have the ultimate verdicts on the fees (Mail &

Guardian, 2016b). The major effect of the 2016 #FeesMustFall student's protests was the R17 billion increase in 3 years on the budget of higher education by the South African Government, as well as the proposed 10.9% annual increase in the government grant to South African universities (Goba, 2016).

## **2.16. Theoretical framework**

Theories are essential because they help to predict, explain and understand an occurrence. They are created to show reality and positioned for the normal expertise (Samuel, 2002) or explain the procedure an expert follows, the thinking, behaviour, methods and values. In this study, the theoretical framework explains the model of application of the agenda setting and framing theories in the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests. McQuail (2010) identified the following as the basics of any theoretical framework:

- ❖ Theory is a universal proposition that is based on observation and logical opinions.
- ❖ Theory states the relationship among observed phenomena and seeks to clarify or predict the relation.
- ❖ Theory guides the gathering and evaluation of evidence
- ❖ Theory gives sense to a phenomenon, guides action and predicts the consequence.

This study is guided by two major theories: the agenda setting theory and the framing theory. The aim of the study is to evaluate the Daily Dispatch's coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities. Since the purpose of a theory is to make us have a better understanding of how a particular issue works, the use of agenda setting theory of the press will expose us to the role of the press (Daily Dispatch) in setting the pace on matters of public interest like the #FeeMustFall students' protests.

### **2.16.1. Agenda setting theory**

The term "agenda setting" came to limelight in the study of McComb and Shaw (1972). They conducted their study on the 1968 United States presidential election where they found out that the press had a major control of voters' judgement on what the major issues

were. They also found out that there was a strong connection between emphasis given by the press on issues and the importance attached to such issues by voters. The proponent of this theory believes that the press either consciously or unconsciously creates a certain image of reality to the public. The press brings to our notice events and occurrences on a daily basis ranging from news, sport, crime, documentary, drama among others. The press overemphasizes some stories while neglecting the others, this makes some media users to perceive such stories as more important (Fourie, 2007). Take for instances, the period when stories about crime, corruption and AIDS filled the columns of many South African newspapers, many believed that the nation was already decrepit. The attention devoted to a particular news stories influences the public perception of the importance of such issue (McQuail, 2000:426).

Another instance of the agenda setting of the press happened in the United States between 1986 to 1989 when the people perceived drugs as the nation's most important problem and the federal government also declared war against drugs, at that time, the country was saturated with several stories of illegal use of drug on the newspapers, and the only explanation to this public's increased awareness was the concept of the agenda setting function of the press (Severin and Tankard, 2001:219).

The researcher concurs with Daramola (2003) who stated there is a relationship between frequency of news coverage and the public perception of such news as important. As a result, the press is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda: it has a great part in determining what the public think the facts are and what the people talk about.

According to Folarin (1998: 6), the following are the four crucial elements that can lead to discussion or opinion in the agenda setting theory:

- ❖ The frequency of a news story.
- ❖ The level of prominence given to the news story.
- ❖ The degree of conflict generated by the news story.
- ❖ The cumulative press/media effect on the news story.

In relation to this study, the Daily Dispatch Newspaper is expected to unearth and dig out facts from the 2016 #FeesMustFall students' protests in South African Universities and relay them to the audience accurately and without bias.

### **2.16.2. Framing theory**

Framing theory was first put forth by Goffman (1974). This theory suggests that how a piece of information is presented to an audience (called "the frame") influences the choices they make on how the information is processed (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). Menashe and Siegel (1998) described a frame as *"a way of packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a certain meaning"*. The concept of framing is related to the agenda setting theory. While the agenda setting theory focuses on press selection of stories, events and issues (what), framing theory focuses on press representation, treatment and production of stories, events and issues (Fourie, 2007:245). Therefore, framing theory does not only tell the audience what to think about as in the agenda setting theory, but also tells the audience how to think about that issue, which is regarded as a second level agenda setting.

Framing theory is most applicable to news and media stories. It tells how journalists report an occurrence i.e. the contextualization of news reports within a specific ideological framework (Fourie, *ibid*). Entman (1993:52) described the core of framing theory as thus: "framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then, define problems: determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits usually measured in terms of cultural values, diagnose causes: identify the forces creating the problem, make moral judgments: evaluate causal agents and their effects, and suggest remedies: offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects".

In relation to this study, the researcher evaluated how the frames with which the 2016 #FeesMustFall news stories were presented by the Daily Dispatch has affected the readers' perception of the issue.

### **2.17. Summary**

This chapter reviewed related literature and available information about the role of the press and students' protests. The following issues were discussed: communication, the press and its role in the society; normative theories of the press; freedom of the press; history of South African Press; newspaper as a form of media; Daily Dispatch Newspaper; professional ethics in journalism; influence of media ownership on media content; framing of news and its impact on readers; South African Universities; overview of students' protests globally and in South Africa Universities, with emphasis on #FeeMustFall students' protests. The theories on which this study was based: the agenda setting theory and the framing theory were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will discuss the methodology employed in this study.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the approaches adopted for the study, covering the following: research design/methods, study population, sampling/sampling technique, data collection and analysis procedures. This study sought to evaluate the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by Daily Dispatch Newspaper.

In achieving the purpose of this study, the under listed questions were asked:

- i. To what extent has the Daily Dispatch Newspaper covered the 2016 #FeeMustFall protest?
- ii. What is the degree of objectivity of Daily Dispatch Newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall protest?
- iii. How does the framing of 2016 #FeeMustFall protest through news presentation influence readers' perception?

#### 3.2. Research design

Research design is the plan used for studying and providing the total structure for the collection of data (Leedy, 1997: 195). It is the idea of how the research will be carried out: specifying who, what, where and how the research is going to be channeled. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) say *“research design is the plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). They further indicate that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible”*. The research plan for this study is presented in figure 3.1. In this study, the triangulation method involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. The quantitative approach involved the use of content of Daily Dispatch Newspaper chosen purposively for the period of occurrence of the #FeeMustFall students' protests in 2015 and 2016 while the qualitative approach involved data collection from selected students of the University of Fort Hare through focus group

discussion. Quantitative data were analyzed using content analysis while the data collected qualitatively were analyzed using thematic analysis.

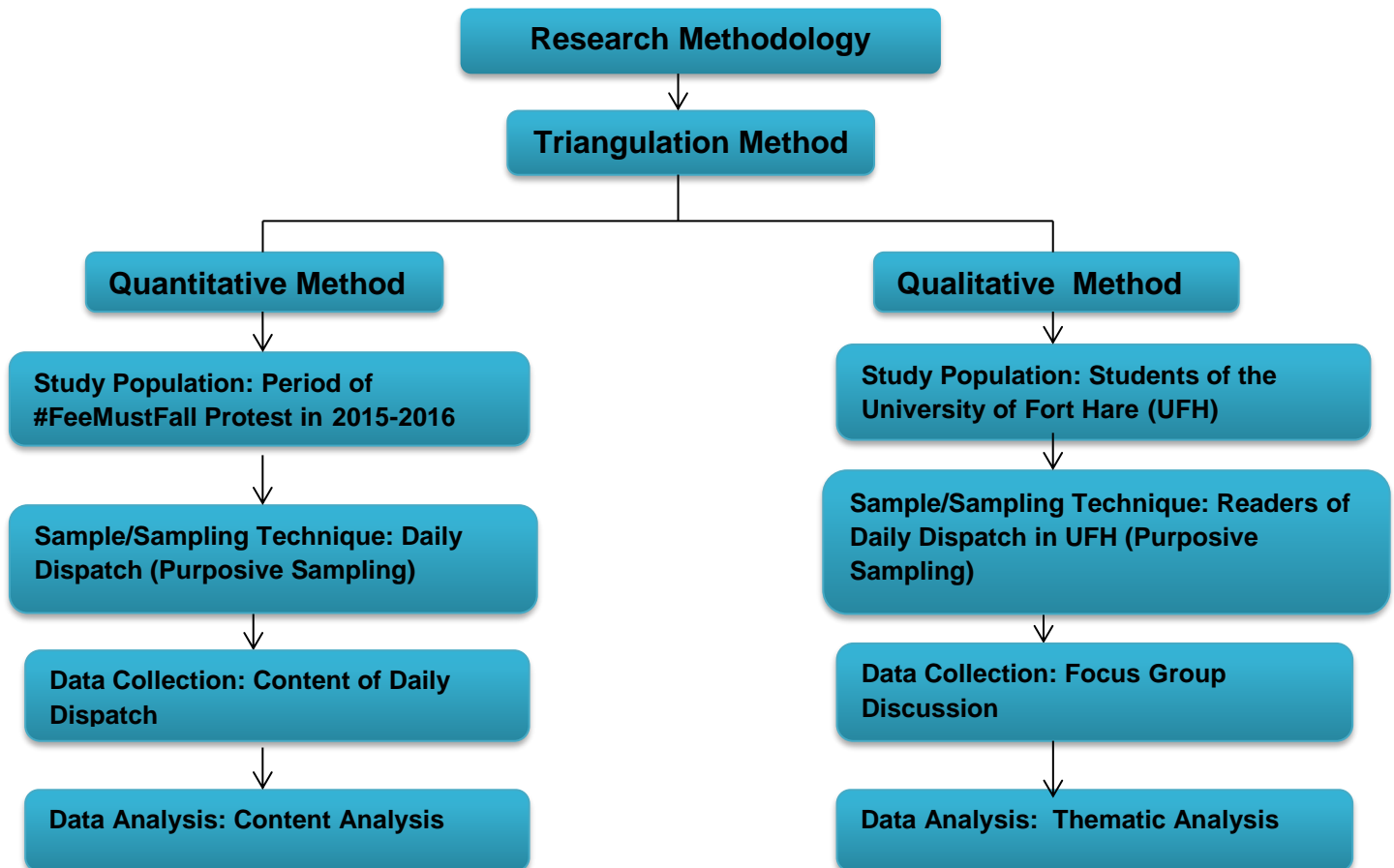


Figure 3.1. Research plan for the study.

Research design has helped the researcher to determine the methods and procedures that were used in this study: the measurement, the sampling, the data collection and analysis (Zikmund *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, Durrheim (2004:29) stated that research design is “a *strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy*”. The main role of research design is to make

sure that researcher already knows the type of research approach to use and also ascertain the validity of the findings (Mouton, 1996:107). Therefore, for this study, which focused on the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper, the researcher paid attention to identifying the suitable research strategies including content analysis of the newspaper which was used to measure the magnitude of reportage and the degree of objectivity of the newspaper while focus group discussion was used to evaluate the effect of framing on readers' perceptions. Research design serves the purpose of a mixed-bag approach i.e. selecting from several options or alternatives in order to accomplish and elucidate the research aims and objectives, which was also the case with this study, as the researcher decided to use a quantitative content analysis from a pool of several quantitative research methods and also the use of thematic analysis, a qualitative research method.

### **3.3. Research method**

Research method is a systematic or an organized means of solving research problems. It provides means of understanding a scientifically conducted research. To address a research problem there are various logical procedures to follow. A researcher need to understand which particular research method is appropriate for a specific study as well as why and how it is relevant (Sprague, 2005; Kumar, 2014).

According to Du Plooy (2009), research method can either be qualitative or quantitative in nature. A researcher can use either of these methods, or both which is known as triangulation. Wimmer and Dominick (2005:139) define a quantitative research method as an approach that *"...allows researchers to summarize results and report them with greater parsimony"*. Quantitative method is appropriate when we are counting or measuring variables. Quantitative method also involves collection of little information from many investigation units through the use of questionnaires (Halvorsen, 1992) while qualitative method entails the collection of a lot of data from few examination units through interviews and observations.

For this study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. Under quantitative method, data were collected using Daily Dispatch Newspaper content while

a focus group discussion, a form of qualitative research method was adopted to analyze readers' perception.

### **3.3.1. Quantitative research method**

Quantitative research, also known as positivist or empirical research was founded by a European named Auguste Comte (1798- 1857). Positivism is a philosophical method that makes use of information based on knowledge and rejects any form of assumption. In quantitative approach, methodological assumptions are basically connected to deductive process of reasoning. Deductive reasoning can be explained as a way in which theoretical framework or conceptual representation provides a basis that a (quantitative/positivist) researcher assumes to be true. A positivist researcher then uses these assumptions to formulate hypotheses, which will be researched, measured, compared, predicted or controlled and at the end be proven (Du Plooy, 2009). Although, quantitative approach, according to knowledge, is based on rationality, it has been criticized for negating other methods of acquiring knowledge (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:3).

Babbie (2010) stated that quantitative approaches involve measurement of data collected through polls, questionnaires and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data through computational techniques. This approach also emphasizes the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data. More so, quantitative approach is the collection of raw data through questionnaire, observers' rating and any other quantitative methods and present them in numerical forms. Quantitative methods involve gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. In quantitative method, data are generated in form of numbers and statistics which are often presented in tables, charts, figures, or other non-textual forms.

In quantitative approach, the researcher's role is observation and measurement; therefore, care should be taken to prevent the researcher from contaminating the data by getting involved with the investigation subjects. Quantitative research is objective as the researcher is independent from what is being researched. In this study, a quantitative content analysis was adopted to analyze the magnitude and degree of objectivity of news coverage of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest by Daily Dispatch Newspaper.

Quantitative method was adopted for this study because quantitative data are more efficient in content and can be tested through a hypothesis. This method afforded the researcher the opportunity to organize the key newspaper articles or headlines as the #FeeMustFall stories were prominent on the front pages of the Daily Dispatch Newspaper. The method also allowed the researcher the opportunity to know the frequency / occurrence of these stories and determine the mean number of paragraphs covered by the stories.

### **3.3.2. Qualitative research method**

Qualitative research is also known as field research, naturalism, critical research, ethnography, alternative approach, interpretative research, anti-positivist approach and constructivism because they all share the same focus (Du Plooy, 2009). The year 1900 to 1940 witnessed researchers like Malinowski, Margret Mead and Radcliffe-Brown working with ethnomethodology and ethnography, using it to give explanatory descriptions of what they understand about small issues (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In the 1960s and 1970s, researchers experienced the period of applied research, where researches were used to test deductively created theories that are established on particular assumptions. However, 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of the grounded theory using a qualitative research approach. The major feature of this approach is that, research is now used to develop theories which can either be held or countered depending on additional data collection and analysis, rather than starting research from theoretical perspective (Du Plooy, 2009). Thus, a qualitative research approach focuses on inductive way of reasoning. The research starts with observation or questioning and based on accumulated improvement, theory is developed (De Vos, 1998). Qualitative approach is also entrenched in anthropology and socio-linguistics focusing majorly on language, meaning and cultural experiences in social environments.

Qualitative methods are used to discover difficult occurrence encountered by researcher in a data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Sandelowski and Barroso, 2003; Tong *et al.*, 2007). It is also the method that uses logical approaches, perceptions and traditions to make research open to analysis, repetition, critique, replication and adaptation. In other words, qualitative method is an instrument which researchers use to project their studies (Given,

2008). Qualitative research seeks to answer research questions and understand research topics from the viewpoints of the study population. It has the capability of providing written descriptions of the experience of people on a specified research issue (Mays and Pope, 2000). It also gives information about the “human angle” of a study in form of opinions, beliefs and perceptions of individuals (Mays and Pope, 2000). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research approach is a situated activity which locates the observer in the world, Qualitative approach entails that researcher learn about a phenomenon in its natural environment, try to make meaning of and interpret an issue in relations to the connotation attached to it by people. The use of qualitative approach in the form of focus group discussion in this study therefore helped the researcher to be closer to the data, engage with participants and learn more about the perceptions of the participants on #FeeMustFall students’ protests. Furthermore, qualitative research approach involves highlighting the qualities of issues, procedures and connotations that are not investigated or tested (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The data collection methods used in qualitative research approach are case study, focus group discussion and in-depth analyses (of documented communication, interviews and recorded observations), basically for understanding the situation rather than generalizing findings (Lofland *et al.*, 2006). In this study, focus group discussion was used to analyze how the framing of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students’ protest stories influences the perception of readers of the Daily Dispatch Newspaper.

### **3.3.3. Triangulation method**

The combination or blending of two or more data collection methods and the reference to several other sources of information or acquire data, are generally called triangulation (De Vos, 1998: 359). Therefore, triangulation method is mostly used by researchers to enhance credibility of research results. The collaboration in this method of research is used to show the richness and strength of the study (Hesser-Biber, 2010). In this study, the researcher provided the pictures and captions of some of the newspaper stories and headlines as well as narratives that added meaning to the figures to enhance in-depth understanding.

Furthermore, Johnson (1997: 292) explained triangulation to include “the use of two or more methods (e.g. questionnaire survey followed by focus group interviews) and multiple sources of data (e.g. content analysis of an organization’s annual reports and interviews with top management)”. More so, triangulation may involve the use of different types of sampling for data collection; the analysis of the collected data from two or more theoretical and conceptual viewpoints (theory triangulation); and carrying out observations or data analysis employing two or more investigators (investigator triangulation). For this study, triangulation involving the content analysis of Daily Dispatch Newspaper followed by focus group discussion was used.

In practice, triangulation may result in the use of a quantitative and a qualitative method so as to test theoretical assumptions through more than one means, and as well increase the dependability and validness of findings.

### **3.4. Study population**

Study population can be explained as the larger environment from which the researcher draws the samples and later used the sample for generalization purposes (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). To ensure accuracy, the sample must have the same features as the whole population from where it is drawn (Babbie, 2007). Daily Dispatch Newspaper was selected for analysis in this study because, like other newspapers, it carried a lot of stories during the #FeeMustFall students’ protests and as well it is a regional newspaper and the most prominent in the Eastern Cape Province just like in the University of Fort Hare. Its choice for this study was further motivated by its wide geographical spread and circulation as well as its long-aged operation in print media.

The newspaper editions throughout the period of the #FeeMustFall students’ protest: October 2015 to December 2016 constituted the study population.

### **3.5. Sample and sampling technique**

Hopkins (2000) defined samples as a representation of the total population. It is some part of a larger body, especially selected to represent the whole. The findings on the sample can therefore be generalized to the whole population, hence, the significance of

a sample being a true representation of the whole population. Therefore, for this study, the population was the Daily Dispatch Newspaper editions published throughout the period of the #FeeMustFall students' protest: October 2015 to December 2016 and since it was not possible to select all Daily Dispatch newspapers for analysis, a sample of 31 editions was selected for analysis. These included Daily Dispatch Newspapers that were published within the period of the protest and contained articles and news on the #FeeMustFall students' protests.

Newman and McNeil (1998) asserted that a very large sample can accurately represent the entire population and at the same time reduces the error of statistical outcomes. Yates (2003) added that when the sampling method is accurate, it makes the results more representative and reliable. Therefore, a researcher needs to use the appropriate sampling technique in order to give a better insight into the population from which the samples are drawn. Stacks and Hockings (1992:180) identified some factors that can indicate the accuracy of a sample as: the population parameters, the size of the sample and the standard error of measurement.

According to Du Plooy (2009), sampling entails a difficult procedure in selecting units of analysis from a large population. Population on the other hand refers to any aggregate of individual, organization, group, social artefact or objects and occurrences. When the whole population is used in a research, it is known as "Census". Nevertheless, as a result of time constraints, costs and geographical distances, census is not always used.

### **3.5.1. Purposive sampling technique**

Purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling was used to select sample for this study. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select samples based on his own judgment in order to achieve the specified research objectives (Dudovskiy, 2016). According to Palys (2008), purposive sampling is divided into different cases including extreme and deviant case sampling, typical case sampling, paradigmatic case sampling, criterion sampling etc. Purposive sampling is cost- and time-effective, as well is the most appropriate method that can be used if there are inadequate numbers of sources of primary data that can contribute to the study (Dudovskiy, 2016). Considering the above, purposive sampling was therefore deemed appropriate for this study. In this study,



sampling was based on certain criteria such as period of occurrence of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest and wide geographical spread as well as circulation of Daily Dispatch Newspaper. The samples for this study were purposively selected and they were editions of Daily Dispatch Newspaper published between October 2015 and December 2016 and contained articles and news on the #FeeMustFall students' protests. This was so because; the protest was not a regular occurrence, it only occurred during these periods. However, this does not invalidate the research work.

For the focus group discussions, only students who regularly read the newspaper and witnessed the protest were purposively selected.

### **3. 6. Data collection**

Data collection methods are instruments used to gather necessary data. In this study, quantitative data were collected through content analysis using Daily Dispatch Newspaper content sourced from the library of the University of Fort Hare, Alice, Eastern Cape, South Africa while qualitative data were collected through focus group discussion among very few selected students of University of Fort Hare who were exposed to some editions of the newspaper by the researcher. It is important to note that the bulk of data in this study was collected from the content analysis of Daily Dispatch Newspaper.

#### **3.6.1. Focus group**

Focus group is a unique type of qualitative research method which requires using a group of selected people formally engaging in a discussion of a specific topic (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014). It involves more than one participants ranging between 6-12 people that share similar experience, socio-cultural background or knowledge for the purpose of gaining more understanding of a particular subject (Liampottong, 2011). In focus group discussion, the researcher coordinates the interview process, defines the protocol, set the parameters and control the flow of discussion (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2013). It allows participants to have in depth discussion on the matters that are related to the topic. During this process, relevant questions are asked by the researcher as well as the participants and participants are allowed to make comment on other's point of view for the purpose of data collection (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). Through the use of this data

collection method, the researcher was therefore able to coordinate the discussion process as relevant questions were asked and discussed in relation to the study.

Focus group discussion occurs between researcher (s) and more than one participant in order to collect data (Parahoo, 1997:296). Focus group discussion is conducted among people who have similar experience or common characteristics so as to get relevant ideas, thought and perception on a particular topic related to them (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002:110). In this study, focus group discussion only contributed a negligible portion of the collected data as participants only read and reflected on the selected newspaper editions given to them by the researcher. The focus group comprised a total of 12 participants who were University of Fort Hare students. The participants were purposively selected based on their readership of Daily Dispatch Newspaper and eye witness of the protest. The researcher used two different focus groups consisting of 6 participants each. Discussions were held in the Common Room of one of the postgraduate students' residences, Iona 1 and recorded. The discussions explored the perceptions of participants on the different news frames they were exposed to by the researcher. The focus group question guide is presented in appendix 2.

#### **3.6.1.1. Focus group discussion procedure**

- ❖ The researcher conducted the discussion using semi-structured questions
- ❖ The researcher gave little exposition to the questions to enable participant understand the questions
- ❖ The researcher used both verbal and non-verbal probing techniques, such as silence, prompting and summarizing e.g. "could you expatiate more on your point?"
- ❖ The researcher re-phrased each participant's answer in his own word to ensure that participants understand.
- ❖ The researcher recorded the focus group discussion by taking notes during the discussions. Taking note during a discussion is essential because it serves as back up. To avoid interruption, the researcher informed participants that notes would be taken during the discussions. Also, the note taking was done by a non-participant so as to put into writing all the actions and reactions of both the participants and the researcher during the interview (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002:237).

### **3.7. Data analysis**

Quantitative data collected using the content of Daily Dispatch Newspapers were analyzed quantitatively using content analysis and the results expressed in frequency table, simple percentages, pie charts and bar charts while qualitative data collected through focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis.

#### **3.7.1. Content analysis**

The main data of this study came from the content analysis of Daily Dispatch Newspapers. Content analysis is a research method that is used to measure the amount of a particular issue (Du Plooy, 1996). For instance, the level of crime reportage, the amount of student protest reportage, and the level of negative portrayal of Africa among other issues are measured. Content analysis is used to make inferences that are replicable and valid from textual data (Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). These inferences are about sender(s) of message, the message itself, or the audience of message. Content analysis also entails categorizing large amount of words into fewer groups by classifying similar words or group of words together. Researchers need to observe that classification is reliable and consistent so as to be able to make a valid inference from the text. This study therefore paid attention to all these as the researcher categorized the presence of the news stories on front page, middle page and back page of the Daily Dispatch newspaper while the number of paragraphs were grouped at intervals. The tonality of the stories was categorized as positive, negative and neutral to measure the degree of objectivity of the writer.

Content analysis is a universal word for a number of approaches used to analyze textual data (Powers and Knapp, 2006). It is a systematic coding and categorizing approach used for analyzing large amount of textual data discreetly so as to determine trends, pattern, frequency, relationships, structure and discourses of communication (Mayring, 2000; Pope *et al.*, 2006; Gbrich, 2007). Content analysis can be used to analyze numerous unobtrusive contents like newspaper content, magazine, online discussion among others. More so, content analysis could either be qualitative or quantitative. For the purpose of this study, a quantitative content analysis was adopted. Content analysis uses descriptive approach to code information and interpret quantitative amounts of codes (Morgan,

1993). In this study, the researcher analyzed and categorized into five (5) different frames by using deductive approach as described by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in which a series of 20 questions to which the coder had to answer “yes” or “no” was developed.

### **3.7.2. Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is mostly used in qualitative research and its major focus is to identify themes in data (Kellehear, 1997). Thematic analysis is more than just numbering words, sentence or phrase in a data. It entails the identification of clear and comprehensible ideas in a data. Researchers use thematic analysis to get detailed meaning of a data (Greg, 2012).

Thematic analysis is an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data. It is mostly used at the beginning of most qualitative analysis. According to Braun and Clark (2006: 79), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data”. While using thematic analysis for this study, the researcher identified, analyzed and reported patterns within the qualitative data collected from participants of the focus group discussion.

Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of phenomena associated to various research questions. These patterns are identified through various processes listed below.

**Familiarization with the data:** - The researcher need to read and re read the data so as to get full understanding of the data. In fact, the researcher needs to do the data collection by him/herself for effective understanding to be achieved. This was the case with this study as the researcher collected the data personally through focus group interview, read and re read the data from the participants to get familiarize with the data.

**Coding data:-** Coding can either be done by hand or through the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), QDA Miner Lite or Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT). When coding by hand the researcher should endeavour that coding captures the main idea of the data. You can code a phrase or sentence depending on the researcher’s discretion. This was the case with this study as the researcher coded the data by hand.

It was endeavoured that coding captured the main ideas of the data. The coding was done using a single word and phrases not sentence.

**Searching for themes:** - This stage you begin to search for themes and sub themes among the codes. Patterns are gotten as a result of its frequent use within the text or as a result of its importance to the research questions. This was the case with this study.

**Reviewing themes:** - Themes need to be cross checked to ensure that all of the data form a coherent pattern. At this stage, a mind map can be used to help visualize the relationship between the themes. This was the case with this study as the researcher reviewed the themes to ensure a coherent pattern.

**Defining and naming theme:** - At this stage the researcher defines each theme according to the meaning or representation in the data set. The names should be concise, punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is all about. This was the case with this study as the researcher defined each theme according to the meaning or representation in the data set (#FeeMustFall news stories) as well as the participant's interpretation of the stories.

**Final report:** - The final report gives the summary of the data. For this study, themes were discussed with tangible examples from the data set.

### **3.8. Research validity and credibility**

Validity in research means the process used by researchers to check whether their findings are accurate by going through certain procedures (Cresswell, 2009). The validity of any research process regardless of the method or approach used is tested by readers, peers and grant viewer (Krefting, 1991). Also, the validity of a data can be checked by considering the consistency, credibility, transferability and applicability which would be discussed below.

- ❖ **Consistency:-** Consistency is a way of measuring the trustworthiness of a study. This is done by carrying out a particular study repeatedly, using the same data, subject and setting to verify if the finding or result will be consistent (Krefting, 1991). It is explained in terms of reliability, i.e. the researcher will give an in-depth

description of the method (s) used in data gathering, analysis and interpretation for the purpose of replication so as to get the same results. This was the case with this study as the researcher ensured consistency and gave a vivid description of the methodology adopted in the study.

- ❖ **Credibility -:** Credibility can be described as the amount of trust given to the way and manner in which findings and result are generated from inference (Rossow, 2003). The main goal in credibility is to show that the research was conducted and explained in a truthful and accurate manner. It is a substitute of internal validity (Strydom *et al.*, 2011). To increase or ascertain credibility, researcher can make use of triangulation, which according to Cohen *et al.* (2007), involves the use of more than two data collection methods in a particular study. To increase the credibility of this study, the researcher used triangulation method involving literature review, content analysis of daily dispatch newspaper and focus group discussion) to ascertain the consistency of the data presented by both methods.
- ❖ **Transferability-:** Transferability means the degree in which the results or findings of a particular study can be transferred to a similar study. Here, the researcher needs to provide enough or adequate description of the situation so as to aid the understanding of readers and give them good knowledge of the background variables used in the study (Mertens, 2005). In this study, the researcher ensured that the findings were well elucidated for proper understanding and transferability. However, the reader is saddled with the responsibility or in good position to generalize the study to his / her own personal situation. In summary, transferability allows readers to highlight the facts of a previously conducted study, compare the facts with a new study and check for similarities between the different studies. In cases where the similarities are many the reader can easily assume that they may have the same outcome. This simply means “transferability” that is, the result of a particular study is moved to another situation.
- ❖ **Applicability-:** Applicability means the level in which the findings of a particular study can be applied to another situation, framework or another group (Krefting, 1991). It also denotes that the findings or results of a particular study can be generalized to a larger population. Applicability is established through the

procedure of transferability (Krefting, 1991). In this study, the researcher ensured the applicability of the findings to two theoretical frameworks: agenda setting theory and framing theory.

### **3.9. Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher outlined the scope of the research which intended to evaluate the newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in Eastern Cape Universities by Daily Dispatch. This chapter described and justified the choice of the research methodology and design for this study. This chapter discussed the study population, sampling technique as well as data collection and data analysis procedures employed for this study. Quantitative content analysis and focus group discussion were emphasized as the research strategies used for this study. The researcher therefore gave an explanation and justification for selecting these methods and how they helped in achieving the aim of this study. The next chapter focuses on the data analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings from this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with data analysis and presentation of findings. Quantitative data were collected using Daily Dispatch Newspapers (DDN) content sourced from University of Fort Hare Library in Alice while qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions among selected students of University of Fort Hare who were exposed to different news frames by the researcher. The quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively using content analysis and the results expressed in frequency table, simple percentages, pie charts and bar charts while qualitative data collected through focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis.

#### **4.2. Quantitative content analysis**

This section analyses quantitative data from DDN. It presents findings on the extent of coverage and the degree of objectivity in the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest by DDN. Also, the findings on the frame of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories by DDN are presented in this section.

##### **4.2.1. Frequency and category of #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN**

Figure 4.1 below showed the category of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by the DDN. Out of 31 #FeeMustFall stories reported by the Daily Dispatch between 1st October, 2015 and 31st December, 2016, 90% (28) were news stories while only 10% (3) were opinion.



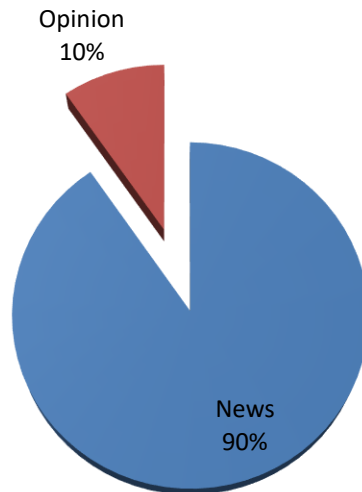


Figure 4.1. Pie chart showing the categories of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by DDN.

#### 4.2.2. Position of the #FeeMustFall stories in the DDN

Figure 4.2 below showed the position of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN. Out of 31 #FeeMustFall stories reported by the Daily Dispatch during the period of the protest, 93.5% (29) were reported on the front page (Pages 1-7) while the remaining 6.5% (2) were reported in the middle page (Pages 8 – 13) and the back page (Pages 14-20) respectively.

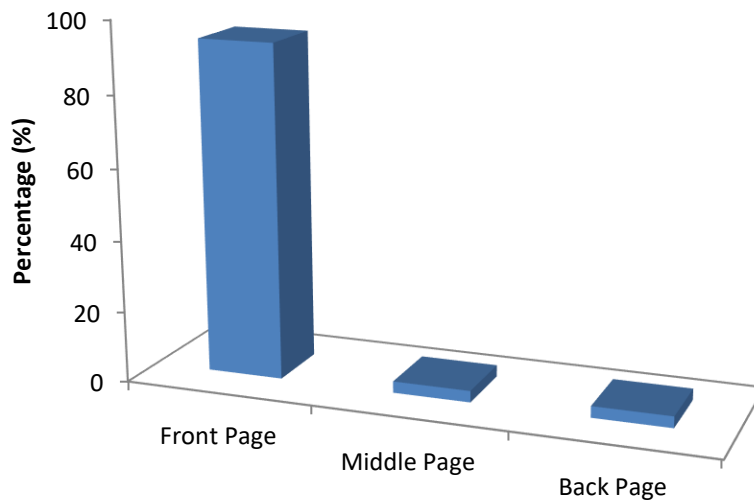


Figure 4.2. Position of #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.

#### 4.2.3. Space covered by #FeeMustFall stories in the DDN

The space covered by the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN was measured by the number of paragraphs of the stories. The number of paragraphs, ranged from 5 to 36 and the frequency are presented in Table 4.1 below. The average space covered by the stories as determined in Table 4.2. were approximately 19 paragraphs.

Table 4.1. Frequency table of paragraphs of #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.

Paragraphs interval	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
5 – 10	2	6.45
11-15	10	32.3
16 – 20	8	25.8
21 – 25	5	16.13
26 – 29	4	12.9
30 - 36	2	6.45

Table 4.2. Average space covered by #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in the DDN.

Paragraphs interval	Class mark (x)	Frequency (f)	Cumulative frequency	Fx
5 – 10	7.5	2	2	15
11-15	13	10	12	130
16 – 20	18	8	20	144
21 – 25	23	5	25	115
26 – 29	27.5	4	29	110
30 - 36	33	2	31	66

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum fx}{n} = \frac{580}{31} \approx 19 \text{ Paragraphs.}$$

Where  $\sum$  is summation,  $fx$  is product of frequency and class mark (midpoint of paragraphs interval) while  $n$  is the total number of #FeeMustFall stories.

#### 4.2.4. Tone of the #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN

Figure 4.3 below showed the tone of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by the DDN. Out of 31 stories reported by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper, 61% (19) were neutral (All parties: universities, students and government were mentioned in the report and were accorded equal responsibility or the writer was not blaming any of the parties), 29% (9) were negative (The writer reported only the wrong doings and errors of the students, government and university management) while only 10% (3) were positive (There was no mention of wrong doing by any party or the report favoured one party against the other).

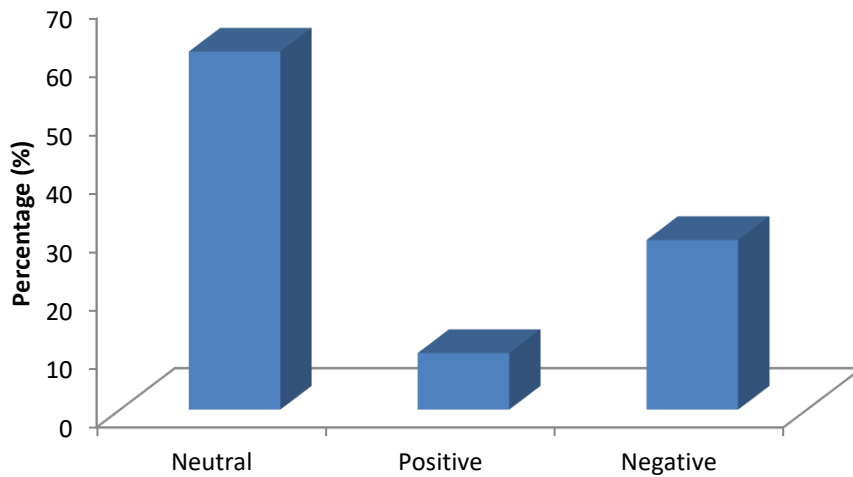


Figure 4.3. Tone of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by the DDN.

#### 4.2.5. Framing analysis of the #FeeMustFall stories covered by the DDN

Figure 4.4 below showed the result of framing analysis of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by DDN. The stories were analyzed and categorized into five (5) different frames by using deductive approach as described by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in which a series of 20 questions to which the coder had to answer "yes" or "no" was developed. Example of such questions were: "Does the story reflect disagreement between parties, individuals, groups or countries?" (Conflict frame), "Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?" (Attribution of responsibility frame), "Does the story provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?" (Human interest frame), "Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?" (Economic consequences frame) and, "Does the story contain any moral message?" (Morality frame). Other questions under each frame are presented in the succeeding section.

Out of 31 stories analyzed, majority, 45.16% (14) were categorized as conflict frame (CF), 29% (9) as attribution of responsibility frame (ARF), 16% (5) as human interest frame (HIF), 6.45 % (2) as economic consequences frame (ECF) while only 3.23% (1) was under morality frame (MF). Details are presented below in Figure 4.4.

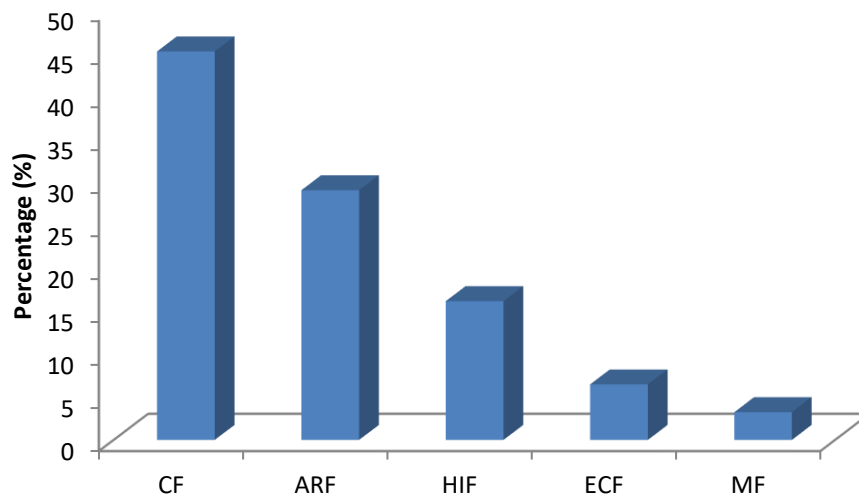


Figure 4.4. Framing analysis of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories covered by DDN. CF: Conflict Frame, ARF: Attribution of Responsibility Frame, HIF: Human Interest Frame, ECF: Economic Consequences Frame, MF: Morality Frame.

### Conflict frame

Conflict frame stories were determined by any of the following questions.

- i. Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?
- ii. Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?
- iii. Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
- iv. Does the story refer to winners and losers?

One of the examples of #FeeMustFall stories with conflict frame is the story titled: *"E Campuses on knife-edge of tension, running battles, more arrest"*.

The frame used in the first paragraph (Highlight 1) of this story *"Eastern Cape universities were balanced on a knife-edge yesterday as #FeesMustFall protests erupted and students clashed with riot police"* is a conflict frame as the introduction reflects disagreement between students and police (question i).

Another paragraph in the body of the story (Highlight 2) also reflects a conflict type of frame where the writer reported as follows:

*“National police spokeswoman Brigadier Sally de Beer said eight men and two women would appear in court today as part of a group of 100 students accused of causing extensive damage to property. She said students had broken windows, overturned cars and thrown rocks at police”.* This caption answered question (ii) as the police reproached the students.

More so, highlights (3) and (4) reflect conflict frame as these captions answer question i as they both emphasize disagreement between parties and groups.

*“Scene of chaos also played out at the Walter Sulu University campus in East London and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. At NMMU, a group of protesting students clashed with another group who wanted to return to classes”*

# E Cape campuses on knife-edge of tension

## Running battles, more arrests

By DAVID MACGREGOR, SILUSAPHO NYANDA and SINO MAJANGAZA

**E**ASTERN Cape universities were balanced on a knife-edge yesterday as #FeesMustFall protests erupted and students clashed with riot police.

On Monday night Rhodes University had resembled a war zone as police allegedly ordered students off the streets at gunpoint and fired stun grenades, teargas and pepper spray when they were slow.

Public order police moved in after students allegedly smashed windows and damaged university property.

Ten students were arrested on charges including public violence and malicious damage to property.

Grahamstown attorney Basil Williams, who is representing the arrested students, yesterday said they were considering bringing a class action lawsuit against police for their heavy-handed response on Monday.

2 National police spokeswoman Brigadier Sally de Beer said eight men and two women would appear in court today as part of a group of 100 students accused of causing extensive damage to property.

She said students had broken windows, overturned cars and thrown rocks at police.

De Beer denied police had been heavy-handed, claiming instead they had used "minimum force to restore order".

Rhodes University lecturer Corinne Knowles yesterday said students had been terrified by the ordeal.

Describing the police action as "surreal", Knowles said squads of public order police moved down the darkened streets firing rubber bullets and stun grenades at students.

Rhodes vice-chancellor Dr Sizwe Mabizela was condemned by students for releasing a campus-wide statement saying the academic programme would continue yesterday despite clashes with police the night before.

Tensions escalated further yesterday when police arrested a student, identified only as Brian, claiming he was in violation of bail conditions imposed after a previous arrest.

Prior to the arrest, some students went into the main administration building looking for Mabizela to get him to address hundreds of students and staff outside.

Water containers were grabbed off tables in the council

chamber and smashed and a painting was ripped off the wall when they could not find Mabizela.

He came out to address the students when police in riot gear moved in.

Attempts by Mabizela to prevent the arrest of Brian proved fruitless and he then joined the students in a march to the police station to find out what was happening.

3 Scenes of chaos also played out at the Walter Sisulu University campus in East London and the Nelson Man-

deia Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth.

4 At NMMU, a group of protesting students clashed with another group who wanted to return to classes.

In East London, a 25-year-old student was arrested on Monday night, De Beer said.

"He was arrested in Southernwood for malicious damage to property."

The student was released on bail yesterday.

Last night in Southernwood there were tense standoffs between armed police and students, with some burning piles of refuse in the streets.

The arrest came after WSU students rioted and blockaded streets in Southernwood.

Yesterday, WSU campuses in Buffalo City remained closed as students boycotted classes.

The shutdown comes after students rejected an 8% fee increase announced on Friday.

At the time of writing late yesterday the situation at the University of Fort Hare was quiet.



Daily Dispatch

Another story with conflict frame is titled: *“Universities of Chaos. Fort Hare shuts down varsity, while police fire rubber bullets at protesting Rhodes students”*.

*The captions highlighted 1 to 6 in the story as framed by the writer reflect conflict between protesting students and the police. Examples of such captions are given below:*

*“Police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades at the protesting students and arrested 11 of them after numerous skirmishes yesterday morning...”*

*“Small bands of protesters and police clashed on campus during the morning with some being pepper-sprayed during confrontations.”*

*“Police arrived and arrested five of the protesting students. Several students were pepper-sprayed as they shouted at police while they escorted the arrested students out of the building.”*



# Universities of chaos

Fort Hare shuts down varsity, while police fire rubber bullets at protesting Rhodes students

By SINO MAJANGAZA and ADRIENNE CARLISLE

**T**HE University of Fort Hare was shutdown yesterday and students ordered to vacate all residences by 5pm today after a call to return to classes was ignored by a group of "disruptive students".

In a letter addressed to students, Fort Hare management said it had noted that students had not returned to classes. "This is with the exception of a few in East London who were intimidated by the disruptive students."

The university said it was left with no alternative but to temporarily close.

1 The order came as chaos erupted in Grahamstown at Rhodes University, resulting in a number of students being arrested.

2 Police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades at the protesting students and arrested 11 of them after numerous skirmishes yesterday morning. Some of the bullets were shown to computer science Professor Philip Machanick.

Rhodes had on Tuesday night announced the academic programme would resume yesterday, but the Rhodes student representative council issued a statement that students should stay away.

While hundreds of students heeded the call to return to lectures, small groups of protesters went to lecture venues to urge them to continue the boycott. Several lectures had to be abandoned after being disrupted.

At the massive Barratt lecture complex a fire alarm was triggered, making lec-

turing impossible.

3 Small bands of protesters and police clashed on campus during the morning with some being pepper-sprayed during confrontations.

By 11am it became clear that attitudes on both sides were hardening.

Several protesters attempted to disrupt a lecture at the law department but students attending the lecture asked them to leave. Both law dean Professor Rosaan Kruger and Prof Laurence Juma weighed in, asking the protesters to please leave. Students at the lecture venue shouted at them to "get out, get out".

4 Police arrived and arrested five of the protesting students. Several students were pepper-sprayed as they shouted at police while they escorted the arrested students out of the building.

Police spokesman Captain Lu-vuyo Mjekula said the arrested students would be charged with contravening the interim high court interdict.

Earlier this year the university was granted an interdict prohibiting student protesters from, among other things, disrupting lectures and the administration of the university.

5 About 15 minutes after the confrontation in the law department, police opened fire on dozens of protesters who had crossed the Drosty lawns onto Somerset Street.

Another five students were arrested during the confrontation. Mjekula said they would face charges related to blocking a public road. A sixth student was arrested and faced charges of malicious damage to property after allegedly hurling a brick at a police vehicle, he said.

6 Witnesses said there had been an exchange of insults between police and students and, after the

brick had been thrown, police fired stun grenades.

7 Videos show students fleeing back onto Drosty lawns. Police opened fire on the students, who they claimed had again become confrontational.

A woman cowering under the wall on the university side was hauled over the wall by a policeman and shoved into a police van. A video showing the woman being dragged over the wall yesterday went viral on social media.

Concerned staff and students in the afternoon appealed to people to donate money for bail for those who had been arrested.

Mjekula said the arrested students were being processed and would likely appear in court this morning.

Some students sustained injuries during the scuffle and many were traumatised by the day's events. They received treatment and support at the scene.

Fort Hare vice-chancellor Mvuyo Tom had issued a similar call to that of Rhodes asking students to return yesterday.

"The university management urges all law-abiding students who wish to continue with their studies to report to their lecture hall by 8am on September 28," wrote Tom.

Although some East London Fort Hare students attempted to return, they were blocked from doing so.

Fort Hare issued a second letter yesterday afternoon informing students of the closure. "All students are expected to have vacated the residences by 5pm on Thursday."

They could return to residences on October 11.

At a meeting late yesterday afternoon UFH students vowed to not leave the residences.



## Attribution of responsibility frame

Stories with attribution of responsibility frame answered any of the following questions.

- i. Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
- ii. Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?
- iii. Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?
- iv. Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem?
- v. Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

One of the #FeeMustFall protest stories with attribution of responsibility frame is the story titled: *"No free ride for SA students. Still double current R60bn needed"*.

The researcher has highlighted 4 paragraphs (1 to 4) in the story with attribution of responsibility frame as they answer majority of the questions relating to attribution of responsibility.

For instance, the following are some of the captions from the story as framed by the writer: *"It also called on the state to find substantially more money to fund higher education. The state currently spends about R60-billion a year on higher education, but the commission says they need to find at least double this amount"*

This caption answers question (iii) as it seems to suggest solution to the issue of #FeeMustFall students' protests.

*"Government is committed to ensure affordable higher education for all and to support poor and working class students to access higher education and training."*

*"The government will carry a fee increase through a gap funding grant on behalf of all poor working class and missing middle families."*

The two captions above answer question (i) as they both suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem of #FeeMustFall students' protests.

*“The report slated the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for being ineffective at collecting debts from graduated students, and said it should hand this responsibility over.”* This caption suggests that the ineffectiveness of NSFAS may contribute to funding problems.

# No free ride for SA students

## Still, double current R60bn needed

By MATTHEW SAVIDES

• EVEN the poorest of university students will have to find a way to pay back the money for their tertiary education, or risk getting nailed by the taxman.

This is one of the key recommendations put forward by the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training.

The commission's interim report, dated November 2, was released by President Jacob Zuma yesterday, just moments before he was quizzed on the #FeesMustFall protests during a Q&A session in parliament.

The commission, established in June amid ongoing and often violent protest action, was tasked with exploring calls for free education and alternate sources of funding for tertiary education.

The final report is expected to be completed in June 2017.

Despite acknowledging that "too many deserving candidates" were excluded for financial reasons, the commission said students who received state funding should not expect a free ride.

"Because higher education and training produces substantial long-term benefits for both the state and a successful student, persons who enjoy fee-free higher education should be treated as loan recipients," the report said.

A reasonable obligation to repay in full or in part would arise when a certain level of income was earned.

"An important influence in favour of the obligation to repay was the perceived need to render the funding process self-sustaining as fully and as quickly as possible."

1 The report slated the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NS-FAS) for being ineffective at collecting debts from graduated students, and said it should hand this responsibility over.

However, the commission also found calls for free education should go beyond fees, factoring in transport, accommodation, learning materials and living expenses.

2 It also called on the state to find substantially more money to fund higher education.

The state currently spends about R60-billion a year on higher education, but the commission says they need to find at least double this amount.

During the question session, Zuma pledged his support for the principle that no student should be denied access to higher education and training but provided no clue on how this could be financed.

3 "Government is committed to ensure affordable higher education for all and to support poor and working class students to access higher education and training," he said.

"Government supports that university fees should be regulated and made available to all.

"No student should be denied access on the basis that their families are not able to afford fees. As government we want all children from poor families to study at universities and TVET colleges."

Professor C T Msimang (IFP) asked the president: "With reference to the registration of university students in 2017, first, has the government reached consensus with students on whether there must be no tuition fees or that there

shall be no increases in tuition fees?

"Second, what is the government's position and response to the demand that there must be no tuition fees, that is, fees must fall?"

Zuma replied that after wide consultation, including with elected student leaders, the decision was that for all students at universities and TVET colleges from families with an income of up to R600 000 there would be no fee increase.

"This includes the poor and the so-called missing middle, who are students from households who have an annual income of between R120 000 and R600 000.

"This follows the announcement of the Minister of Higher Education and Training [Blade Nzimande] on the August 19 that the university fee increase for the 2017 academic year should be capped at 8%.

"No institution has announced a fee increment of more than 8%.

4 "The government will carry a fee increase through a gap funding grant on behalf of all poor working class and missing middle families," he said.



Daily Dispatch

## Human-interest frame

Human interest news stories were determined by any of the following questions.

- i. Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
- ii. Does the story employ verbs that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?
- iii. Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
- iv. Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
- v. Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion?

The story titled: *“Rhodes students out on warning”* is a representative of #FeeMustFall stories with human interest frame. Highlighted in the news story are the following captions written using human interest frame.

*“One woman wiped away tears when she spotted her father as made her way up from the holding cells into the dock and was comforted by her fellow accused. She hugged her father and cried after her release”* This caption answers questions (i) and (ii) as the writer introduced a human face on the issue. Also, the writer employed verbs such as ‘wiped away tears’ and ‘cried’ that may generate feelings of sympathy and compassion.

The following caption: *“The statement said staff and students had been ‘traumatized’ by the protests and that counselling was available free of anyone was feeling uneasy”* also reflects human interest frame as the writer emphasized ‘traumatized’ which indicates how staff and students were affected by the #FeeMustFall students’ protest. This shows that it answers question (iii). More so, the use of the word: ‘traumatized’ may generate feelings of sympathy and compassion as indicated by question (ii).



# Rhodes students out on warning

By DAVID MACGREGOR  
Senior Reporter

FIVE Rhodes University students arrested on Monday were released on warning yesterday after a brief appearance in the Grahamstown Magistrate's Court.

They face public violence, intimidation and other charges.

Friends, family and other #Fees-Must-Fall protesters packed the court in support of Asanda Majola, Aneliswe Gwangxu, Philasande Joyi, Vhonani Petla and Makwena Manaka.

The five – two men and three women – were arrested by riot police after toilets were vandalised and lectures disrupted on campus during a tense standoff with those wanting lectures to continue.

1 One woman wiped away tears when she spotted her father as she made her way up from the holding

cells into the dock and was comforted by her fellow accused.

2 She hugged her father and cried after her release.

Protests came to a head on Monday as public order police descended on campus after talks to resolve the crisis and keep the academic programme going stalled amid student demands to shut down for the week.

After hours of "monitoring" the students, warning them to disperse and not to destroy property or intimidate students and staff wanting to attend lectures, they moved in and arrested the five.

According to a university campus statement, fire alarms were set off and staff were intimidated and harassed.

Toilets were flooded, trash was strewn around the campus and there were reports of insecticide

being sprayed into lecture rooms.

3 The statement said staff and students had been "traumatised" by the protests and that counselling was available free of anyone was feeling "uneasy".

The arrests seemingly brought the protest to an end and campus was quiet yesterday.

The five students were visibly relieved yesterday when magistrate Ntsoki Moni said they would be released on warning after spending a night in prison.

No conditions were attached to their release and they were ordered to appear again on November 30.

State prosecutor Navadia Adriaan had recommended the accused be released on warning and Moni agreed.

During the bail application it emerged that none of the accused had any previous convictions. — davidm@dispatch.co.za



**TRAUMATIC ORDEAL:** One of the arrested students is comforted by her father and attorney Ntobeko Yokwana

Picture: DAVID MACGREGOR



## **Economic consequences frame**

#FeeMustFall stories with economic consequences frame were determined by any of the following questions.

- i. Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?
- ii. Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?
- iii. Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?

The captions below in a #FeeMustFall story titled: *“MPs say no to free for all”* reflect an economic consequences frame as the writer made reference to the economic consequences of providing free higher education.

*“They said it was impractical, too costly and could eat up at least a quarter of the country’s GDP if implemented”*

*“For 100% coverage of undergraduate head count enrolments, the state would need more than R250-billion additional funds to meet the funding needs in the medium-term, or over the next three years...”*

# MPs say no to 'free for all'

By BABALO NDENZE

THE state is not a "free for all", say MPs who argued against the idea of free higher education yesterday.

1 They said it was impractical, too costly and could eat up at least a quarter of the country's GDP if implemented.

MPs yesterday discussed research findings by the parliamentary budget office, which presented to the standing committee on appropriations a fiscal analysis of the cost of higher education in SA and various funding models.

The debate came as the fees commission, now at work in Pretoria, took submissions from various stakeholders.

The committee heard there was a 12% recovery rate of the student loans offered by NSFAS.

2 For 100% coverage of undergraduate head count enrolments, the state would need more than R250-billion additional funds to meet the funding needs in the medium-term, or over the next three years, according to the study.

The research also found that only 30% of first-year students graduated within three years, while 56% graduated within five years.

Ahmed Shaik Emam of the National Freedom Party said the poor graduation rate was part of the problem.

"There is this perception that the state is a cash cow ... you just get and get."

ANC MP Ndabakayise Gcwabaza said he wanted to "plead" with people not to base their argument for free education on fraud and corruption.

"Fraud and corruption is there - we must deal with it and clean it up.

"But the immediate challenge is that fees must fall and it means we must find money that is in the government.

"I don't agree with a 100% free for all," said Gcwabaza.

Doreen Senokoanyane (ANC) said the most important focus should be on transformation and addressing inequality.

"On the question of free education, I would say no. It wouldn't be fair."



Daily Dispatch



## **Morality frame**

Answers to any of the following questions in the affirmative reflect a morality news frame.

- i. Does the story contain any moral message?
- ii. Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?
- iii. Does the story contain the intervention of religious leaders?

The story titled: *“Civic groups still back fees must fall campaign”* is the only #FeeMustFall story with morality frame which is reflected in the following captions from the story:

*“Talks to try and bring down tensions between protesters and management facilitated by local clergy were held this week but did not reach any resolution”.*

*“He said attempts to open negotiations through the local Anglican Diocese needed to be given a fair chance...”*

*The captions above answer question (iii).*

# Civic groups still back fees must fall campaign

By DAVID MACGREGOR  
Senior Reporter

RHODES University may have been quiet since exams started on Friday, but the #FeesMustFall campaign is far from over after several local community organisations threw their weight behind protesting students.

- 1 Talks to try and bring down tensions between protesters and management facilitated by local clergy were held this week but did not reach any resolution.

Police were accused of using excessive force last week during clashes with students that included allegations of innocent bystanders being shot at and a management claim they were ambushed at a meeting on Monday with students, community organisations and clergy.

Unemployed People's Movement (UPM) organiser Ayanda Kota yesterday told the Daily Dispatch that a community plan to march to the Grahamstown police station and Rhodes University today with students had been called off in an attempt to try and resolve the campus crisis.

- 2 He said attempts to open negotiations through the local Anglican Diocese needed to be given a fair chance and that marching today would be "contrary to the

spirit of negotiation"

After last week's violent clashes with police, private security guards armed with high powered paint ball guns were called in to protect buildings after arsonists set fire to a campus tennis court clubhouse.

University spokeswoman Catherine Deiner yesterday said all exams scheduled to be written so far had been completed without any disruptions.

She said about 300 students had opted to write examinations in January next year.

Late last week, the UPM and five other locally based "progressive organisations" released a statement saying they supported #FeesMustFall demands.

Besides demanding free, quality education for all they also insisted the tertiary education system be decolonised.

Colonial symbolism including statues and names needed to be removed.

They also insisted final examinations be suspended until January to create an environment conducive for effective learning.

"We want the university to know that the people of Grahamstown fully support the students. We want the university to know their struggle is ours."

davidm@dispatch.co.za



Daily Dispatch

### 4.3. Qualitative data analysis

This section analyses qualitative data and presents findings on the effect of framing of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest stories by Daily Dispatch Newspaper on readers' perceptions.

#### 4.3.1. Focus group discussion

The researcher used two different focus groups consisting of 6 participants in a group. Members of the focus group were selected students of the University of Fort Hare who read Daily Dispatch Newspaper regularly and witnessed the protest. The focus group discussions were conducted in a Common Room at Iona 1, a student residence in the University of Fort Hare, Alice campus. Each focus group was exposed to 3 different #FeeMustFall stories by Daily Dispatch Newspaper. The stories represented the 3 prominent frames used in the reportage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests by the Daily Dispatch (attribution of responsibility frame, conflict frame and human-interest frame) as presented in figure 4.4. Members of each group were asked to read each story succinctly and write out their thoughts and feelings about #FeeMustFall students' protests. Thereafter, the researcher further engaged each focus group in a discussion which was centered on their perceptions on the #FeeMustFall stories they had read. The discussion sections were recorded in order for the researcher to recall all the discussions that transpired in the groups for adequate analysis. This study investigated the effect of the specific news frames used in the presentation of #FeeMustFall students' protest stories on readers' perceptions.

##### 4.3.1.1. News frame

- i. **Attribution of responsibility frame:** In the responsibility story, the government was blamed for not providing affordable higher education system for all and also the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was condemn for their inefficiency in retrieving the debts from graduated students. As reported by the correspondence 'Matthew Savides' he wrote *"The Commission for Inquiry into Higher Education and Training calls that free education should go beyond fees, factoring in transport, accommodation, learning materials and living expenses. It*

*also called on the state to find substantially more money to fund higher education”.*

In another part of the story the President was quoted to have mentioned that *“Government is committed to ensure affordable higher education for all and support poor and working-class student to access higher education and training”.*

- ii. **Conflict frame:** In the conflict frame story, two players (group and individuals) were in battle against one another. In this case, the group included the #FeeMustFall student protesters, University management and the police officers who were invited to calm the situation unfortunately ended up fueling the protests. The reflection of conflict frame was noticed from the first paragraph of the story which stated thus, *“Eastern cape universities were balanced on a knife edge yesterday as #FeeMustFall protests erupted and students clashed with riot police”.* The protests escalated into students damaging properties, overturning cars and throwing stones at police officers while the police also responded by firing stun grenades, teargas and pepper spray at the students. The protests later resulted into police arrest of ten protesting students.
- iii. **Human-interest frame:** Human interest story on the other hand explained the situation where a person was affected by an incident or a situation where someone suffers the damages as a result of an event. The #FeeMustFall story mentioned a victim who was unjustly arrested along side with four other protesting students. The reporter narrated his experience thus *“one woman wipes away tears when she spotted her father as she made her way up from the holding cells into the dock and was comforted by her fellow accused. She hugged her father and cried after her release”.*

#### **4.3.1.2. Measures**

In other to measure the responses of the focus group participants, the researcher instructed the participants to list their thoughts and feelings that came to mind while reading the #FeeMustFall stories. Thereafter a discussion section was conducted and tape recorded in other to aid the researcher understanding of the thoughts listed. To measure the extent to which the frames have influenced the participants' perceptions as

reflected by the thought listing responses and discussion, a thematic analysis was employed.

#### **4.3.1.3. Thematic analysis of participants' perceptions**

The purpose of thematic analysis is to search for themes or pattern across the data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of phenomena associated to various research questions. The patterns across the focus group data were identified through the following process.

**Familiarization with the data:** - In order to be more familiar and understand the data better, the researcher carried out the focus group discussion by herself. Thereafter, researcher transcribed the focus group discussion, and then read through the data (participants' discussion) thoroughly so as to get full understanding of the data.

**Coding data:** - Coding can either be done by hand or through the assistance of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), QDA Miner Lite or Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT). For the purpose of this study, the researcher coded the data by hand. It was endeavoured that coding captured the main ideas of the data. The coding was done using a single word and phrases not sentence.

**Searching for themes:** - At this stage, the researcher began to search for themes and sub themes among the codes. Patterns/ themes are gotten as a result of its frequent use within the text or as a result of its importance to the research questions.

**Reviewing themes:** - The researcher cross-checked the themes to ensure that all of the data formed a coherent pattern. At this stage, a mind map could be used to help visualize the relationship between the themes.

**Defining and naming theme:** -At this stage, the researcher defined each theme according to the meaning or representation in the data set (#FeeMustFall news stories) as well as the participant's interpretation. The theme's names are concise, punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is all about.

**Final report:** - The final report gives the summary of the data. Themes were discussed with tangible examples from the data set (#FeeMustFall news stories).

The succeeding section discusses the themes from the thoughts of participants of the two focus groups in this study. The themes are discussed under the news frames to which the participants were exposed (attribution of responsibility, conflict and human-interest news frames).

#### **4.3.1.3.1. Attribution of responsibility news frame**

##### **❖ Government insincerity**

The first story exposed to the participants was titled *“No free ride for SA students still, double current R60bn needed”*. Most of the participants blamed the government on their take in the issue of the #FeeMustFall protest stating that the government promised all access to higher education but failed to provide the means. One of the participants stated that *“the government promise to reduce fee for poor and working-class students is unjust”*. Another participant also noted that *“the president was shying away from coming clean when he promised affordable higher education for all and support for the poor and could not provide clue on how this would be financed”*.

##### **❖ Commission of inquiry**

The commission of inquiry into higher education and training was established in June, 2016 during the student protest on #FeeMustFall. The participants dwelt mostly on the recommendations of the commission as reported in the story they read. Some of the participants mentioned inadequate funding of the higher education system in South Africa as a major challenge. Pointing out that the government needs to double the amount they spend on higher education which is R60bn currently. A participant said *“R60bn is used for loan at the moment which they said is not even enough that they need double of the money, that shows that the money will continue to increase”*. Another participant stated that *“Government is having a kind of fear about continuity because double of the amount that is currently being used will be required in the future to continue the process”*.

Another point made by the commission was that free education should be all encompassing to include transport, learning materials, accommodation and living expenses.

#### ❖ **Government to provide free education**

Some of the participants were of the opinion that government should provide free education for them rather than yearly increasing fee. A participant noted that *“the government not giving free education is a violation of the promise they made to South Africans”*. Explaining that free education is their basic right that is why the students are clamoring. Another participant said *“the fee increase affects the poor students more as it can put an end to their dreams of higher education”*. He further stated that *“if the government cannot give free education they can at least make it affordable to all”*. A participant mentioned that *“if government does not provide a permanent solution, the #FeeMustFall protest will be a yearly occurrence”*.

#### ❖ **NSFAS not effective**

The participants blamed the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for their inability to coordinate the giving of fund to students. As stated by one of the participants, *“NSFAS does not do proper investigation before giving out fund and ended up not giving brilliant and qualified students”*. Another participant was of the opinion that *“the NSFAS is used by the government to extort money; he said rather than giving free education, the government provided funds which will be paid back by students after graduation”*. One of the participants lamented that *“students are confused in deciding which debt to pay first between NSFAS and the university”*. She said *“as the tuition increase every year and NSFAS fund has not been increased, they (students) end up owing NSFAS and the university as the same time”*. She stated further and I quote *“I feel that NSFAS should first look at the way in which students apply for the fund to be more effective. Firstly, deserving students don’t get NSFAS and secondly, even if you get NSFAS, sometimes the amount they give you is not enough to cover the whole debt”*.

#### ❖ **Unemployment**

According to the story provided, the commission of inquiry into higher education and training observed that the NSFAS has not be effective in collecting debt from graduated students and recommended that they should hand the responsibility over. But most of the

participant said rather than running after graduated students to pay their debt, the government should provide employment opportunities for the students so that the refund would be easy for them. One of the participants said *“I feel there should be a way of empowering the students after they leave school so that they can be able to pay back the money”*. He stated further that *“going by the unemployment rate in South Africa at the moment, most of the graduates are not employed, how are they going to pay back the money they got as loan? He later suggested by saying “unemployment should be solved”*. Another participant also stated *“I think that the Government should provide jobs because it is difficult for students to pay back the money, they finish their degrees and they do not get jobs, how are they supposed to pay the money?”*.

#### **4.3.1.3.2. Conflict news frame**

##### **❖ Violence eruption**

From the second story titled “E Cape campuses on knife-edge of tension running battles, more arrests”. The participants were able to easily identify conflict from the beginning of the story to the end. Most of the participants were not in agreement with violence action of protesting students, stating that student can rather make their intention known to the authorities in a peaceful protest without intimidation as was reported by this story. Explaining further, violence protest can endanger the life of students as well as staff and at the same time it can cause delay in academic activities. Some participants even recommended punishment for violent students. On the contrary, some participants believed that violent protest is the only language the government and the university management understand. Consequently, the students used violence to nail home their points. A participant stated that *“All Universities in Eastern Cape are in support of #FeeMustFall and the method they used in driving home their point was outright violence”*. Another participant suggested that *“such protest as #FeeMustFall should be coordinated by the students’ leadership in order to maintain orderliness and prevent the protest from being hijacked by hooligans”*.

##### **❖ Police intervention**

The poor handling of the protest by the police officers was seriously condemned by the participants. Some pointed out that the intervention of the police eventually escalated the protest. According to the story the reporter wrote that “the police allegedly ordered the students off the streets at gun point and fired stun grenades, teargas and pepper spray



when they were slow". Participants also said the police were very aggressive to students, and as well cruel, to have used force and dangerous objects which can harm or even endanger lives on students. Although the national police's spokesperson, Brigadier Sally de Beer denied police using heavy hand, instead claimed they had used minimum force to restore order. Majority of the participant condemned police action claiming that the police were shooting rather than calming the situation. A participant stated that *"the protest was hot at Rhodes University as a result of the way the crisis was managed on the part of the police who were supposed to maintain law and order in the country"*. The participant stated further that *"students were troubled because of the way the police handled the protest"*. Likewise, another participant stated *"some individuals condemned the intervention of the security agency because the way they handled the issue was as if it increased the tension in the community"*. One of the participants suggested that *"the police should protect the public and ensure there is safety during the process"*. He suggested further that *"police should monitor the process, not influence it"*.

#### ❖ Students arrest

According to the police's spokesperson, ten students arrested out of 100 students that were accused to have damaged properties would appear in court. She added that students had broken windows, overturned cars and thrown rocks at police officers. It was also reported that the protesting students from Rhodes University have been reported to be looking for their vice chancellor to address them which on their failure turned violent. Protesting students were also reported to be in conflict with the police. All the above listed resulted in police arresting the students, but some of the focus group participants condemned police action. In their opinion, students arrest did not solve the problem but rather escalated it. A participant stated that *"arrest of students actually escalated the protests"*. On the other hand, another participant thought that *"protests put the lives of students in danger and the risk of them getting criminal records as they are arrested for several acts"*.

#### ❖ Clashes among students

The participants described the clash between the students as undesirable. According to the story, the reporter wrote that *"At NMMU, a group of protesting students clashed with another group who wanted to return to classes"*. A participant said *"students needed to agree*

*with one voice during protest as no student should be in class while others are protesting” he referred to this as division of opinion. Likewise, another participant stated that “disparity among students would frustrate the effort of protesters and would never allow the protest to achieve its aim”. More so, one of the participants was of the opinion that “somebody is using a divide and rule means to cause trouble among the students”.*

#### ❖ **Vandalization of property**

The story recorded several instances where protesting students have destroyed properties. According to the story ‘public ordered police move in after students allegedly smashed windows and damaged university property’ another instance was when police’s spokesperson said ‘students had broken windows, overturned cars and thrown rocks at police’. Participants were of the opinion that public display of dissatisfaction by students should be monitored so as to prevent vandalization of property, looting and disruption of peace in the host communities. One of the participants stated that *“protests put the lives of students in danger as the general thing is to damage properties and intimidate other students”*. Another participant stated *“it was never peace at the University of Fort Hare, the protest was actually very violent here at the University of Fort Hare: there were lots of lootings, destruction and buildings were burnt down”*. A participant, who was against the act of vandalism by protesting students, stated that *“the government does not suffer the loss, it is the students that suffer the loss, and therefore, they do not have any reason to vandalize or destroy government properties”*. Moreover, a participant thought that *“the arrested students should be prosecuted and convicted for vandalism and disturb of public peace but not for protesting for their rights”*.

#### **4.3.1.3.3. Human-interest news frame**

##### ❖ **Emotional breakdown**

The third story is titled “Rhodes students out on warning”. It narrated the ordeal of five students arrested and charged to court for public violence, intimidation and others. According to the story, the reporter wrote that *“one woman wiped away tears when she spotted her father as she made her way up from the holding cell into the dock and was comforted by her fellow accused”*. The participants said the emotional break down of the female student on sighting her father in the court room was touching. A participant said *“the lady kept crying even after her release on warning might suggest she had never been involved in any*

*police case or violent occurrence before the #FeeMustFall protest and as a result felt embarrassed". This was corroborated by another participant who said "the tears there showed her innocence" and "that she does not know what she was arrested for"*

#### ❖ **Harassment of staff and students**

The story read that *"according to the university campus statement, fire alarms were set off and staff were intimidated and harassed"*. It was also reported that both students and staff were traumatized by the protest that occurred between students who wanted to resume classes and those who did not. One of the participants stated that *"If you are protesting you should not hinder those who want to learn"*. The participants condemned that the violence action of the protesting students who refused to attend classes and sympathized with the diligent students who were fought because they wanted classes to resume. Participants also condemned the protesting students' act of spraying insecticide into the lecture rooms where serious students are receiving lecture, saying it is a sign of disrespect to the lecturers as well. One of the participants who condemned the act of intimidation displayed by the protesters stated that *"You don't intimidate people because you have a goal or a mission to achieve, so if you don't want to be intimidated, you should not intimidate others by driving them away"*.

Free counselling section was made available for any one feeling uneasy.

#### ❖ **Student's imprisonment**

From the story "Rhodes students out on warning", it was stated that the five students arrested (two men and three female) spent a night in the prison before going to court where the magistrate released them on warning. The court room was said to be full of friends and families of the accused who were there to support them. The focus group participants noted that releasing students who were accused of public violence, intimidation and other charges freely is not right unless they were not guilty or they were wrongly accused as suspected by a participant who said that *"the cry of one of the female students showed her innocence"*. Another participant stated that *"the police just grabbed the five students as scape goats may be to serve a deterrent to others"*. The participant stated further that *"this is a sign of the ineffective service of the police because they should be able to monitor the protest and*

know those who wanted to perpetrate evil rather than arresting innocent students". On the other hand, a participant noted that *"the arrest of students actually brought the whole process to a halt"*.

#### ❖ Student release on warning

Also from the story under review ("Rhodes students out on warning"), the five students arrested were relieved when the magistrate Ntsoki Moni said they would be released on warning after spending a night in the prison. Although, some participants believed that the students were released without any charges because they were innocent other participants were of the opinion that the arrested students should not have been release freely without any punishment as it might encourage the violent student to go on protesting. One of the participants opined that *"If there were evidences against them that they were violent and intimidating to faculty members and staff, they should not have been set free; they should have been made to face the wrath of the law"*. Another participant observed that *"out of the five students arrested, three were female which shows that the female gender is also sensitive about the issue of educating themselves"*.

## 4.4. Summary of findings

### 4.4.1. Research question 1

**To what extent has the Daily Dispatch Newspaper covered the 2016 #FeeMustFall student's protest?**

The extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall student's protest stories by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper was measured by the frequency, position and space covered by the stories. The findings are presented in figure 4.1, figure 4.2, table 4.1 and table 4.2. Figure 4.1 revealed that only 31 stories were reported by Daily Dispatch Newspaper within the period of the #FeeMustFall student's protest which occurred between October 2015 to December 2016. The finding also indicated that 90% (28) were news stories while 10% (3) were opinions. This therefore suggests that the stories on #FeeMustFall student's protests were under reported by the Daily Dispatch. Figure 4.2 showed the positions the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories occupied in the Daily Dispatch Newspaper. It revealed that 93.5% (29) of the stories were reported on `the front pages (1-7 pages) of the newspaper while 6.5% (2) were reported on the middle pages (8-13 pages) and back

pages (14-20 pages) respectively. Even though the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories seemed to be under reported, this finding reveals that the stories were given prominence by Daily Dispatch Newspaper as most of the stories were reported on the front pages.

To further determine the extent of coverage of the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories by the Daily Dispatch, the space covered by stories in the newspapers (Table 4.1) was measured by the number of paragraphs dedicated to each story. The number of paragraphs ranged between 5-36 paragraphs. The finding revealed that majority of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories occupied between 11 - 15 paragraphs with a frequency of 10 (32.3%) followed by 16 - 20 paragraphs with a frequency of 8 (25.8%) while 21-25 paragraphs had a frequency of 5 (16.13%). Paragraphs 26- 29 occurred 4 times (12.9%) as 5-10 paragraphs and paragraphs above 30 occurred 2 times (6.45%) each. The average space covered by the stories was approximately 19 paragraphs (Table 4.2).

#### **4.4.2. Research question 2**

##### **What is the degree of objectivity of Daily Dispatch Newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest?**

The degree of objectivity of the #FeeMustFall student's protest was measured by the tone i.e. (positive, negative and neutral) of the stories reported by Daily Dispatch Newspaper. The term positive, negative and neutral is explained for the purpose of this study as thus, a story is positive when there is no mention of wrong doing by any party; students, government and university management or when a report favours one party against the other. It is however, negative, when the reporter reports only the wrong doings and errors of the students, government and university management while neutral indicates when all parties are mentioned in the report and are accorded equal responsibility or the writer is not blaming anyone. Only the neutral stories represent objectivity while the positive and negative stories are subjective. The findings as presented in figure 4.3 revealed that out of 31 stories reported by the Daily Dispatch, 61% (19) were neutral, 29% (9) were negative while only 10% (3) were positive. These findings indicate that 61% of the

#FeeMustFall student's protest stories reported by the Daily Disptach newspaper were objective while 39% were subjective. These findings further suggest that the degree of objectivity of Daily Dispatch Newspaper coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall student's protest is high as it is far above the average. Hence, Daily Dispatch Newspaper can be said to be objective in its coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall student's protest.

#### **4.4.3. Research question 3**

##### **How does the framing of 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest through news presentation influence readers' perception?**

To answer research question 3, the researcher first analyzed the frame of the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories as presented by Daily Dispatch and categorized the stories in different five frames including conflict frame, attribution of responsibility frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame and morality frame. Thereafter, a representative story of each of the prominent frames was read by each of the focus groups and their perceptions on the stories read were analyzed thematically. As presented in figure 4.4, the framing analysis of the stories indicated conflict, attribution of responsibility and human-interest frames as the prominent frames used by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper in their coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall student's protest stories. Among these frames, conflict frame was the most prominent with approximately 45% (14) of the entire stories (31) followed by attribution of responsibility frame and human-interest frame with 29% (9) and 16% (5) respectively. The findings from the thematic analysis of focus group discussions on the three (3) news stories on #FeeMustFall student's protests suggest that the different news frames affected the participants' perceptions as the specific news frames produced similar audience frames. In other words, attribution of responsibility news frame resulted in perceptions that attributed responsibilities to government on various free education related issues; conflict news frame generated conflict-related perceptions in the readers while the human-interest news frame generated perceptions that are emotional and provided human face.

#### **4.5. Summary**

This chapter presented the result and analysis of the quantitative data collected through the Daily Dispatch Newspaper on the coverage of the #FeeMustFall students' protests in 2016 as well as the qualitative data from the focus group discussion held among selected students of the University of Fort Hare in Alice campus. The quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively and the results presented using pie chart, bar charts and frequency tables while the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis of two focus group discussions. More so, the chapter also gave a vivid interpretation of the findings according to each research questions.

The findings from the quantitative content analysis suggest that the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories seemed to be under reported by Daily Dispatch Newspaper. However, the stories were given prominence by the press as most of the stories were reported on the front pages. As well, the degree of objectivity of the press as regards the reportage of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories was above the average. Furthermore, findings from the thematic analysis of focus group discussion suggest that the type of news frame used for the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories influence the thoughts and perceptions of readers as the news frame resulted in similar audience frames. The next and last chapter will focus on the discussion of these findings, drawing conclusions from the study and giving some recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

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

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study focused on the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper which involved content analysis of the newspaper and focus group discussions to evaluate the effect of framing on readers' perceptions. The preceding chapter looked at data analysis and presentation of findings using quantitative and qualitative methods. It as well gave a succinct interpretation of the findings of the study. This chapter gives a vivid discussion of the findings from the preceding chapter based on the objectives of the study. It as well focuses on drawing conclusions and making some recommendations. Other issues discussed in this chapter are limitations of the study and suggestions for further researches.

#### **5.2. Discussion of findings**

In this study, the researcher assessed the extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper, the degree of objectivity of Daily Dispatch Newspaper in the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall protest and how the framing of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protest news stories influences readers' perception. The findings from this study are discussed in the succeeding section.

##### **5.2.1. Extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests**

The frequency of reportage of a story is one of the four crucial elements that can lead to discussion or opinion in the agenda setting theory (Folarin, 1998: 6). Other elements include the level of prominence given to the news story, degree of conflict generated by the news story and the cumulative press/media effect on the news story (Folarin, 1998: 6). To measure the extent of coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests by the Daily Dispatch, the researcher analyzed the magnitude of the press coverage of the protests by determining the prominence through the frequency of different types of stories (news story, features, editorial, opinion and cartoon), position (front page, middle page and back page) and space covered (paragraphs). The findings from this study suggest



that the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories seemed to be under reported by Daily Dispatch Newspaper as only 31 stories were reported by the newspaper within the period under study (October 2015 – December 2016). This indicates that the frequency of reportage of the #FeeMustFall student's protest stories by the press in this study might not be enough to set the agenda of what to think about by the society or increase the public's awareness on #FeeMustFall students' protest as increased public's awareness have been attributed to the concept of the agenda setting function of the press (Severin and Tankard, 2001:219). For instance, the high frequency of stories of illegal use of drug on the newspapers in the United States between 1986 and 1989 increased public's awareness on the issue of drugs which the people perceived as the nation's most important problem at that time.

This was corroborated by Daramola (2003) who noted that *"there is a relationship between frequency of news coverage and the public perception of such news as important"*.

Considering the implications of the #FeeMustFall students' protests on South African economy and educational system, the press is expected to have dwelt more on the issue by increasing the frequency of reportage per week, using different types of stories such as cartoon, features, opinions, editorial and news as against the findings of this study where the majority of the stories 28 (90%) were news while the remaining 3 (10%) were opinions. However, the researcher also found out that the stories were given prominence by the Daily Dispatch as most of the stories 29 (93.5%) were reported on the front pages while only 2 (6.5%) stories were reported on the middle and back pages. Likewise, with the average of 19 paragraphs dedicated to #FeeMustFall students' protest stories by the Daily Disptach Newspaper, it further showed the importance attached to the issue by the press as the attention devoted to a particular news story influences the public perception of the importance of such issue (McQuail, 2000:426). This finding is agreement with the work of Picard *et al.* (2014) who measured the prominence of banking and financial news in some European countries by first page presence. The authors observed that banking coverage prominence increased as the first page presence of banking news increased by 74% between 2007 and 2008. The prominence given to the #FeeMustFall students'

protest stories by the Daily Dispatch indicates the newsworthiness of the issue and the importance attached to it by the newspaper.

### **5.2.2. Degree of objectivity in the coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests**

The roles of the press hinge on its willingness and ability to daily relay accurate information about the on-goings in the society to the heterogeneous audience. As an agenda setter of the society, the press should be objective in its reportage of any issue. However, various researchers have different views on objectivity of the press. Some view the concept of objectivity as “truth and reality” (Westerstahl, 1983). According to positivist school of thought “one is either objective or one is subjective, to be objective is to say that one presents a content that is not affected by one’s own assessments, i.e., the facts. Facts are what can be experienced directly, that which others would be able to know in precisely the same way. To be subjective is to say that one’s own assessments (attitudes and values) have influence on knowledge”. Glasser (1992: 179) says objectivity is based on the idea of noticeable and available facts a journalist can get. In this study, objectivity was measured by the tone of the stories as is a test of how journalists carry out their roles as a watchdog (Picard *et al.*, 2014). The researcher defined objectivity as “when all parties were mentioned in the stories and were accorded equal responsibility” or “when the writer did not blame any party, group or individual”. In other words, objectivity indicates neutrality in the tone of the writer. The definition of objectivity in this study is in accordance with the view of Yat (2007) which referred to objectivity in journalism tenet as reporting all sides of the same story given by an eye witness or other people present at the scene of event, without any input from the journalist himself.

The findings of this study suggest that the Daily Dispatch Newspaper was objective in its coverage of the 2016 #FeeMustFall student’s protest stories as the tonality of the coverage indicated that majority of the stories were neutral (61%). This finding is contrary to previous study by Picard *et al.* (2014) who reported 48 % neutrality in the tone of banking and financial news coverage between 2007 and 2013 by some newspapers in selected European countries.

### **5.2.3. Effect of framing of 2016 #FeeMstFall students' protest stories on readers' perceptions**

Frame is used to group information, shape it and process it skillfully or professionally. Chong and Druckman (2007) defined framing as “a process of conceptualizing issues or manipulating thoughts about an issue towards a new meaning”. Menashe and Siegel (1998) described a frame as *“a way of packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a certain meaning”*.

The concept of framing is related to the agenda setting. Unlike the agenda setting which focuses on press selection of stories, events and issues (what), framing focuses on press representation, treatment and production of stories, events and issues (Fourie, 2007:245). In other words, framing does not only tell the audience what to think about, but also tells the audience how to think about the issue.

In this study, the researcher found out that five different frames (conflict frame, attribution of responsibility frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame and morality frame) were used in the presentation of the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper. However, conflict frame (45%) was the most prominent followed by attribution of responsibility (29%) and human interest (16%) frames. This finding is in accordance with previous related study by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) where the prevalence of the aforementioned news frames (conflict frame, attribution of responsibility frame, human interest frame, economic frame and morality frame) was reported. According to Valkenburg *et al.* (1999), conflict frame emphasizes conflict between parties or individual, in this case, conflict was emphasized between protesting students and South African Government as well as the protesting students and police. Attribution of responsibility frame attributes responsibility, credits or blames to certain political institutions or individuals. In the light of this study, some of the stories with attribution of responsibility frame attributed responsibility of free education to South African Government. For the human-interest frame, it focused on an individual as an example or emphasized emotions while the economic consequences frame focused on the economic consequences of free education and #FeeMustFall students' protests for the audience as morality frame emphasized morality and offered social instructions.

The findings from the effect of framing of the #FeeMustFall students' protests stories on readers' perception showed that the different frames used in the news presentation significantly affected the readers' perceptions in this study, as attribution of responsibility news frame resulted in perceptions that attributed responsibilities to government on various free education related issues; conflict news frame generated conflict-related perceptions in the readers while the human-interest news frame generated perceptions that are emotional and provided human face. This finding is in agreement with the work of Price *et al.* (1997), where the effects of three different news frames were investigated by given some students false story to read about the funding of their institution by the state. The students were randomly chosen and given varied version of the story to read. The story had single information, but was introduced differently and ended based on the type of frame used which included conflict, personal consequences, or human-interest. The students were later asked to write down what their thoughts were toward what they read. The findings revealed that the different news frame used greatly affected their perception to the news. Likewise, Valkenburg *et al.* (1999) studied the effects of news frames on readers' thoughts and recall by sampling two groups of readers who were both given two different stories; one was on crime while the other was on the introduction of euro. The two stories were framed in form of human interest, economic consequences, conflict and attribution of responsibility. The result of the study showed that the framing in each story affected the thought of each reader. It is therefore clear that frames play a significant role in readers' perception and as well, define the way information is presented by readers.

### **5.3. Conclusion to the study**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the 2016 #FeeMustFall students' protests in the Eastern Cape Universities were given prominence by the Daily Dispatch Newspaper as majority of the stories occupied the front page of the newspaper editions with an average of 19 paragraphs dedicated to the stories. However, the protests seemed to be under-reported by the newspaper as revealed by the total number of stories available on the protests within the period of the study. As well, the newspaper did not employ other different categories of stories including features, cartoon and editorial) in its

coverage of the protests. In terms of objectivity, the findings of this study revealed that Daily Dispatch Newspaper was objective in its coverage of the #FeeMustFall students' protests as the reporters were mostly neutral in their tones. Moreover, the #FeeMustFall students' protest stories in this study were mostly framed using conflict, attribution of responsibility and human-interest frames. Furthermore, the different news frames used in the presentation of the #FeeMustFall students' protests stories resulted in similar audience frames, thereby confirming the significance of news framing on the perceptions of readers and the importance attached to a news story by the publics.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher has come up with the following recommendations:

- ✓ The press should be more effective in the coverage of issues of national interest like the #FeeMustFall students' protests in South African Universities.
- ✓ The press should take into consideration the frame and the tone used in news presentation as these have been observed to greatly influence readers' perceptions
- ✓ The press should give prominence to important issues using different types of stories including news story, features, editorial, opinion and cartoon.
- ✓ The press should always be objective in their reporting as the publics rely on them for accurate information on every issue.
- ✓ The press should continue to play its role of setting the tone of what the publics think as the agenda setter of the society.

#### **5.5. Limitations of the study**

- ✓ Inadequate literature on #FeeMustFall students' protests in South African Universities.
- ✓ Funding.

## **5.6. Suggested areas for further research**

- ✓ Comparative study on the coverage of the #FeeMustFall students' protests in South African Universities using various national newspapers. This is necessary as it will allow research into the coverage of the protests by newspapers in other South Africa regions.
- ✓ Social media is one of the fastest means of communication globally, especially among the youths including students. Consequently, its role in all human endeavours cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore important to investigate the role of social media in #FeeMustFall students' protests in South African Universities.
- ✓ The increase in occurrence of students' protests across universities in South Africa is alarming and is fast becoming a threat to the educational system of the Country. Thus, the need for urgent intervention of all stakeholders in the effective management of students' protests in South African Universities. Therefore, the researcher is suggesting that the role of communication in managing students' protests in South African Universities be considered for future study.

## **5.7. Summary**

This chapter started by discussing the findings of the research focusing on the objectives of the study. The chapter also provided conclusions on the objectives and provided recommendations that will help the press to play its role effectively as the agenda setter of the society. Lastly, the chapter highlighted some limitations to the study and proposed new areas for future research as it relates to students' protests in South African Universities.

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## APPENDIX 1



University of Fort Hare  
*Together in Excellence*

**Govan Mbeki Research & Development Centre**

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07 April 2017

Monisola Balajoko Ayodeji-Falade  
Department of Communications  
University of Fort Hare  
Alice Campus  
South Africa

Dear Monisola,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your application for Ethical Clearance for your research project titled: ***Newspaper Coverage of the 2016 #Feesmustfall Students' Protests in Eastern Cape Universities: A Content Analysis of Daily Dispatch.***

On behalf of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) we have checked your proposal and would like to let you know that there is no need to issue an ethical clearance certificate. Even though in desktop research or where secondary data is being reviewed that does not involve collecting data from humans and animals directly, researchers are strongly urged to observe good ethical conduct when using information by others (acknowledge sources and avoid plagiarism).

Yours,

Professor Wilson Akpan  
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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTION GUIDE**

- i. What is your perception on the #FeeMustFall students' protests from what you read in the story?
- ii. What are your thoughts on the #FeeMustFall students' protests according to the reporter? Can you please list them?
- iii. Can you please expatiate or give instances on your point from the story you read?