

# MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

### DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY STUDIES

INFLUENCE OF CONVERGED NEWSROOM PLATFORMS TO THE  
PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM BY THE HERALD AND  
DAILY NEWS

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*. The study sought to establish how the two publications which have opposed views are adapting to newsroom convergence and with what effect the development plays in the practice of professional journalism. The study was mainly qualitative and data was taped from the targeted population using qualitative data collection methods. The researcher made use of interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions to obtain data from the CEO's, editors, journalists and online audiences of the two publications. In addition, the study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques that are non-probability and purely qualitative. The study was guided by the following theories namely social shaping of technology, diffusion of innovations and revisiting the public sphere. The findings were analyzed and presented in the study as well as the proposed recommendations. The study deduced that *The Herald* and *daily News* are influenced by newsroom convergence pausing both negative and positive effects on professional journalism. Albeit the fact that the two are owned and controlled differently, both share the same responses to converged newsroom platforms. Newsroom convergence has brought many changes to both publications in as much as the daily newsroom operations are concerned. Again the study deduced that converged newsroom platforms have economic benefits but impinge on professionalism of journalists.

## Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	ii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 Background to the study</b> .....	2
<b>1.3 Problem Statement</b> .....	4
<b>1.4 Objectives of the study</b> .....	4
<b>1.5 Main research question</b> .....	5
<b>1.6 Significance of the study</b> .....	5
<b>1.7 Study Assumptions</b> .....	6
<b>1.8 Delimitations</b> .....	6
<b>1.9 Limitations</b> .....	7
<b>1.10 Structure of the study</b> .....	7
<b>1.11 Conclusion</b> .....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	8
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	8
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	8
<b>2.2 Literature review</b> .....	8
<b>2.2.1 Newsroom convergence and professional journalism in Africa</b> .....	8
<b>2.2.2 Media convergence in Zimbabwe</b> .....	11
<b>2.2.3 Converged newsroom platforms, professional journalism and audiences</b> .....	14
<b>2.2.4 Economics and the converged newsroom</b> .....	19
<b>2.2.5 Newsroom convergence and multitasking</b> .....	21
<b>2.3 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	22
<b>2.3.1 Diffusion of innovations</b> .....	23
<b>2.3.2 Revisiting the public sphere</b> .....	24
<b>2.3.3 Social Shaping of Technology Theory</b> .....	25
<b>2.4 Conclusion</b> .....	26
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	27
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN</b> .....	27

<b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....	27
<b>3.2 Research methodology</b> .....	28
<b>3.3 Qualitative research</b> .....	28
<b>3.4 Secondary and primary data</b> .....	29
<b>3.5 Unit of analysis</b> .....	30
<b>3.6 Target population</b> .....	30
<b>3.7 Sampling</b> .....	31
<b>3.8 Convenience sampling</b> .....	31
<b>3.9 Purposive sampling technique</b> .....	32
<b>3.10 Data collection instruments</b> .....	32
<b>3.10.1 Interviews</b> .....	33
<b>3.10.2 Questionnaires</b> .....	34
<b>3.10.3 Focus groups</b> .....	34
<b>3.11 Data analysis techniques</b> .....	35
<b>3.11.1 Content analysis</b> .....	35
<b>3.11.2 Critical discourse analysis</b> .....	36
<b>3.12 Ethical Considerations</b> .....	36
<b>3.13 Conclusion</b> .....	37
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	38
<b>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL ECONOMY</b> .....	38
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	38
<b>4.2 Political economy</b> .....	38
<b>4.3 <i>The Herald</i> Mission</b> .....	41
<b>4.4 <i>Daily News</i> mission</b> .....	42
<b>4.5 <i>The Herald</i> vision</b> .....	42
<b>4.6 <i>Daily News</i> vision</b> .....	42
<b>4.7 <i>The Herald</i> core values</b> .....	43
<b>4.8 <i>The daily News</i> core values</b> .....	43
<b>4.9 <i>The Herald</i> objectives</b> .....	43
<b>4.10 <i>Daily News</i> objectives</b> .....	44
<b>4.11 <i>The Herald</i> Ownership and Control</b> .....	45
<b>4.12 <i>The daily News</i> ownership and control</b> .....	45
<b>4.13 <i>The Herald</i> editorial policy</b> .....	47

<b>4.14 The daily News editorial policy</b> .....	49
<b>4.15 Conclusion</b> .....	51
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	52
<b>DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS</b> .....	52
<b>5.1 Introduction</b> .....	52
<b>5.2 Overview of findings</b> .....	52
<b>5.3 Media convergence influence to <i>The Herald</i> and <i>daily News</i></b> .....	53
<b>5.4 The effect of newsroom convergence to professional journalism</b> .....	55
<b>5.5 The enrichment of media content through newsroom convergence</b> .....	58
<b>5.6 Economic benefits brought by converged media platforms to local print media organisations</b> .....	60
<b>5.7 Initiation and enhancement of multi-tasking by converged newsroom</b> .....	61
<b>5.8 Challenges to ethical journalistic practices caused by new media</b> .....	63
<b>5.9 Conclusion</b> .....	64
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b> .....	65
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	65
<b>6.1 Introduction</b> .....	65
<b>6.2 Summary of findings</b> .....	65
<b>6.3 Recommendations to <i>The Herald</i> and <i>daily News</i></b> .....	68
<b>6.4 Conclusion</b> .....	69
<b>References</b> .....	70

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The study seeks to assess the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism in a period of a year, spanning from July 2014 up to date. The study focuses on the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*. The term newsroom convergence refers to some combination of technologies, product, stuffs and geography among the previously distinct provinces of print, television and online media (Singer 2004). The study has been greatly influenced by the researcher's passion in print journalism which was further fueled by experience gained during her intern period at *The Herald* newspaper from July 2014 to July 2015. Furthermore, development in; and rise of the use of new media also prompted the study. The study focuses on *The Herald* and *daily News* as both are daily newspapers with a relatively large circulation. The study made use of qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methods allow researchers to study and understand social and cultural phenomena. Although the variables were largely unknown, researcher concentrated on the context that may shape the understanding of the phenomenon being studied Creswell, (2011). Hence data gathering methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations were carried out on twenty audiences, ten journalists, two CEOs and two editors. These methods provide first-hand information. Interviews also provide more information thereby improving accuracy of the research findings.

Three theories were also used to guide the study on the influence of converged newsroom platforms to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*. These include the diffusion of innovations, the social shaping of technology theory and the public sphere. Both social shaping of technology and diffusion of innovations theories were relevant to the study as they focus on the origins and use of new technologies and also address the relationship between society and media technology. The theory public sphere was also essential in this study as citizen engagement is part and parcel of new media. These three theories proved

to be relevant to the study as they assist in understanding the influence of converged platforms to the practice of professional journalism.

## 1.2 Background to the study

The term converged newsroom has existed since the 1990s with the significant disappearance of former boundaries between journalism and other forms of communication. Mutsvairo (2013) notes that Africa in recent years has seen the emergence of a diverse range of citizen media, empowered by digital technologies such as mobile phones, blogs, micro blogs, video-sharing platforms and mapping. He added that Zimbabwe is still skeptical about the prospects of embedding the works of citizen journalists into their mainstream packages. This therefore shows that the mainstream media is skeptical about the authenticity of new media as a reliable source of information. However, Templar (2002) argues that media convergence has always been there since the 1980s but it is only recently that it came to be recognized. Hence traditional forms of media such as the radio, television and newspaper were already converged from this earlier period. Jenkins (2006) adds that traditional media have been ‘reorganized’ such that technology has gone into place where different forms of media were formerly divided and separated by traditional walls. Web based and mobile technology has turned communication into dialogue. In Zimbabwe; Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram are among the most commonly used social media platforms. These sites have become a platform of news gathering and dissemination. For professional journalists who have been publishing through traditional media, this new media has likely brought about changes in the newsroom, hence a study to ascertain the influence of such developments becomes essential. *The Herald* and *daily News* newsrooms have been transformed from mere print publications to “one stop shop” for information, education and entertainment through any channel and in whatever form, under the same roof, thereby prompting this study.

Professional journalism encompasses traits such as ethics and standards. Ward (2011) notes that ethics can be defined as actions that promote a flourishing life for other people or actions that

result in the flourishing of pleasure or the reduction of pain. Like many other ethical systems, journalism ethics include the principle limiting harm to whoever will consume the news.

One cannot talk of *The Herald* newspaper without the mention of Zimbabwe Newspapers (Ltd) commonly referred to as Zimpapers (Ltd). Zimbabwe Newspapers is a government owned company which was bought from the Argus group in 1980. It is the oldest and largest newspaper publishing company in Zimbabwe which has over a century of years' operating in the Zimbabwean newspaper industry. The *Herald* newspaper which is the largest and oldest daily newspaper in Zimbabwe is published by Zimpapers. *The Herald* is published in Harare and its origins dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Argus Group of South Africa launched the *Mashonaland Herald* in 1891 and was later named the *Rhodesian Herald* in 1892. As Mabweazara (2010: 4) states that no technology seems too used to be used, just as nothing is too new to be blended with the old for even newer results, Zimpapers committed itself to raising editorial standards through the use of new technologies and related resources to produce the best quality of newspapers and thus sustain and increase the company's competitive edge.

Prior to the adoption of new technologies, journalists at Zimpapers relied on traditional means of news making, which sometimes resulted in delays in the publication of breaking news. *The Herald* started online publishing around the period of the late 1990s or early 2000 to be precise. Mukendi (2005:60) notes however, that new technologies are reconfiguring newsroom relationships and traditions by making the profession more individualistic as colleagues interact lesser than ever. On the other hand, Deuze (2004:140) argues that in order to have a wider understanding, newsroom convergence should be approached through the institutional, technological, organizational, and the cultural perspectives. In simpler terms, there is a remarkable change in today's media operations in as much as production and consumption is concerned hence this study becomes important.

The *daily News* is part of the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, which was founded by two journalists as a company initially called Motley Trading (Pvt) Limited in July of 1995. The *daily News* began publishing under the ANZ umbrella on March 31 1999. It went through a number of legal battles with the Ministry of Information under the auspices of the then Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo, which led to its closure after the Supreme Court ruled that the *daily News* was operating illegally due to its failure to register with the Media Information Commission. It is



significant to mention that *The Herald* and *daily News* are both mass produced daily newspapers and both command a huge consumer base. While the *daily News* is privately owned, *The Herald* is publicly owned which presented distinct factors. That the two newspapers have a large following cannot be understated. It should also be known that the researcher also has a keen interest in print journalism hence understanding newsroom convergence is key.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The problem statement of the study is “influence of converged newsroom platforms to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily news*” and it focuses on the period of July 2014 to date. The researcher was an intern for a year at *The Herald* during the above mentioned period. The Work Related Learning (WRL) experience gave her an opportunity to have a feel of the print media industry at a time when new media technology developments were the order of the day. Thus the need to grasp and rope in the new media technologies in the newsroom environment became crucial in shaping her career path. The digitalization process has brought about a change in the way media professionals work. Media convergence has brought about the participation of consumers in the way mass media is managed through participatory journalism. Jenkins (2006) and Wien (2008) are some scholars who have researched and written extensively on the influence that media convergence has in the newsroom as well as the consumers in several countries in Africa and the rich nations of the Western world. The study focused on the influence of media convergence in Zimbabwe and assesses the socio-economic benefits brought about by the new phenomenon. The study was also prompted by the need to improve and enhance the economic, social and professional benefits that media convergence brings to local journalists and media owners.

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

- To assess the influence of newsroom convergence on the practice of professional journalism, with regards to ethical standards.
- To assess the extent to which converged newsroom platforms enrich media content

- To explore the economic benefits brought by converged newsroom platforms to media owners
- To investigate how converged newsroom platforms lead to multi skilling to *The Herald* and *daily News*
- To examine the ethical challenges faced by journalists from *The Herald* and *daily News* in using new media technology

### 1.5 Main research question

- To what extent do media convergence influence *The Herald* and the *daily News* from July 2014 to July 2015?

### Research Questions

- What effect do converged newsrooms have on professional journalism in Zimbabwe from July 2014 to July 2015?
- To what extend do converged newsroom platforms enrich the media content?
- What economic benefits do converged media platforms bring to the print media owners in Zimbabwe especially *The Herald* and *daily News*?
- How do converged newsroom platforms lead to multi skilling to *The Herald* and *daily News* from July 2014 to July 2015?
- What ethical challenges do *The Herald* and *daily News* journalists face in the use of new media technology from July 2014 to July 2015?

### 1.6 Significance of the study

The study would contribute to the existing literature on newsroom convergence. Unlike most literature which is mostly from Western scholars, this study benefits local media as it is based on a Zimbabwean context. The study strives to inform policymakers from *The Herald* and *daily*

*News* to make knowledgeable decisions that help to bridge the gap between traditional and new media. This entails making administrative policies that enhance news production and dissemination by the media houses. The study guides converged newsroom practitioners to uphold professionalism as they adopt multitasking in the modern newsroom. The understanding of professional journalism serves as a cornerstone to the development of any society. The study also contributes significantly to literature in the modules that have been undertaken by the researcher throughout her Media and Society Studies modules such as Introduction to Information Technology, Understanding the Press and also Print Journalism.

### 1.7 Study Assumptions

This study is premised on the following assumptions:

- ❖ The researcher assumes that *The Herald* and *daily News* have converged newsroom platforms.
- ❖ The researcher assumes that *The Herald* and *daily News* have adopted new technologies.
- ❖ The researcher assumes that converged newsroom platforms have affect media content.
- ❖ The researcher assumes that media convergence brings benefits to media owners.

### 1.8 Delimitations

The study seeks to assess on the influence of converged newsroom platforms to professional journalism by the print media in Zimbabwe, particularly *The Herald* and *daily News*. The research was based on a time period that ranges from 2014 to date. The study assesses two newspapers only which are *The Herald* and *daily News*. Only the development and practice of professional journalism in converged newsroom context of the two daily newspapers would be assessed from 2014 to date. The study would only deal with the CEOs, editors, journalists and online audiences for *The Herald* and *daily News*. This further narrowed the number of respondents.

## 1.9 Limitations

The study would focus on the upholding of professional journalism in converged newsroom platforms. The study centers only on the online journalists and audiences. The research focuses on two newspapers which are *The Herald* and *daily News* in assessing the extent at which professional journalism is being practiced, meaning that data from other daily newspapers in the country shall not be included. Furthermore, only interviews with CEO's and editors who determine news coverage would be considered. Interview responses from journalists would be subject to bias as journalists feared that their response jeopardies their jobs. Weaknesses of theories used, such as the social shaping of technology limited the research to the idea that technology hammers society into conformity, (Lievrouw 2006:248). The diffusion of innovations is also limited as Garrison (2001:234) argues that the proposed flow of information is subject to resistance such as reluctance to adopt new technologies. The democratic participant theory also fails to cater for the unequal access to freedom of information posed by socio-economic limitations.

## 1.10 Structure of the study

The study consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and also gives a background to the study. Chapter two focuses on review of related literature and the theoretical framework. Chapter three presents the research methodology and design used by the researcher in carrying out the study. Chapter four presents an organizational analysis of *The Herald* and *daily News*. Chapter five focuses on data presentation and analysis. Lastly, chapter six gives a summary, conclusion and recommendations

## 1.11 Conclusion

This chapter set out the background to the study, organizing all the related challenges and problems that made this study necessary. The chapter also outlined the major focus of the study in the unit of analysis section which was supported by the research questions and research objectives. The limitations and delimitations of the study were also outlined as the major themes of this chapter. The next chapter shall dwell on literature review and theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature and work that has been done on the area under study. The chapter further explored the concept of newsroom convergence in different parts of the world with an emphasis on Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. Literature review can be defined as an introduction to a wide range of methods of analyzing ideas, finding relationships between different ideas and understanding arguments in research, (Hart 1998). The literature review has been derived from textbooks, journals and published dissertations. Literature review is important because it clarifies the problem statement, explains possible techniques and minimizes possible mistakes in the study. Furthermore, this review assumes a thematic approach and the themes are derived from the research questions and objectives. Theoretical framework such as the social shaping of technology, diffusion of innovations and democratic participant were explored to understand the study from a theoretical point of view.

#### 2.2 Literature review

##### 2.2.1 Newsroom convergence and professional journalism in Africa

Although there has been scholarship on media in Africa, most research has been primarily focused on traditional mainstream media (Wasserman 2011:5). As Mabweazara (2011:102) notes, despite the rapid growth of online journalism research in Western countries, not much can be said on the same in the African context. Most research on media convergence and online journalism in general is rather Western. Fosu and Ufuoma (2013) concur that apart from the concept is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa because of the late and slow impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on the African continent. Van Noort (2007:14) states that the advent of computers and the internet gave rise to communication technologies. Digitalization and media technology in Africa seem to be on the rise with the

number of people accessing the internet through different gadgets getting higher by the day as (Fosu and Ufuoma 2013). In their case study on Ghana and Nigeria, Fosu and Ufuoma (2013) affirm that in 2007, there were about 65 million new users of mobile phones, with average accessibility at 30% spreading significantly to villages. They further assert that in Ghana and Nigeria, mobile phone usage has become 'ordinary' even in the remotest part of each country making up about 85% penetration. Information Communication Technology is not only present in the two countries stated in Africa as the advances made in countries such as Zimbabwe are worth noting here. Among the few studies carried out on the effects of new media technology on professional journalism is that which was carried out by Berger in 2005 on nine countries in Southern Africa. Berger (2005) observed that there is increased uptake of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) by the journalists. As Wien (2008) postulates, newsroom convergence is critical in a world of rapid globalization and evolving trends. It can thus be observed that the research problem, these assertions focus on other countries other than Zimbabwe. There has not been such study on how ICTs have shaped or are shaping journalism in Zimbabwe. The study therefore bridges the gap between ICT's and newsroom convergence in Zimbabwean print media particularly *The Herald* and *daily News*.

However, Fosu and Ufuoma (2013) are of the opinion that media studies in most parts of Africa have focused largely on the formal or traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television. Much of the focus has been on how the media has played a role in democratizing the continent of Africa. Their argument is that the media helps in safeguarding and enhancing the governance within the model of liberal democracy. Similarly, Berger (2005) acknowledges new media's potential to increase journalists' work efficiency simultaneously getting rid of the barriers associated with the traditional media. Traditional media has been limited by geographical, economic and regulatory frameworks thus resultantly shortchanging the audience. Berger (2005) suggests that such limiting factors have been overwhelmed by the advent of new media. Van Noort (2007:13) concurs adding that the advent of newsroom convergence has changed the overall sociology of the newsroom. This means that while there has been rapid digitization in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the effect of adopting new technologies by the print media industry has not been highlighted. The benefits and challenges that new media present, contrary to traditional have not been explored at a local level. The study therefore looks at the impact of

such technological changes on Zimbabwean newsrooms particularly the print media and how it resultantly influences professionalism.

With regards to digitization, Chari (2013) is of the view that Africa has moved at a snail's pace while Fosu and Ufuoma (2013) argue that the process is progressing very well. Fosu and Ufuoma (2013) argue that Africa is presently experiencing its fair share of the digital revolution necessitating radical adaptation and transformation of not only the media industry but also audience composition and how they access information. The rapid increase and diffusion of new digital technologies in Africa has been applauded and approved due to the positive changes it brings about, (Mabweazara 2013). However, Mano (2009:277) argues that most assertions are based on Western motivated research hence do not give an African experience either historically, in principle and context. Thus this study seeks to bring out a Zimbabwean perspective and concentrates on how the two print media publications are adapting to digitization. The study focuses on how journalists at *The Herald* and *daily News* are adjusting to new media technologies. While journalists' rate of new technology adoption is analysed, it can be compared to none due to peculiarity of environments. Focusing on these two local publications sheds more light on the Zimbabwean case in as much as public and privately owned print media and newsroom convergence is concerned. The study highlights factors that may be unique but critical in shaping professionalism in the country.

The internet, telecommunication, radio and television have made very significant penetration on the continent with diverse possibilities for broadcasting. Almost every African country has at least a mobile network providing a range of services including voice calls, messaging, and internet connectivity, among others to users. Due to this advent of satellite communication, Berger (2005) asserts that a considerable number of practicing journalists confessed to engaging in unethical practices of some sort during their operations. Some of the unethical practices noted by Berger (2005) included plagiarism, downloading pornographic material and releasing post-mortem videos of the deceased. According to Chari (2013) recent literature on the relationship between new media and journalism practice is based on technological determinism in the sense that new technology in media is viewed as the driver of social change. The approach employed here acclaims the new technology in media as the main contributor to the changes in journalism practices. This means that while new technology avails unlimited opportunities to journalism as

postulated by Fulton (2008), these are also embedded with ethical challenges. New media has expedited globalization which tends to be biased towards Westernization, thereby diluting local culture thus making society difficult to manage. Thus to this effect, Mabweazara (2014) notes that new technologies should not be viewed distinctly but rather as embedded within the social, cultural, political and economic networks in which journalism is entrenched. This therefore suggests that new technology effects are also determined by contextual environment, which in this case is Zimbabwe. Thus deducing that social, cultural, political and economic networks within which the practice of professional journalism takes place determines professionalism. The study therefore becomes important in emphasizing how these factors contribute to the overall practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News* in the face of new media technologies.

### **2.2.2 Media convergence in Zimbabwe**

A survey by Freedom House in 2015 showed that according to estimates by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) internet access in Zimbabwe expanded tremendously from 19% in 2013 to over 20% in 2014. Freedom House (2015) further states that approximately 99% of this internet access is via mobile telephones while internet via fixed line remains at less than a percent and the mobile phone penetration rate, which is over 100 percent, includes users with multiple SIM cards. However, the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (Potraz) argues against the findings by the ITU and states that the rate of internet penetration in Zimbabwe is 50% as at December 2014, an increase of 8% from the rate of 2014 (Potraz 2014). This explains that viewership and listenership in Zimbabwe is increasing if one is to apply the statistics as presented by Potraz. Thus ITU and Potraz through broadcast regulation play a part in the integration of print journalism to other publishing platforms that deal with publication of audio and visuals. This also implies that newsroom convergence has an implication on not only the journalists and media content but also on the viewers and listeners who are accorded different platforms to access information and air their opinions as feedback. This means that professionalism by journalists cannot therefore be thoroughly analysed at by focusing at production level only but also upon dissemination and reception. Consequently, the study includes online audience from both *The Herald* and *daily News* newsrooms to highlight how the developments also affect them.



According to Chari (2013) new media technologies have transformed journalism practice in a profound way and Zimbabwe has not been an exception. The appropriation of the internet and the mobile phone by Zimbabwean print journalists has contributed to a transformation of the profession at a number of levels, including news sourcing routines, and the structuring of the working day, (Mabweazara 2013). In this regard, Chari (2013) notes that research on the impact of these technologies on journalism ethics is relatively limited. Much of the scholarly attention tends to focus on uses of new media technologies in everyday practice, while their ethical implications are pushed to the backstage. The study therefore articulates how newsroom convergence determines appropriation of ethical standards and journalistic professionalism as a whole.

Mabweazara (2011) is of the notion that the deployment of the internet by Zimbabwean journalists is relative and contingent upon internal newsroom contexts and the wider socio-political and economic circumstances in which the journalists operate. He seems to suggest that Zimbabwean mainstream press such as *The Herald* and *daily News* remain central and vibrant platforms for the struggle for control of public discourse between the opposition and incumbent elite. Mano (2012) adds that Zimbabwean journalists rather cooperate, resist or conform to stipulated newsroom policies. Mano (2012) also notes that open and subtle pressures exist in both publicly and privately-owned newsrooms. Social media due to its interactive nature broadens the platform for mainstream press. New technologies constitute an important factor in shaping communications and the mainstream press's news making practices. Influence of converged newsroom platforms on professional journalism cannot be generalized hence the importance of the study that focuses on two distinct newsroom which are *The Herald* and *daily News*. The distinctions coming are thus highlighted in the study in terms of ownership, control and editorial policies among other factors.

Newsroom convergence does however pose challenges to the journalism profession as Chari (2009) notes that the excitement brought by the internet in Africa tends to conceal the challenges associated with the medium. Journalism is underpinned by a set of values which translate into ethical principles that are either internationally agreed on or based upon a given media institution, (Banda 2010:23). With new media, journalists do not feel obliged to stick to ethical

stipulations, factual errors, untruths and plagiarism Chari (2009: 1). It can be argued that online plagiarism is the main reason why media houses have resorted to encryption of their web pages. The way in which news is conceptualized, gathered, produced, disseminated or consumed is changing in the context of new communication technologies (Chari 2013). As Mano (2007) asserts, the concept of journalism is generally explained as a profession that is concerned with information collection, writing, editing and disseminating the news for radio, newspaper and television but new media has changed this concept. The presence or absence of such challenges is thus explored in the study, basing on two print media newsrooms which are *The Herald* and *daily News*.

Journalism as it stands today owes a lot to the increasing technology that journalists are now employing in getting information, investigating cases as well as giving the information to the consumers. Mabwezara et al (2014) assert that very little is known on how African journalists are adjusting so as to practice their profession on interactive platforms such as the internet. Moyo (2011) asserts that digitalization has brought to the fore new means of countering the status quo and new forms of journalism that are not confined to institutions and this is shown in both form and content of the news distributed to the viewers and listeners. In his explanation, Banda (2010) uses the words ‘deinstitutionalized’ and ‘deprofessionalised’ to describe the influence that newsroom convergence has had on the way journalists are conducting their duties. Deinstitutionalized denoting loss of visible structure and practices whilst deprofessionalised denotes lack of training and regulatory framework. Most research focused on how technology has changed and reconfigured news production and distribution of information but has ignored the effects of new technology on professional journalism in Zimbabwean print media. This study assesses how professionalism is lost or upheld through introduction of new technologies. Thus the study becomes relevant in underscoring the effects of new technologies on professionalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*.

There is a great debate on the effects of new media technology on professional journalism an area of study which has not been explored to the fullest especially in Zimbabwe. Journalism ethics have been affected and there is a need to point out some of the most affected ethics. Ward (2008) argues that journalism ethics too often fall back on simplistic appeals to general concepts such as “truth-seeking”, “freedom”, “serving the public” and “democracy”, terms which are

highly contested. Chari (2013) states that research on the impact of new media on practice of journalism and ethics is very scant in Africa whereby he is convinced that there is no known literature on the impact of new media technology on journalism ethics. Although what Chari (2013) states is partly and not entirely true, justice has not been done on the effects of new media technology on professional journalism. Ward (2008) defines ethics as the analysis of conduct responsible practice and fair human interactions in the light of the best available principles. He adds that ethics is about practical judgment and the application of principles to issues and decisions. Journalism ethics thus encompasses a range of practical and theoretical decisions made by journalists during the news gathering, production and dissemination process. These decisions make the basis of the study.

### **2.2.3 Converged newsroom platforms, professional journalism and audiences**

Media convergence is not a technological shift only but the process alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences (Jenkins 2004). Thus convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint. Jenkins (2004) further asserts that convergence is more than a corporate branding opportunity; it represents a reconfiguration of media power and a reshaping of media aesthetics and economics. Waxman (2012) states that the practice of consuming media any time, any place, and having the ability to access a myriad of news choices, is affecting the way consumers retain information. Access to information is regarded by Curran (2000:218) as a fundamental right in a democratic society, a right to be adequately informed on issues relating to public interest hence. This therefore entails the need for media institutions to have the ability to reach their audience in many ways possible; which therefore leads to newsroom convergence.

As Van Noort (2007:16) notes; print newspapers realised they were losing audience especially the young population, hence the need to adopt new technologies. Thus Waxman (2012) goes on to note that the 21st century saw the advent of news organizations having multi-platform presence, so that newspapers are also websites, smartphone apps, tablet apps, and social media profiles. Therefore, though Zimbabwe's rate of new technologies adoption might differ from that of the West as previously explored, *The Herald* and *daily News* are in-line with global trends. The integration of multi-platform publication by the two newspapers can be evidenced by newspapers' live blogs, videos and audio clips published on the internet, thus the study on

newsroom convergence becomes significant. Thus the study includes both the young population that is in touch with use of new media technology and journalists who partake in multi skilling and whether or not journalistic professionalism is compromised. Perceptions on convenience, time, efficiency and quality of content are thus analysed in the study.

Media convergence has made it easy and convenient for journalists to gather information and disseminate the information in an efficient and cost effective way with the guarantee of reaching a large base of consumers. Alejandro (2010:12) describes social media as “word of mouth on steroids”, due to the fact that the internet spreads information faster and more efficiently and is not limited by any geographical boundaries. Alejandro (2010) gives an example of how Twitter and Facebook broke the news about legendary musician, Michael Jackson’s death to illustrate the efficiency of speed and audience reach of the internet. As Van Noort (2007:16) adds online journalism is dialogical, immediate and permanent. However, the disadvantage of online publications is that not many people take it seriously and they would not spend much time reading the articles carefully. This means that after obtaining information online, audience still rely on traditional media such as hard copy newspaper, radio and the television to confirm the credibility of internet information. Thus while the internet might be an efficient platform to disseminate information, if there is no credibility guaranteed, the plot of enhancing media content distribution by *The Herald* and *daily News* is lost. Thus the study assesses the level of professionalism displayed by *The Herald* and *daily News* through the perceptions of their online audience.

As Van Noort (2007) ads; policy makers, editors and journalists could make use of the advantages of online media to compliment print newspapers. In the same manner, Chari (2013) adds that the new media technologies, such as the mobile phone enable journalists to gather news from every nook and cranny of the globe, and send data to their newsrooms with relative ease. Berger (1997) notes how the internet provides media personnel with unlimited access to information on any subject, and how newsgroups allow journalists to tap into the collective brain, wit and wisdom of thousands of knowledgeable journalists and the ordinary consumers. However, the relative ease of access such as through the mobile phone is described by Mabweazara (2013:146) as an interruption of journalists’ personal space with professional time. He adds that under such circumstances journalists tend to work more than they used to. The

study however, assesses how by being conversant with various media platforms could lead to multiskilling of journalists. Thus the study seeks to establish how newsroom convergence leads to multiskilling to *The Herald* and *daily News*.

News making practices of the day, are described by Deuze (2007), as determined by the ways in which the media professionals give meaning to the provisions by the convergence of the cultures of production and consumption of media. This means that the relationship between production and consumption cannot be overlooked. As Curran and Gurevitch (2000) quotes Schudson (1987:59);

“..the quality of art lies in how it is received, or how it is created within the context of reception, rather than in some quality intrinsic to the art object itself...”

This means that it is only when media products are consumed that the service of educating, entertaining and informing an audience is achieved. Therefore transforming newsrooms practices becomes fundamental in the digital era, in pursuit of a society engrossed with consumerism of media products. Convergence of newsroom platforms can also be viewed as driven by an industry desperate for strong customer relationships, technologies that are increasingly cheap and easy to use, and a media culture that privileges an active audience (Deuze 2007:244). This means that where mainstream media was one-way, the audience have become part and parcel of news production. This is because online content is prone to critic by an active audience, as the internet feedback passes no filters and gatekeepers. Alejandro (2010:13) notes that the advent of new media and newsroom convergence has given audience power and independence outside the traditional mainstream media, hence he termed such platforms as the “Fifth Estate”. This therefore entails that the traditional media, the Fourth Estate, has its own watchdog in the form of the citizen journalist. The study therefore seeks to establish whether scrutiny from such platforms could influence *The Herald* and *daily News* media content.

Rice and Haythornthwaite (2006) denote that virtual communities as presented by new media, are made up of secondary relationships hence newsroom convergence introduces media content to a heterogeneous audience who have distinct interpretations of text. The virtual communities are what Band (2010:26) terms the ‘cybersphere’ where there is no exclusivity, everyone

participates equally. Thus where mainstream media gave space to a particular groups and marginalized others, the cybersphere is all encompassing. Papacharissi (2009:29) notes that new media platforms allows audience to engage in this cybersphere thereby upholding democracy. On the other hand, media production tends to be analyzed in terms of the political economy or sociology of the industry (Schudson, 2003). Thus the above assumptions therefore seem to suggest that the new media platforms do away with traditional media practices that are exclusive, highly politicized and biased. Thus the inclusion of everyone on social media gives a voice to the previously marginalized, hence the study assesses this affects professionalism in converged newsroom platforms.

Understanding an audience, as outlined by Schudson (2012: 276-277) is crucial as media operate within a given culture and ought to respect cultural symbols in a society. Consideration of culture assists journalists in identifying news values, thereby distinguishing what affects the audience and in what manner and resultantly upholding professional journalism ethics. While culture is dynamic and ever evolving, professional journalism principles have to undergo some transformation too. Changes to the technological and social circumstances are producing a new media journalism with completely different values (Pavlik 2001). Such changes, according to Ward (2008:295) call for new journalism ethics and a solid theoretical base in order to suit the converged newsroom. This resultantly gives relevance to a study that seeks to assess influence of converged newsroom platforms to professional journalism. The above assertions therefore suggest that *The Herald* and *daily News* might have to craft new ways to counter the negative impacts that newsroom convergence could have on professionalism.

As Jenkins (2006) explains, media convergence is the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of audiences. Examples of media convergence include reading the newspaper on a laptop, watching a television show on a tablet, and listening to the radio on a smartphone. According to Appelgren (2004) the concept convergence is found in both the field of media and the field of academy and the concept is used to explain a process of ongoing restructuring of media houses. The concept is also used to explain the latest developments along lines of media forms, distribution and consumption (Appelgren 2004). Similarly, Appelgren (2004) is quick to point out that there is no universally accepted definition of the concept of media convergence and he states that the

meaning and definition of media convergence depends heavily on the contextual meaning that accords to the concept. The conceptualization of media convergence has seen most scholars diverging in terms of definition and the conceptual framework of the concept. These assertions therefore denote that if one is to understand newsroom convergence in Zimbabwe and its resultant effects, it is essential to derive meaning from its local contexts. Thus the study of *The Herald* and *daily News* gives a better understanding of news room convergence in the country's print media.

Moreover, Huang et al (2006) in Ekwo (2012) identified the merge of newspaper, radio, television, magazines and online editions into one which help explain what the concept of media convergence is all about. This is usually done so as to ease the distribution of news across different platforms and outlets. On the other hand, Erdal (2009) states that media convergence is a factor for change for the media industry in any country rich or poor. Although Erdal (2009) does not define media convergence, he states that radio, television and mobile phones and internet have combined into one media platform with the capacity to deliver news to a wide range of consumers over an extended geographical area. As such Ekwo (2012) argues that the previous boundaries among various print and electronic media organizations in the way they do business are almost eliminated because technology enables different operations to overlap.

The view presented by Ekwo (2012) points to a precise and concise definition of the concept of media convergence. Mutsvairo (2013) suggests that while internet access in Zimbabwe is significantly more limited than in the rest of the world, Zimbabweans have been on the forefront of online participation and several factors contribute to this explosion. He adds that online newspapers and blogs dedicated to providing news and commentary about Zimbabwe's political and social problems have dominated the Web over the past decade. Therefore the economic background of Zimbabwe has not hindered media convergence, although adoption of media technologies may have taken long. The study therefore highlights how *The Herald* and *daily News* can maximize on the advantages of internet platforms and at the same time consider the influence of newsroom convergence on professional journalism.

#### **2.2.4 Economics and the converged newsroom**

Dupagne and Garrison (2006) coined the term economic convergence to explain the economic benefits presented to a media house through the process of media convergence. As such Dupagne and Garrison (2006) argue as the European Commission's (1997: ii) Green Paper plainly stated, convergence goes beyond technology but is about services and new ways of doing business of interacting with society. Dupagne and Garrison (2006) stated that the concept of media convergence brought with it what they termed as economic convergence, also known as market or industrial convergence. Bourreau et al (2002:12) states that media products are "experience goods" whose value is not known until consumed, hence demand of such goods is based upon what those who have consumed it have to say. This means that media relies on imitation and information exchange. Because newsroom convergence stems from developments in media technology, the Zimbabwean experience borrows from or imitates developed Western countries. Thus the study seeks to establish how the local print media houses who have adopted newsroom convergence and how they are obtaining and retaining audience of their various converged platforms.

What Dupagne and Garrison (2006) state as economic convergence can plainly and loosely described as media convergence as the benefit of economic convergence means that at the institutional level, economic convergence emphasizes multiple but integrated platforms. Killebrew (2005) points out that the cross-promotional value of sharing and presenting information across platforms could bring about greater advertising revenues. This is supported by Sparks (1996; 46) who says that purchase of hard copy newspapers is on the decline hence the need for electronic distribution. Electronic newspapers cut on costs such as printing, delivery stuff and transportation. Such developments have been welcomed by many other institution which Papacharissi (2002) says they regard as a mass enterprise whose cheap access by consumers has been countered by innovations such as electronic banners and portals as sources of advertising revenue. The study therefore seeks to establish whether the local print media can make use newsroom convergence to generate income and also cut on production costs as asserted above.

McChesney (1995:10) is of the view that the internet is a capitalist enterprise hence despite being 'cheap', might still be beyond the reach of some in society. Limitations could be in terms of



access to the internet, a reliable network, and money to purchase data or Wi-Fi, a smartphone or computer and sometimes even computer literacy. On the other hand, Sparks (1996) notes that consumers are reluctant to subscribe for electronic content which in turn poses a huge financial challenge for the media institution. Thus the study interviews media policy makers such as the CEOs and editors of the two publications to have assess the level of response and viewership of their online media content. The study will also engage the online audience to establish their familiarity with online publications of *The Herald* and *daily News*. This assist in highlighting whether converged newsroom platforms are profitable.

The use of new media technology has also brought about increased citizen participation. New media technology has also increased access to information and made it possible for divergent organizations to realize their objectives and make profits out of this realization (Carpentier and Scifo 2010). Such factors result in changes from procedures to practices which according to Cottle (2000:22) “accommodates both the determinacy of bureaucratic needs and journalist agency” this means that while *The Herald* and *daily News* may have divergent opinions and policies, they could make use of new media platforms to market their sites and obtain profits. This means that the competition for advertisers has been shifted from the traditional newspaper to the virtual community.

To managers, newsroom convergence is rather a strategic option presented by the internet’s multimedia platforms (Dennis et al 2003). Thus such strategy if utilized minimizes the daily operational costs of running the newsroom in terms of transport, time and human resource. Mabweazara (2011) adds that journalistic principles in newsroom relate to the material situations in which the journalists operate. Such factors result in changes from procedures to practices which according to Cottle (2000:22) “accommodates both the determinacy of bureaucratic needs and journalist agency”. This study therefore takes into account the role played by media managers in determining the overall end result of newsroom convergence. This study thus takes into account strategies used by CEOs and editors of both newsrooms in relation to social, political and economic conditions in which convergence takes place. This study there would highlight the effects newsroom policies and how they affect profitability in *The Herald* and *daily News*.

The wider transformation brought by digital migration is made possible by changing communications technologies. It is driven by global trends in economics, politics and human behavior. Berger (2009) further asserts that for most media houses, the switch-over in publication is just a more efficient transmission of technology and a way to squeeze more content on local media. This implies that increasing more TV channels and other means of media platforms translates directly to economic benefits. Such digitalization has not spared the print media which has adopted technological developments through the use of smartphones and recorders. The smartphone is therefore used for live blogs for example, where it is used to take pictures, videos and posting them to the newsroom or uploading updates instantly online. This therefore changes the normal routine for traditional print media journalists in the converged newsroom, which therefore brings in the study of the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*.

### **2.2.5 Newsroom convergence and multitasking**

Convergence has brought new dimension in the way journalists carry out their day to day routines, hence Erdal (2007:58) says that there is a cross media production which has been necessitated by technology and digitization. He goes on to define convergence as the melting together of information structures, communications media advancements, the society and culture. Newsroom practices are being reconfigured and so are professional routines. This is further explained by Cottle (2003:16) who claims that news production texts have ceased to be separate entities but have become interpenetrated. This means therefore that the roles of journalists are no longer confined to one genre or medium but have become multi tasks through the use of several platforms of news production under one roof. Taking a look at the United States scenario, Bresser and Meeds (2007:3) describe convergence as a process in which the newspaper journalist creates content for television and vice versa. They go on to say that parallel production of content for two media platforms of one which is digital is common but also very sophisticated. The need to gather and disseminate content through the internet thereby calls for journalists to learn and be proficient in internet use. The study highlights whether newsroom convergence in Zimbabwe leads to multitasking as witnessed in the United States. Emphasis would be placed on the implication of multitasking on professional journalism in a local context, *The Herald* and *daily News* to be precise.

A radical approach to newsroom convergence by scholars Deuze (2006) and Jenkins (2006) envisages a future society in which the role of journalist is completely done away with in the future to allow direct access to information by internet users without the role of media houses. Bresser and Meeds (2007:5) argue that this approach does not guarantee credibility, accurateness, social communication order and mass audience reach as offered by journalism. McQuail (2000) notes however, that significant changes in civic affairs is inevitable due to digitalization. The study comes in to assess the role of traditional print journalism in contrast with online journalism. The differences are thus analysed to establish the credibility and accurateness of the online version of the two publications. The extent to which multitasking compromises accuracy and credibility changes will be assessed. The influence of multitasking will adversely impact professionalism.

It is important to note that multitasking has also presented its own new wave of challenges such as decline in the quality of reportage due to time constraints, staff shortages as well as inability to use new media tools (Bresser and Meeds 2007:9). According to Huang et al (2006), a study revealed that journalists themselves have had ambivalent perceptions on the effect of multitasking to their daily routines. Thus the researchers concluded that "...future journalist trained in multiskilling will be jack of all trades and masters of none and would produce worse reporting..." (Bresser and Meeds 2007:11). Competition and the need to be the first organization to break the latest news, Quandt (2005) brings about turbulent journalism. Multitasking and the quest for efficiency in converged newsrooms thus compromises the quality of content by journalists. This means that professionalism in journalism might be under threat due to new technologies, hence the study becomes relevant.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework consists of concepts, definitions and their references that serve to strengthen a study (Swanson 2013:4). It is important to have a theoretical framework as it connects a researcher to existing knowledge, enlightens and effectively engages the researcher to the study. The theories to be explored in this chapter include social shaping of technology, diffusion of innovations and the public sphere. These theories are analyzed in relation to the use

of new technology in media as well as the influences and effects of incorporating this new technology in modern day professional journalism.

### **2.3.1 Diffusion of innovations**

The diffusion of innovations, as propounded by Rogers (1962) seeks to explain the concept where by communicated ideas or products gain momentum in a given period of time as they spread (diffuse) in a society. In this case new ideas and or products are the innovations. Lievrouw (2006:246) notes that diffusion of innovations assists in understanding the relationship between society and technology. On the other hand, Robinson (2009), states that in diffusion of innovations the population remains a constant while innovations change or evolve. The process of taking new the new ideas relies entirely on the perceptions of the population or audience. A simple example can be the uptake difference in uptake of Twitter and *WhatsApp* social media applications. While Twitter was introduced before *WhatsApp*, the later gained a larger consumer base while the former lagged far behind. Rogers (1995) states that understanding how innovations are positioned, named and target audience beliefs assist in determining how the new ideas or products will be adopted. Diffusion of innovations addresses the transformations and speed at which technological development is taken up. Rogers (1995:207) claims that the rate at which innovations are adopted is determined by perceived benefit, type of innovation and the channel of communication. First adopters are those who are at the initial stages that Rogers (1995:206) uses to illustrates the rate of adoption of new technology, where he says initially there are innovators, then early adopters, early majority late majority and laggards in that order. The innovators, as Lievrouw (2006:250) states, have to be very influential individuals and of high profile social status in order to facilitate fast adoption of the new technology. As such, the theory informs the study on how newsroom convergence as a new phenomenon is adopted and utilized by *The Herald* and *daily News*. The theory also explains the nature in which consumers take up and create reliance on online publications of the two newspapers. The theory therefore enlightens the researcher on distinct concepts in adoption of new media technologies.

It is important to note that the theory is criticized, Freeman (1991) for assuming that technology is stable or remains the same unit throughout the diffusion process. This means that technology is not presented as individual entities but rather as intertwined and collective reinventions that are

constantly transformed. For example while an early adopter buys a Samsung S4 smartphone, a late majority consumer might purchase the Samsung S6 which is an advanced version in the Samsung range. Another critic, Wellman (1988:46) state that there are other external factors that inhibit diffusion of innovations such as competition amongst the inventors or innovators of new technologies themselves. Bigger institution tend to elbow out new ideas or innovators due to their large network advantages thereby stifling any competition and maintain a stronghold of the resources.

### **2.3.2 Revisiting the public sphere**

Papacharissi (2002) states that the internet and its surrounding technologies hold the promise of reviving the public sphere; however, several aspects of these new technologies simultaneously curtail and augment that potential. Castells (2001) defines the public sphere as the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society. The internet and related technologies have created a new public space the internet has the ability to carry and transport information, bring people from diverse backgrounds together it cannot be regarded as the ideal public sphere that Habermas (1962) propounded. Papacharissi (2002) postulates that the virtual sphere reflects the dynamics of new social movements that struggle on a cultural, rather than a traditionally political terrain and is a vision not a reality. This therefore entails that the new theory ropes in the advent of the new public sphere “cybersphere,” that convenes on the digital platform and is not limited to geographical locations such as *The Herald* and *daily News* digital platforms.

However Gerhards and Schafer (2009) argue that in this way, search engines might actually silence societal debate by giving more space to established actors and institutions, to experts and to expert evaluations and views, thereby replicating pre-existing power structures online. This manner of actor and content selection might be even inferior compared to the old mass media, because the latter at least employ journalistic norms like balanced reporting and neutrality when selecting actors and statements, and thereby present a possibly better communication than the internet. Papacharissi (2002) notes that the role of the internet as an ideal public sphere is still a vision, it inspires, but has not yet managed to transform political and social structures. Therefore

people have accessed and debated on digital platforms but it has not changed the policies in society as well as in Zimbabwe.

Papacharissi adds that cyberspace is public and private space. It is because of these qualities that it appeals to those who want to reinvent their private and public lives. Cyberspace provides new terrain for the playing out of the age-old friction between personal and collective identity; the individual and community. Thus what Papacharissi (2002) regards as an ideal public sphere is how internet discourse contributing to democracy. However, Gerhards and Schafer (2009) suggest that the internet could accelerate fragmentation of the public sphere. He states that this could happen those already dominant interest groups and actors would take up the foreground in practical use of the internet as the situation is in a capitalist society. Thus the study seeks to establish if this is the situation with the *The Herald* and *daily News* platforms.

### **2.3.3 Social Shaping of Technology Theory**

In defining the social shaping of technology theory, Williams and Edge (1996:866) state that in the implementation of new technologies and innovation, there are both technical and social factors that are considered- resultantly affecting the technological content and its social implications. Simply put, Williams and Edge (1996) mean that technological developments are socially shaped. Lievrouw (2006:248) defines social shaping of technology as a concept of demystifying technological development from being detached from political, ethical and social scrutiny. This means that technology is not immune to such social factors and hence is affected in one way or the. The social shaping of technology is a critic of technological determinism whose basic assumption is that technology drives social change, (Mumford 1970). Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) argue that technological determinism is an inadequate explanation of technological development or innovation or of social change. In their critic of technological determinism, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) use an illustration of a hammer and nail in which technology is the hammer and society is the nail and regards where it implies that technology hammers societal changes. According to Livingstone (1999) technological changes must be located within the cultural process hence he further asserts that more scholars are sceptical about societal changes that follow technological innovations as social changes are rather a result of complex political, environmental and economic factors.

Central to the social shaping of technology concept as, Williams and Edge (1996) assert, are choices to be made, though sometimes unintentionally and such choices render technological developments reversible and negotiable, which is contrary to technological determinism. Hence technology becomes liable to social factors such as policy claims and objectives. Exploring sociology of technology further, Mackay and Gillespie (1992:685) argue that the role of ideology, marketing and consumer appropriation of technology cannot be understated in understanding social shaping of technology. Thus the study use of the theory to highlight and assess how the same concept affects professionalism in a converged newsroom. Newsroom convergence therefore, illustrates the technology being appropriated into society whereas how it shapes journalists into upholding or shunning social values informs the basis of the study.

Appropriation of technology products by consumers and the value they attach may go beyond the intended use. Thus, the I-phone apart from its numerous cell phone functions can be used as a status symbol of wealth, thus the society attaches meaning to technology. Understanding such concepts is important for this study as it aims at relating new media technologies and professional journalists in the converged *The Herald* and *daily News* newsrooms. The social shaping of technology theory will assist in understanding how the professional journalists respond to, and take up new practices in the newsroom. By so doing the study establishes whether new technologies shape the newsroom and how it does thus establishing whether or not professionalism is affected.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The chapter has reviewed the literature related to the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News*. It also gave a theoretical framework to guide the study. Chapter three outlines the research methodology and design employed in data generation for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study which focuses on the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism by *The Herald* and *daily News* from July 2014 to date. The research methodology explains the path or the techniques used in data collection and data generation. The chapter also outlines the target population,



sampling techniques and sample size, as well as the data collection techniques that the researcher employed in coming up with the research results. The chapter thus justifies the rationale and logic behind employing a qualitative research methodology and the sampling procedure followed by the researcher.

### **3.2 Research methodology**

Research is basically a process of looking for and getting answers (Keyton 2011:2). According to Rajasekar et al (2013) research on its own is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. Research methodology is simply an approach used in generating data that is critical to a research project (Freebody 2003). To add onto that, research methodology can be noted as a systematic way to solve a problem. Research design may also be viewed as a research guideline or procedure with specific components such as methods and tasks that help in organizing information into a comprehensive study (Coolican 2004). In simpler terms, research design refers to the kind of approach taken in confronting research questions. This study adopted a qualitative research design because it analyses social phenomenon in terms of texts and images rather than numbers and statistics (Flick 2014). Such a research is important in social science research as it gives a deeper understanding of social and cultural phenomenon that might not be quantifiable.

### **3.3 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research is an inductive approach and tries to establish theory from research. According to David and Sutton (2004) qualitative research gives emphasis to words more than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. This study presented a qualitative case study approach to explore the influence that newsroom convergence has on media houses. Qualitative research methods were introduced and developed in social sciences to allow researchers to study and understand social and cultural phenomena (Clarke 2005). Flick (2014) adds that qualitative research analyses social phenomenon in terms of texts and images rather than numbers and statistics. In agreement, du Plooy (2008) notes that qualitative research adds weight and significance of a given study. This means that qualitative research is more plural and presents a

holistic approach to formerly marginalized variables that might not have been encompassed in research (Flick 2104:12). As further postulated by Clarke (2005:36), qualitative research methodologies can be historical, comparative and descriptive. The study takes a descriptive approach which is regarded by du Plooy (2008:31) as the most accurate form of research methodology. The nature of the study employed a case study design of the two daily papers, one from the private media and the other a state sponsored daily newspapers. Descriptive research is one which is based on human observation and responses whereby data can be obtained through interviews and questionnaires (Clarke 2005:39). The study makes use of this type of research as it relies on observation and in-depth interviews in data collection and this assists in understanding situations and trends and also allows recording of information for future analysis.

Interviews, focus groups and questionnaires are purely qualitative hence they give room for attitude and behavior which are key in dealing with people. The variables are largely unknown and the researcher concentrates on the context that may shape the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2011). Descriptive research is critical in dealing with participants in a social set ups such as *The Herald* and *daily News* newsrooms as observation of how they carry out their duties is critical in this study. In such studies, a hypothesis is created following the research process, because a limited amount of information exists on the subject matter. The flexibility of descriptive qualitative study enabled the researcher to make sense of - and construct meanings out of – the ongoing interactions between journalists, their immediate context of practice and their wider social context. This methodological approach reveals the contingent nature of cultural production and facilitated a close understanding of the dynamics of news making practices in which new technologies are deployed.

### **3.4 Secondary and primary data**

Data, as Gray (2009:4) suggests, denotes raw information. To David and Sutton (2004) data is what the researcher collects and it could be in the form of written records, interviews or observations. Primary data is raw information which is yet to be produced from a field study whereas secondary data refers to literature that has been produced and publicized. Given that the research is not entirely a new phenomenon the study is going to review secondary sources that include internet, written textbooks, dissertations and online newspapers. The study used information from *The Herald* and *daily News* websites as well as documented data from the

CEOs. Data such as for online users helped the researcher in determining the demographic factors of digital media audience of *The Herald* and *Daily News*. The study also drew its data from primary sources which is raw data collected in the field through the use of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. Primary data allowed the study to attain firsthand information hence it brings the study closer to reality and validity. The use of both secondary and primary data integrates the study to theoretical and practical contexts.

### **3.5 Unit of analysis**

A unit of analysis is a major entity that a study is focusing on, such as who or what is being studied. (Yin 2009:29). Groups of individuals, individuals and sometimes geographical units, to mention but just a few, can all be classified as units of analyses. In concurrence, Du-Ploy (1995) defines unit of analysis as the people, groups organizations, or things and anything else that has relevance whose characteristic we wish to observe, describe or explain. As further noted by Yin (2009:29) an individual is a primary unit of analysis. The unit of analysis in the study include the influence of newsroom convergence on the two daily newspapers in Zimbabwe, *The Herald* and the *daily News*. The study focuses on practice of professional journalism in the advent of new technologies in Zimbabwe. The study also deals with two daily newspapers, one privately owned and the other publicly owned. The participants include two CEOs; one from each newspaper, two editors; one from each newspaper and twelve online journalists with six from each newspaper. A total of forty online consumers of *The Herald* and *daily News* also participated in the study.

### **3.6 Target population**

As David and Sutton (2014:149) suggest, a targeted population denotes every possible case that could be included in the study, depending on the nature of the research question requirements. It is from this target population that elements that make up a study sample are derived, using various forms of sampling procedures (Yin 2014). The study made use of purposive and convenience sampling procedures. However, Neuton (2006) notes that the targeted population should closely represent all elements reflected in unit of analysis. The researcher's targeted population includes twenty-four online journalists (twelve males and twelve females), two

editors and two CEOs at *The Herald* and *daily News*. The study also targets forty consumers who view online publications of the *daily News* and *The Herald* newspapers. Online journalists are crucial to the study population as they are the ones who are directly affected by newsroom convergence. Whether online journalists uphold (or not) professionalism in their everyday activities of news gathering, processing and dissemination is key to this study. CEOs are an integral part of the decision and policy making such as purchasing of new technology and they also have access to information related to economic benefits thus they are vital to the study. Editors are also part and parcel of the gatekeeping process hence they play a part in professional journalism by the two newspapers. Newsroom convergence's effectiveness can only be achieved through consumption of online content hence such audience are also an important population to this study.

### **3.7 Sampling**

Sampling is a concept defined by Flick (2014:168) as the process of selecting a population in a research area. Creswell (2010) postulates that a study sample is a manageable number of the target population that is representative enough of the whole target population. David and Sutton (2014:149) note that what is key in sampling is to ensure that the sample is not biased through under- or over- representation of certain populations. The study employed non-probability sampling, which David and Sutton (2014) regard as those samples based on a population that has an unequal chance of being selected, hence difficult to select a sampling frame. There are various non-probability sampling techniques that are employed in the field of research and these include quota, convenience, and purposive sampling techniques. The study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques which conform well to the qualitative research paradigm to guide the study.

### **3.8 Convenience sampling**

Convenience sampling refers to the selection of sampling subjects depending on their expedient access, proximity and easy access to the researcher (Yin 2014). Convenience sampling technique was employed in coming up with the study sample of forty participants selected from the

consumers (online users) that are thought to have internet access. Convenience sampling technique conforms well to the qualitative research paradigm. The researcher assumes that the study would be highly sensitive and most participants might not be willing to take part hence the need for making use of a convenience sampling technique. The convenience sampling technique was most useful for the forty participants comprising twenty males and twenty females drawn from mostly internet cafés and Wi-Fi centres in a bid to realise the consumers who view the online publication of the two newspapers. This was done so as to get the different perceptions concerning how professional journalism has been or has not been used in the coverage of news as by *The Herald* and *daily News* online publications. Only those who were readily available and willing to volunteer were involved, thereby upholding ethical values and minimizing bias at the same time.

### **3.9 Purposive sampling technique**

Purposive sampling technique is when the researcher judges who fits into the study through the use of what is known expert's choice criterion. The researcher decides on who are the most suitable respondents (David and Sutton 2014:152). The study employed purposive sampling technique in coming up with a sample of twelve online journalists, six from *The Herald* and six from the *daily News* (with equal proportions of males and females from each newspaper) two CEOs (one from each daily) and two editors (one from each daily newspaper). This sample is representative enough of the target population under study. Purposive sampling technique demands that the researcher select who to participate and whom to study focusing on the objectives and aim of the research. According to Yin (2014) purposive sampling is most effective sampling techniques and populations that are small in proportion as the researcher depends on interviewing participants on a one on one basis. The need for the use of in-depth interview in this study is one of the critical reasons why the researcher employs purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique's main advantage is that it includes respondents who are specific and relevant to the study thereby improving accuracy.

### **3.10 Data collection instruments**

Data can be collected verbally, non- verbally and through the use of existing data (Flick 2014:44). Verbal data collection can be achieved through interviews, focus groups and narratives

while non-verbal data can be attained from observations. Existing data in the form of journal articles, dissertations, films and videos to mention a few. The study therefore made use of verbal and non-verbal data collection through the use of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires.

### **3.10.1 Interviews**

An interview, according to Crow (2013) is an interactional and social exchange of dialogue with the potential of learning on both participants. This definition that an interview is likely to assist both the interviewer and interviewee to know themselves better. However (Gray 2009: 370) defines an interview as a conversation between two people where one probes the other. Semi-structured interviews combine a pre-determined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (Patton 2006). The researcher came up with a semi-structured interview guide that contains questions and topics explored by the study. The researcher opted to use semi-structured interviews because it has a number of merits. It creates a positive relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is a very simple, efficient and practical way of generating information and or data about that cannot be easily observed for example; feelings, emotions and attitudes. People are able to talk about something in detail and depth. The meaning behind an action may be revealed as the interviewee is able to speak for themselves with little direction from the interviewer. Complex questions and issues can be clarified. The interviewer probes areas suggested by the respondents' answers.

Interviews are an important data generating technique that is critical in coming up with raw and undistorted data. Interviews incorporate the engagement of the researcher and the research respondents into a conversation where the researcher enquires and questions the views of the respondents on how they view the phenomenon under study. In the study the researcher made use of interviews. The primary data included interviewing editors and CEOs of *The Herald* and *daily News* as they helped in giving an account of how their newsrooms are evolving due to technological developments and the transition process from their point of view. Interviews attract a high rate of response from the respondents and also allow the researcher to make a follow up on any issue that is not clear. Interviews are also vital in capturing non-verbal cues which are important in generating information important for the study. In the study, two CEOs and two editors derived from both publications were interviewed face-to face using semi-structured

interview technique. While the main questions had been set prior to the interview, more questions emerged and were answered during the process thereby enriching the data collected. The data from such sources was also valuable as it was first-hand nature and from credible source. Flick (2014:207) asserts that interviews are more open hence they do not limit data collection. Resultantly, vast information was collected due to this method as such interviews make the most of the interpersonal communication.

### **3.10.2 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a set of written down questions that can be completed with or without the presence of the interviewer (Neuman 2006). Kapandura (2009:51) adds that a questionnaire is a method of data gathering that prompts from a respondent responses to pre-constructed questions in a given format. Those questionnaires that are completed in the presence of the researcher are termed self-administered. The researcher self-administered twenty-four questionnaires to journalists at *The Herald* and *daily News*. The journalists were made up of an equal number of males and females from both publications. Questionnaires sought to highlight how journalists are adopting new technologies and how they are also taking part in changing the traditional newsroom platform. The questionnaires were issued out to respondents and were collected after a day, giving the journalists enough time to respond as they were busy during most part of the day. Due to different diary schedules, the journalists were also not all available in the newsroom any point. The questionnaires contained open ended questions and were highly descriptive as they were for a manageable number of respondents hence the need for in-depth opinions (Gray 2009:338). Respondents were selected through the purposive sampling technique. The research employed questionnaires since questionnaires do not take much time for the researcher. The data gathered through the use of questionnaires is easy to administer and questionnaires are easy for the literate respondent to understand thereby making the data collection instrument effective. Another advantage is the fact that questionnaires limit respondents to the parameters of the researcher, thereby minimizing instances of irrelevant information.

### **3.10.3 Focus groups**

A focus group is any group discussion or interaction in which the researcher is actively attentive and encouraging, Kitszinger and Barbour in Flick (2014:250). Focus groups, as further noted by

Gray (2009:388), require high level of interest and involvement from all participants. In the study, a total of four focus group discussions were conducted, each with at least ten participants drawn from on line readers of *The Herald* and *daily News*. Participants in all groups were made up of equal number of males and females. The researcher moderated all the focus groups, introducing informality to make participants comfortable and at the same time making sure that attention does not shift from the main issues. Thus ever participant was given a chance to say something. To those who were reserved, they were assured that all answers were correct and would go a long way in determining and shaping the study. Focus groups have advantages such as effectiveness in dealing with sensitive topics and saving time as useful evaluations could be made from various individuals at the same time. Questions asked were related to participants' understanding of newsroom convergences, whether they access news from *The Herald* and *daily News* sites and their trust of online articles among other questions.

### **3.11 Data analysis techniques**

Data analysis, according to David and Sutton (2004) refers to the attempt to identify the presence or absence of meaningful themes, shared or conflicting ideas. He adds that the nature of data to be analysed can be directly linked to the way it was collected. The researcher relied on using qualitative approach on analyzing data as well as content and critical discourse analysis. Silverman (2013:140) postulates that data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously. As Flick (2014:370) suggests, qualitative data analysis is important in research as it is used to reach an overall summary and or conclusion.

#### **3.11.1 Content analysis**

Content analysis is a technique for systematically describing written, spoken or visual communication and usually includes the uses of newspapers, magazines and the internet among others (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007:77). Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) add that content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantifiable manner for the purpose of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantifiable manner for the purpose of measurable variables. As Gray (2009:500) advances, content analysis systematically and objectively classifies texts in respect of their peculiar characteristics. Qualitative content analysis can also be essential in case of texts with profound semiotics and narratives. In the study qualitative content analysis was employed to analyze



participants' written responses through questionnaires completed by journalist from The Herald and daily News. This helped in the interpretation and comprehension of the research findings.

### **3.11.2 Critical discourse analysis**

Critical discourse analysis, according to David and Sutton (2014:197) is a technique that covers a wide array of aspects from semiotics to narrative analysis. Gunter (2000) argues that discourse analysis puts forward the idea that news becomes the representation of the world in language. News is a representation in the sense of construction; it is not a value free indication of results each particular form of linguistic expression in a text-wording, syntactic option, has its reason. In other words media texts are not ideologically empty hence a critical discourse analysis approach assist in bringing out meaning hidden in texts. Critical discourse analysis focuses on studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of control, supremacy, discrimination and partiality. It examines how these discursive sources are negotiated and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts. Critical discourse analysis thus assisted in obtaining meaning from both *The Herald* and *daily News* online journalists, CEOs and editors responses. These were obtained through interviews and questionnaires. This approach helped to unpack the deeper meaning encoded in the response given by participants and created a better understanding how converged newsroom platforms impact to professional journalism.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics are employed to enhance the validity of the research results but most of all to protect the rights and participation of the participants (Stake 2008). Employing research ethics like informed consent enables the researcher to respect respondents and to ascertain that research participants are not coerced into participating in the study. As such this research is going to consider ethical principles of, informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for intellectual property rights. To enhance anonymity the names of the research participants were protected through the use of pseudonyms, alphabetical letters which were used in identifying the research participants so as to protect the actual identities of the respondents. The researcher also got verbal consent from the research participants before the interviews. The researcher ascertained that participants who took part in the study did so out of their own volition and will. No single

participant was coerced into participating in the research. The researcher explained, explicitly, the nature of the research and the need for the participants to take part in the research out of their own will, without fear of victimisation or violence on their person. The researcher therefore collected the informed consent of the participants before the respondents participate in the study. To employ ethical investigation the researcher also respected intellectual property rights through acknowledging borrowed literature and works from other scholars. The research took a professional cue and any direct quotation, citation and or any other material collected through either secondary data review or any other means was properly referenced and acknowledged. The researcher only used the information generated from the interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions for the purpose of this research only as stated in the opening statement of the interview guides.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

The chapter highlighted the research methodology that the research followed. The chapter highlighted how the research came about with the data that the research presented. Data collection techniques, the techniques' advantages sampling procedure and the data location points were all categorised. The following chapter highlights the political economy and organizational analysis of *The Herald* and *the daily News*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter analyses the organizational structure and political economy of *The Herald* and *daily News*. Issues of ownership, funding, control of the two publications are discussed in relation to how they affect the print media operations. Understanding the environment that the media operates helps in trends, policies and techniques adopted by the newsrooms in light of new media convergence. This therefore gives a background on factors that affect newsroom convergence and professionalism.

### 4.2 Political economy

Media ownership and control in Zimbabwe is embedded in politics and this has an effect on the content that the audiences get from the media. Thus Smith (1776) defines political economy as “...a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator concerned with the twofold objective of providing a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people...” He suggests that political economy is the study of social relations, particularly power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources including communication resources. “In its more ambitious form, it is the study of control and survival of social life” (Mosco 2009:25). This denotes a control and survival of the controlled. The issues of ownership and control of the media take centre stage throughout the communication process.

Golding and Murdock (1991:18) note that critical political economy is interested in the interplay between economic organisation and political, social and cultural life and their implications on basic moral questions of justice and equity for public good other than economic and technical efficiency. Thus political economy of the media relates therefore, to how power relations and how they affect media operations. Herman and Chomsky (1987) add that there are filters in the communication process that the media are subjected in the manufacture of consent. This means that these factors have a direct bearing on media to the effect that they influence how what is

produced by the media. Power relations affect the content, processing, distribution and markets forces for any media house. This in turn plays a central role in outlining the nature of internal and external publics that journalists from *The Herald* and *daily News* operate in. Such factors provide the basis of how professionalism is portrayed in the converged newsroom.

Critical political economy of the media looks at how the patterns and processes of ownership relate to the range of discourses. According to Golding and Murdock in Curran and Gurevitch (2000:73) critical political economy of the media is "...interested in seeing how the making and taking of meaning is shaped at every level by the structured asymmetries in social relations..." This means that at every level within media and communication structures, there are inequalities that emanate from how resources are distributed. Mindful of the fact that fifty-percent government ownership of *The Herald*, the newspaper's daily operations are heavily influenced by the government. As a major shareholder the government has the overall say in decisions that of the paper's content, its slant, processing and distribution of news. Government intervenes to safeguard its interests and thus use the newspaper as a propaganda tool that communicates its policies. This means that newspapers are not sovereign within capitalist societies such as Zimbabwe.

McChesney (1989) states that political economy of the media has become more economic than political. He adds that the media actively frame issues and promote news stories that serve the needs and concerns of the elite. This means that due to consumerism the print media are more focused on making profits and gaining advertising revenue. Both newspapers; *The Herald* and *daily News* are commercial entities that survive on advertising revenue and newspaper sales, hence the content that they produce is meant to attract consumers and advertisers at the same time. Thus Herman and Chomsky add that this constitute the second filter in media which is advertising and is responsible for most of the media's income. Mosco (1996: 143-144) defines this as 'commodification' and states that it constitutes the process of transforming use values into exchange values. Mosco (1996) adds this results in the changing of products whose value stems from their ability to meet individual and social needs into products whose value is set by what they can bring in the marketplace. Thus both scholars concur that the need to make profits has led to the commercialism of media content. Thus in *The Herald* and *daily News* many adverts that a crafted in the way that the advertisers want which are usually entertainment oriented. Thus

both publications seem to have become business entities and coupled by economic challenges that have marred Zimbabwe over the years, the need to make profits is equally detrimental to survival. The commodification is however two faced. There is the commodification of media products to consumers such that prominence is given to what audience like to hear about. This influences purchase and subscription of media products such as *Daily News* on the go and *The Herald* daily update which come as instant news updates necessitated by new media technologies. The other form of commodification is the selling of audience to advertisers where the popularity of a publication resultantly attracts advertise to a market of consumers. The use of catchy headlines which are mostly deceiving, to attract sells also highlights how the media has become highly commercialized.

Herman and Chomsky (1988:14) assert that the third filter is that of sourcing, where the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The state owned media such as *The Herald* rely heavily upon news provided them by corporate and government sources, which have themselves developed enormous bureaucracies to provide this material to the media. In effect, these bureaucracies subsidize the media and the media must be careful not to antagonize such an important supplier. Thus the credibility of news sources for *The Herald* is based on prominence, political affiliation and social status. Furthermore, these corporate and government sources are instantly credible by accepted journalistic practices. Anti-elite sources, on the other hand, are regarded with utmost suspicion and have tremendous difficulty passing successfully through this filter. Thus the *daily News* makes use of prominent opposition parties' leadership and the opposition elite as credible sources of their news. This therefore ensures the echoing of the same sentiments with these publications which are highly polarized. Newsroom convergence therefore entails that more audience within the country and beyond get updates that manipulate them of how the situation is like n the country through the lens of such biased sources.

Although the government does not own the *daily News*, the use of propaganda filter that Herman and Chomsky (1988) term 'flak' still ensures conformity and protects the image of the government. The use of flak is characterizes government intervention through use of draconian media laws to infringes mass media from exercise media freedom. For example the use of the Access to Information Protection Privacy Act (AIPPA) is typical of government influence on

local media to ensure that they do not access some information that or demand accountability from parastatals and other arms of government. Thus all media houses are affected and liable to prosecution if not. The *daily news* due to its political slant has been, more often than not, in a series of legal battles that has seen its closure once and arrests of journalists and editors several times.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) through their propaganda model assert that the media serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity. Those who dominate the society include the elite and ruling class that Karl Marx terms as the base in his base and superstructure model. While the shaping and making of meaning is not the sole purpose of the media it runs throughout every stage in the communication process.

With reference to Herman and Chomsky (1988) propaganda model, media content is greatly influence by ownership. They add that the ownership is however centralized in the hands of a few. Marx (1974) denotes that this can be expressed through the base and superstructure model. Marx states that the base is characterized by media owners and controllers while the superstructure consists of state apparatus. The base shapes the superstructure whilst the superstructure maintains base. *The Herald* as a mouthpiece of its owners, the government and Zanu PF; advances ideologies and propaganda that ensure that they retain power. On the other hand the government determines what and how *The Herald* operates and what content is produced. Similarly, the *daily News* gives relevance to the opposition and its funders while they in turn heavily influencing the content they produce. Such communication manipulates the audiences and shortchanges them at the same time.

### **4.3 The Herald Mission**

The ZimPapers mission statement is to produce newspapers, computer paper, cheques, books, and other printed matter including packaging of the highest quality at competitive prices. *The Herald* also aims to offer publishing services of the highest quality at competitive prices that add value to their customers, employees and the shareholders. The newspaper has managed to fulfill its mission to be competitive as the Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS) 2015 regarded the newspaper is the largest in the country. However the newspaper due government ownership and control is biased in favor of the ruling party ZANU PF. This political slant

therefore makes the mission of adding value to customers unattainable as audiences are short changed of accurate information.

#### **4.4 Daily News mission**

*Daily News* seeks to dominate the country's media market as well as expanding regionally. The newspaper aims to serve and provide information to the public, through professionalism, courage and responsibility. The *daily News* mission entails producing quality papers for a profit, serving public interest and that of the company. The mission also include fairness, objectivity, and integrity; and at the same be the employer of choice. The *daily News* has a fairly large circulation of about 6 000 (ZAMPS 2015). The same survey also acknowledges that the *daily News* produces the best quality of newspaper in the country. Thus the publication fulfils its aim of producing the best quality of newspaper in the country. However the fact that the newspaper is biased in support oppositional political parties does not tally with its mission of objectivity and fairness.

#### **4.5 The Herald vision**

Richardson (2001) defines vision as "the desired outlook of the company". In other words vision communicates a company's set of direction and intended trajectory. *The Herald* vision is to be a leading newspaper, publishing, printing and packaging company in Zimbabwe and beyond as well as to service existing markets and continually search for new ones both within and outside Zimbabwe. With reference to the 2015 Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS), *The Herald* has the largest circulation in the standing at 42 000 with its weekly sister paper *Sunday Mail* second at 38 000. This fulfills its mission of becoming the largest paper in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.6 Daily News vision**

*Daily News*' major vision is to become the ultimate leading media house in the country providing and catering for the needs of every society in as much as the production of news is concerned. Just like any other corporate entities, *daily News* as an organisation seeks to dominate the country's media market as well as expanding regionally. The newspaper also aims at to introduce a number of new publications in magazines and newspapers in local language. Cognisant of the fact that *daily News* is part of the main stream print media, the publication can be considered to be on the right path in becoming the leading the media house. However competition from other players such *News Day* and *The Herald* makes attaining the vision difficult. The fact that the

*daily News* is polarised against the government however, makes leading the industry almost impossible.

#### **4.7 The Herald core values**

*The Herald* core values are centered on customer satisfaction, good cooperate governance, profitability and provision of quality products and services. The organization also aims to be the employer of choice. While its vision includes servicing existing and new markets, adoption of newsroom convergence becomes a step in the right direction. This is because of the ability to penetrate both the broadcast and online markets presents the publication with new opportunities over numerous platforms. As Schudson (2011:3) notes, the internet poses dangers such as disintegration consumers and devaluation of content. The establishment of *The Herald* online publications such as Facebook page, Twitter and blog create new opportunities to the publication and creates more markets to generate advertising revenue. However, use of online news platforms challenges the policy makers to limit the impact of the disadvantages of the internet.

#### **4.8 The daily News core values**

Core values are specialized standards set by a company regarding the method of its functioning, decision making, problem solving, and customer service. The core values of *daily News* are to attract profit and giving the business a unique identity. Benefits of core values include alerting clients and potential consumers of what the company is all about. Core values are essential in maintaining proper corporate relations with the media, customers, public, and other business entities. They also aid companies in decision-making processes. Other core values include entail truthfulness, accuracy, fairness and balanced reporting. The organisation has in the past ran protracted legal battles with the government hence the need to remain guided by the core values and prevent losing money through legal battles.

#### **4.9 The Herald objectives**

*The Herald* objectives are to produce a publication that is of the highest quality, serving the interests of both the community and that of the company. The newspaper is of national coverage and is popular amongst the audience, thus suggesting that it fulfills the objective of serving the



community. While the newspaper is printed in Harare, the newspaper is distributed daily to all corners of the country. However the adoption and use of new media technologies makes the publication readily accessible to audience in all corners of the country where and beyond. Thus those in remote areas and in the diaspora can still get to know what is going in the country thereby staying informed and updated. This fulfills the objective of serving the community in a wider sense.

*The Herald's* other objective is to be fair in its reportage. While a news item might be balanced in terms of having various voices, these are mainly Zanu PF and government sources who basically echo the same sentiments. This is essentially because the government owns majority of shares in terms ownership and control. Hence it has the overriding decision when it comes to the newspaper's policies. Thus there is lack of diversity in terms of political parties' representation by the newspaper. This therefore entails that it maintains a biased slant in favor of Zanu PF and the government. Such bias thus suggest that *The Herald* fails to meet its objectives of fair reportage.

#### **4.10 Daily News objectives**

The *daily News* objectives are to serve and provide information to the public, produce quality newspapers for a profit, serving the interests of the community and the company. The *daily News* also aims to stay in touch with modern technical production. The use of social media and other networking sites shows that the newspaper is making significant progress with the use of modern technologies. This is shown by the use of computers, smartphones and HD video cameras by journalists. Use of such technologies improves the efficiency of daily journalistic routines from sourcing, processing and dissemination of information.

The *daily News* also seeks to offer the readers and advertisers the best facilities in the market. This means that the newspaper aims to satisfy its advertisers and readers. Satisfying audience translates to fulfilling the roles of educating, informing and entertaining audience. However this also entails providing fair and objective news which adequately reflect occurrences taking place in all parts of Zimbabwe. However, due to high levels of media polarisation, the newspaper fails to reflect and report adequately on news. This is because of the bias against the ruling party and government. Thus this objective is relatively unrealistic in face of politically biased media.

#### **4.11 The Herald Ownership and Control**

Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) controls the major stake and has the majority voting power of 51.09 percent in Zimpapers. The rest of the shares are divided amongst various companies such as Old Mutual Investment Corporation owns, the Zimbabwe Pension Fund and First Mutual Life Assurance, National Social Security Authority (NSSA) are some of the companies that have a stake in the shares of the company that is Zimpapers. It is of paramount importance to note that of all the companies that have shares in the paper none of them has the majority share thus none of the companies has complete voting power. Therefore, in essence it is safe to say that *The Herald* is owned by the government together with other entities.

Of major significance about the ownership and control of *The Herald* is the fact that government and ruling party Zanu PF owns more than a fifty percent stake, therefore it is the government that has an overall say over the publication (Munyuki 2005). While the publication was used to advanced white interests during the pre-independence era, after independence the oppressed became the later day oppressor. This came as *The Herald* is a tool of advancing propaganda by the elite to the majority. Moyo (2002) postulates that opposition and criticism is viewed in negative light hence frequently termed “regime change agenda.” Most critics of the government such Western countries, oppositional political parties and the civic society are regarded as enemies of the state who are set on reversing the gains of the liberation struggle. Mukasa (2003) notes that Zimbabwean print media is a true reflection of the Marxist ideologies that are premised on the fact that the ideas of the elite and ruling class prevail at any given time and age. Hence as such *The Herald* is not only a lap dog but an effective tool that mediates to the people on behalf of the government instead of vice versa. Convergence of such a highly politicized and polarized newsroom thereby presents its own set of predicaments and solutions at the same time in as much as journalism is concerned. Coupled by the fact that the publication is controlled and owned by the government, the possibility of *The Herald* journalists upholding utmost professionalism becomes debatable.

#### **4.12 The daily News ownership and control**

Ownership and control is the major determinant of what and how news will be packaged and distributed by any media organisation. Strive Masiyiwa is one of the funders of the *daily News*. Since retaining their license in 2010, *daily News* has been funded by Jethro Goko and other

unidentified donors. American billionaire George Soros' Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) is notorious for funding regime change agenda in Africa (especially Zimbabwe) and other parts of the world has been linked to *daily News* funding. The same article reveals that OSISA sponsored opposition party MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai and his delegation's trip to Washington DC in April 2007. (The Patriot July 2, 2015). Thus Soros has been linked with both MDC and *daily News* funding in a bid to topple the government and bring about "democracy." Newbold et al (2002) asserts funding is a major determinant for any organization and the same applies with newspapers. Donors have since been associated with pushing a regime change agenda hence the *daily News* thrives on political news reportage. The newspaper supports opposition with the ability to oust the ruling party such as the MDC, ZimPf and the G40 faction. Thus *daily News* headlines are always on political and anti-government because that is the content that their Western sponsors wants to see.

The newspaper has been labelled as a Western mouthpiece as it focuses on news article that frame President Mugabe as a senile tyrant who has brought immense suffering on the people of Zimbabwe. This kind of reportage has created sour relations between the government and the newspaper. In the face of economic challenges that have faced the country over a number of years, donor funding has sustained the newspaper. President Mugabe has been accused of stalling the country's development, human rights violations and compromising democracy by allegedly rigging elections. He has also been regarded as incapacitated to lead due his age and alleged health ailments. And thus in their coverage, *daily News* emphasizes on these aspects.

Apart from donor funding and that from shareholders, sales and advertisements generate income for the daily News. The *daily News* apart from advancing political agenda also aims at profit making. With reference to the 2014 ZAMPS the *daily News* is the second most common and extensively read publication in Zimbabwe after *The Herald*. Such popularity with audience attracts advertisers because through preferred media their products and services gains consumers (Kotler 1994). Econet Wireless and Telecel are the country's biggest advertising brands. The study therefore considers factors as funding, ownership and control to the overall practice of professional journalism in a converged newsroom. The two media organisations operate under distinct environments hence how they adapt new technologies becomes all-inclusive with regards to the study.

### 4.13 The Herald editorial policy

Editorial policy refers to the rules and regulations that govern the operation of a media institution. It outlines guidelines such as the do's and don'ts of the day to day news sourcing, processing, packaging and dissemination. Hall (1980) suggests that reality is constructed. Thus reality, as noted by Kaid et al (1991) can be relayed, subjective and constructed. This means that apart from the basics of educating, informing and entertaining the masses, the media has a task of creating reality. Such 'encoding' by the media helps to shape public opinion and results in the audience decoding of preferred reading of media texts. *The Herald* is at task to uphold the ruling class ideologies thereby shaping public opinion on certain factors such as who to vote which is Zanu PF come election times. Editorial policy employs techniques such as framing in order to achieve dominant reading. As Schudson (2011:7) defines journalism as "...information and commentary on contemporary affairs taken to be publicly important", such views are those of the elite and the ruling class. For instance President Mugabe's age, which is currently at ninety-two; is regarded as an accumulation of unparalleled wisdom while Tsvangirai is framed as a shallow minded womanizer. Such policies that set certain agendas have an effect in the overall operations of journalists in the newsroom hence affect credibility, fairness and professional journalism as a whole.

The effect of such policies is however debatable as audience are not passive but are have their own interpretation of media texts, based on their social, religious, cultural and political backgrounds among other variables. Schudson (2011:35) notes that communities are not heterogeneous hence there will always a struggle for credibility and fairness from all sectors of the society. Once a group is marginalized, credibility is lost. Gays and the opposition are usually marginalized hence are only mentioned in the negative by the state media such as *The Herald*. By analyzing the editorial policy of the newspaper under study the research will seek to determine how much the practice of professional journalism is upheld or dntrodden. *The Herald* is a state enterprise that is biased towards the government thus impartiality is lost and the audience also lose faith due to such anomalies. Journalists thus abandon professionalism in their quest to adhere to editorial policies and this cripples viewership by some online audience as they lose trust in an untruthful and highly politicized publication.

The *Herald Editorial* department's main duties are sourcing and writing of news articles. The department consists of reporters, sub editors, desk editors, photographers and the editor. All personnel strive to adhere to their editorial policy and at the same time disseminating credible, accurate and up to date information. The need to be timeous and convenient gives credence to the adoption of newsroom convergence. Coupled with the company editorial policy the adoption of newsroom convergence has a casual and effect relationship with journalists, hence the need to study the influence of newsroom convergence to the practice of professional journalism.

Junior and senior reporters write stories and forward them to desk editors. These desk editors are the first level of fact and proof reading. The editor the overall say on what articles appear in the newspaper and in what manner. The editor is also involved in the hiring and firing of journalists. Caesar Zvayi has been *The Herald* editor since October 2013 to date. Zvayi holds a Biological Sciences and Geography degree from Bindura University of Science Education, Post Graduate Diploma in Media and Communication Studies and a Master of Arts Degree in Communication and Media studies both from the University of Zimbabwe. He also has a strong political background affiliated to Zanu PF, hence is a typical tool of reinforcing government ideology. The fact that he holds major qualifications in politics and that he is affiliated to Zanu Pf was a strategy to ensure loyalty and adherence to the stakeholders such as the government.

The editor is held responsible for all material published in each publication hence the need to be thorough in his editing. Assistant editors help in gatekeeping and editing while sub editors ensure the newspaper is perfect from content to page layout among other tasks. The Group Editorial Executive oversees and reigns on the editor and he reports to the executive. Constantly the editor is reminded to tread carefully or risks suspension or expulsion. For instance, the board has in the past suspended Zvayi for overlooking a business story that highlighted the deteriorating economic situation in the country. While it was a true situation, Zvayi got a suspension as the article was considered as undermining the efforts of the government of economic revival. Fear is therefore prevalent amongst the editorial department as a result. Such situations affect the conduct of journalist in their daily routines and whether or not convergence offers reprieve is part and parcel of the study. This means that the title is not based on merit but rather a site of power struggle to manipulate and influence decision making.

Thus the political economy of *The Herald* is best described by the way audiences interact on the public sphere which in this age of technological developments is characterised by social media platforms. Marx and Engels cited in Curran (1982:22) states that “The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of production are subject to it.” Thus summing up that *The Herald* serves as a mouthpiece of the government, a relationship that is determined by the ownership and control of the publication.

#### **4.14 The daily News editorial policy**

The *daily News* editorial policy gives credence to the promotion of democracy and good governance. Thus the publication keeps the government on check and gives emphasis on their foibles. Such principles clash with the government of the day as it paints those in authority in a negative light. A typical example can be the Operation Murambatsvina. After the *daily News* and the cooperate world criticized the way the operation was conducted in 2002, government made a U-turn and embarked on the damage control program under the Operation Garikai/ Hlalani Kuhle. Thus given such situations, technological developments enhance traditional media and contribute in bringing injustices to book. Thus converged newsroom create a platforms open platforms to ensure citizen engagement in public interest matters.

*Daily news*, like any other organisation faces competition on a daily basis. While the publication mainly targets anti-government consumers, there is a constant need to up their game and penetrate new markets. As such, it has to create a competitive advantage in order to survive. This is simply because audience and consumers in general prefer one product over the other due to certain peculiarity that is distinctive amongst the rest. The paper thus thrives on strongly condemning the government, without fear. Thus the preparedness of the editorial team to face any challenge over their reportage in the face of stringent laws and regulations becomes unmatched. The newspaper becomes a perfect substitute for the state controlled newspapers and media. As media has become internet based, the effect of such reportage online will be highlighted by the study. The resultant effect on professionalism is thereby determined.

The *daily News* is published under the ANZ which is directed by Jethro Goko. ANZ publishes various newspapers such as the *daily News*, the *daily News on Sunday* and *The Weekend Post*. These publications have one group editor, Stanely Gama who is also responsible for the editorial

department. The group editor of the newspaper is Stanely Gama. The *daily News* maintains and follows firm stipulations that ensure that they publish timeously. As Mabwezara (2013: 147) new media has changed mainstream journalism as personal time has been intertwined with work. This means that a journalists can break news from the comfort of their homes without incurring any costs such as transport and printing. Thus such ease of carrying out business assists the *daily News* in beating deadlines thereby enhancing their professional duties.

The editorial department has various desks such as sports, entertainment and politics among others. These desks are headed by desk editors who receive stories from reporters. The news desk editors also report to the editor hence a thorough job is done before news articles are sent for publishing.

A board of directors and management is responsible for the appointment of the editors. Since the editor is responsible for all publication, utmost consideration is given during the selection of a capable editor. Gama holds a Politics and Public Management degree from the University of Zimbabwe. He has a vast experience in the media industry both public and private. For instance he has worked for *The Herald* and the *Financial Gazette* in the past. Such a background is essential in the day to day conduction of his duties at the daily News as the newspaper is a major critic of the status quo.

Therefore, desk editors and ultimately the editor have to ensure the article that he approves to appear in the paper are good enough to sell the newspaper to the advertisers. This is so because the paper relies heavily on the money that is generated from advertising revenue. As in every media organization there are several filters that act as gatekeepers of information. At the *daily News* gatekeeping begins with the desk editors.

The advent of new technologies brought about newsroom convergence. The developments have challenged the traditional top-down approach to news dissemination, the audience have become part and parcel of news production. As Alejandro (2010:12) postulates, the internet has broken down barriers between journalists and audience hence the gatekeeper in no longer in full control of information. Audience are now in charge of determining what news is and setting their own agenda without newsroom filters. Thus *The Herald* and *daily News* in their pursuit for online markets and audience have become vulnerable.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

The chapter has presented and analyzed organizational structures of *The Herald* and the *daily News*. The political economy and daily operations of the two publications have also been presented. The next chapter presents and analyses research findings.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The chapter becomes the ultimate part of the study as it presents the research findings. The data was presented qualitatively, with the use of critical discourse and content analysis. The findings are based on the research objectives identified in prior chapters which sought to establish the influence of converged newsroom platforms to the practice of professional journalism. The data was obtained through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups of CEOs, editors, journalists and online audiences of *The Herald* and *daily News*. The data would be presented using tables.

#### 5.2 Overview of findings

Fig 3: The table below shows the methods of data collection and the number of participants who were involved in the study.

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Number of targeted responses</b>	<b>Number of responses given</b>
Interviews	4	4
Questionnaires	24	18
Focus groups	40	36

The table above show the responses that the researcher sought out to achieve and those that were obtained to constitute the findings of the study. The research carried out sought to answer the main research a question which was to assess the extent to which media convergence influences

professional journalism at *The Herald* and *daily News*. The research was carried out within the period from July 2014 to date. Data was collected using interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. The two CEOs, Chris Goko of *daily News* and Pikirayi Deketeke of *The Herald* were interviewed. Interviews were used for the CEOs and editors so to get as much information as possible even from unscripted questions. While both interviews were to be carried out face to face, Goko was interviewed over the phone as he was not physically available for the interview. These interviews sought how newspaper management was dealing with the new option of publishing content in different formats. The interviews were administered to allow instantaneous and in-depth responses. Face to face interviews were also carried out with editors of both publications bringing the total of interviews carried out to four and equalled the intended number, thus achieving high response rate.

A total of twenty-four journalists were handed out questionnaires and had to bring them back after 24 hours. This allowed them time outside their busy schedules to respond fully to the questionnaire. These journalists constituted twelve males and twelve females from both organisations of various age groups. However only twenty-one questionnaires were returned as two journalists from *The Herald* misplaced them and one from the *daily News* could not be found after the designated response time frame.

The researcher also moderated four focus groups, each with ten participants from Harare's Marlborough residential area which was within the researcher's proximity. The participants were broken down to groups of ten so that the participants were manageable. Each group had an equal proportion of male and female participants of the age-group between 18-45. This was to ensure gender balance and also the age group was to capture the most active online media participants and users. However, during the focus group discussion, four participants pulled out of two groups. Hence the focus group research findings were obtained from thirty-six participants. The response could be considered as relatively high as it was above fifty percent.

### **5.3 Media convergence influence to *The Herald* and *daily News***

Interview conducted sought the meaning and understanding of newsroom convergence and what it entails for the CEOs and editors of *The Herald* and *daily News*. The study revealed that respondents gave a definition that was related their personal interaction with newsroom

convergence phenomenon. The range of responses by the CEOs and editors were centralized on that newsroom convergence is the ability of a media house to be versatile in terms of positively utilizing and adopting new media technologies. They also added that it entailed maximizing returns by penetrating new markets and utilizing the digital platform to reach audiences as well as selling them to advertisers.

Furthermore, the four interview findings revealed that while there were changes in the newsroom due to newsroom convergence, these changes were more pronounced in a virtual in the virtual sphere. This means that there were a few changes in the newsroom physically than on the digital platform. This therefore tallies with what Papacharissi (2012) asserts in revisiting public sphere theory, suggesting that the internet is the modern day form of public sphere. Thus it cannot be ascribed to any geographical or physical changes but happens in the borderless virtual communities. Thus correspondents to the desk is done the through the same networks, thereby changing how journalists operate but doing

Findings from fourteen journalists through questionnaires on the meaning of newsroom convergence from was defined as the ability to not only take photographs and of writers to blog and tweet among others. This means that convergence in itself remains relative in definition but can be expressed in a myriad ways. However what remains significant is the fact that what respondents illustrated was that media convergence has influenced the two publications remarkably. One journalist made reference to the existence of convergence desks as a sign of how much importance has been given to media convergence. The presence of convergence desks in the newsroom signifies that the new media phenomenon has found its way into the traditional newsroom and has been given its due importance not only in the virtual sphere but also in geographical spaces, thereby implying that media convergence has change the structure of the newsroom.

While there was the presence of media convergence in both newsroom it did not however entail that there were specific journalists who focused mainly on online journalism. In fact, only editors of the online desks are specifically assigned to the task of online news. All journalists from both newsrooms provided information to the desk, as part of their routines in the newsroom. Thus creating an environment whereby journalists obtain information not only as text but also as

audio-visuals in order to feed all platforms. Thus answering the main research question that indeed newsroom convergence influences *The Herald* and *daily News*.

Focus groups with online audiences gave another perspective to newsroom convergence as most groups described it as the presence of the mainstream print media such as *The Herald* and *daily News* in their social media circles. While three groups agreed on this, one group suggested that convergence is the reaching out of the so previously “distant” traditional media to its audience and they used words such as “cool” and “awesome” to describe the developments. Such responses came from those participants of the younger age group. Thus according to the diffusion of innovations theory by Rogers (1995: 207) it can be deduced that young people can be regarded as early adopters of new technology than their older audiences.

This means that the audience due to the ease of access to the publications is a great development that they appreciate, reflecting social shaping of technology theory (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006). The fact that those who were excited by newsroom convergence goes along with Van Noort (2007) who suggests that newsroom convergence was adopted after print newspapers realized they were losing younger audience. Thus newsroom convergence meet the demands of a modern day audience that relies on the smartphone for everyday news and communication. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the interactive nature of digital media creates a sense of belonging and participation in the formerly exclusive public arena by the online audiences of *The Herald* and *daily News*.

#### **5.4 The effect of newsroom convergence to professional journalism**

From the research findings it can be deduced that the pursuit of profits has led to the shunning of professionalism. Editors in their interview responses revealed that newsroom convergence has brought a new way of conducting news production and dissemination of news. The CEOs and editors during interviews admitted that while professionalism is fundamental, the market force is equally important. Thus efficiency attracts consumers and advertisers to a publication’s online content, hence the need to be the preferred choice. While both publications compete against other publications to break news, professionalism is compromised. The instantaneous nature of new media technologies has led to a stiffer competition and the need for greater efficiency which in turn weigh in on professional standards. This means that media managers are tasked with

ensuring that the media as a business is viable while at the same time meeting the objectives stipulated by shareholders. As postulated by Dennis et al (2003), newsroom convergence is a strategic option presented by the multimedia platforms. This means that newsroom convergence avails new opportunities for media management for both *The Herald* and *daily News* although the effects boil down to increased work in shorter periods of time for journalists.

Furthermore, Professionalism is classified into two categories, occupational and organizational professionalism, Obrening (2009:12). He adds that organizational professionalism is from a management perspective whilst occupational is for the managed. The managers use professionalism to control issues related to authority, legality and is based on educational standards and occupational training. On the other hand occupational professionalism is the more traditional form that is characterized by discretionary decision-making in complex situations. This explains why throughout the interviews, editors and CEOs describe professionalism from a viewpoint of mainly avoiding lawsuits and their journalists' educational competence.

Findings from twelve questionnaire responses showed that professionalism is not entirely the ultimate goal in a converged newsroom platform. Whereas journalists are required to submit figures and facts that are required to be appropriate and true, it is not always the case that comments which are given are to be honest. McQuail (2010) points out that in any newsroom ethics are enshrined in the code of conduct. Therefore, it is up to the journalist to adhere to these codes of ethics, which refer to a set of principles of professional conduct that are adopted at a personal level by the journalists themselves. Thus it becomes part and parcel of self-censorship.

Findings from sixteen questionnaires response detailed how much these journalists state that they uphold ethics and do not partake in plagiarism. In the years they have been in the profession of journalism they were on record to state that bound to uphold the expectations that require them stick to the highest levels of professional journalistic integrity. This would enable them to safeguard content integrity and at the same time to go an extra mile whilst still carrying out wide coverage and enhanced content. However the questionnaires also revealed that frequency of desktop sourcing however suggested that more than ever before, there is less time set aside for field work. True journalism characterized by being in the field recording events as they unfold faces extinction. Thus news is recycled from one newsroom to the other, thereby giving room for plagiarism. Therefore in as much as the editors and journalists claimed that there is need to

uphold ethics more than there is the need to make a profits and this weighs in on professionalism. Thus such findings concur with the social shaping of technology theory, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006:248) that technology shapes society which in this case are *The Herald* and *daily News* journalists.

However, through the same questionnaires responses, journalists agreed that comments directed at them on digital platforms affect. Sixty percent of journalist stated that they sometimes avoid adding by lines on highly controversial issues in which they are likely to be called attacked. Thus the lack of by lines shows that there is lack of confidence by the journalists in their own work thereby subjecting their professionalism to possible doubts. If they cannot stand in for their own work then it's as good as there is no journalism at all. Thus Curran and Gurevitch quote Schudson (1987:59) where he says that the quality of art lies in how it is received. Therefore bad feedback denotes poor journalism and a sign that of lacking professionalism.

With the study findings through the use of focus groups, it came to light that while online information is held with a pinch of salt, online audiences of *The Herald* and *Daily News* all seem to concur that that the sources uphold the utmost professionalism hence their content is more credible than any other internet sources. This is because of institutional professionalism that the two publications have formerly enjoyed and exhibited through print media. One participant noted that the trust singles out the two publications from what she termed “unscrupulous” internet news sources that are emerging. Thus suggesting that this audience is skeptical of adopting new technologies as stipulated by the diffusion of innovations theory, (Rogers 1995). Thus in as much as the issues to deal with licensing and registration with the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) may seem draconian they do help media organisations to obtain trust from audiences. This institution is what Banda (2010) suggests is threatened by digital media, when he talks of “deinstitutionalized and “deprofessionalised.” Thus it can be deduced that professional journalism is under threat in light of newsroom convergence.

However only two participants suggested that while there is a general consensus on the credibility of online publications by the two newspapers there is need to confirm with the hard copy. The researcher observed that the two respondents were the eldest amongst the group hence the reason why they entrusted traditional hard copies to online sources. It can thus be deduced that elderly sections of the population still believe in the need for a hard copy in the face of new

technology. Nonetheless, the fact that the majority find the online sources adequate shows that journalist from both publications have managed to uphold professionalism and have resultantly retained trust amongst their audiences across various platforms. This means that when practiced diligently, converged newsroom can enhance traditional due to ease of access and affordability to consumers. This therefore answers the main research question on how newsroom convergence influences professionalism.

As noted in earlier chapters, the *daily News* is mostly read by people who are opposed to the ideas of Zanu (PF) and generally hate the policies of the party. *The Herald* on the other hand supports the status quo and is rather a mouthpiece of the government. The media is thus highly polarized. With the advent of newsroom convergence, audience are using the platforms such as the two publications Facebook pages and websites to bring in citizen participation that helps to dilute the highly polarized mass media content. Thus with more and more citizens engaging in debates that affect them, journalists are pushed to verify their facts prior to publishing or else risk being shamed on social media. From the findings obtained from online audience through focus groups, consumers are willing to name and shame journalist who publish information that they can justify is not true. Hence this resultantly pushes journalist to try and make sure they avoid untruths and uphold professionalism by so doing.

### **5.5 The enrichment of media content through newsroom convergence**

Findings from questionnaires by journalists from both newsrooms indicated that the internet is valuable not only for disseminating information but also for sourcing information. Thus satellite communication has allowed for the use of computers and internet to provide information on various topics under one roof. Journalist noted that use of computers has helped them to trace on issues related to their news stories. They added that this provided them with strong background and a wider perspective on how and what to write in their new articles. As asserted by Deuze (2007) news making practices of the day are given meaning by the convergence cultures in production and consumption of media. One health desk reporter highlighted how the internet helped her to cover a story on Siamese twins who had their heads conjoined. She added that knowledge on existence and probability of birth defects helped her to have an open minded approach, contrary to societal pressures which highlighted it as a bad omen. Thus regarding the internet as a valuable source of information to media personnel. This means that converged

newsroom platforms, through use of many platforms enriches media content. This also concurs with the social shaping of technology theory that explains how technology shapes the society, (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006)

However forty-five percent of the questionnaire findings also showed that the dialogical nature of new media has allowed audience and mass media to engage in regular debates over various issues of public interest. Journalist and audience are no longer separated by any barriers. Thus the new generation of citizen engagement has taken over the internet. There are no longer boundaries such as when journalists would write for a paper and feedback would be filtered by media houses. This was established in the findings as most journalists when asked to outline disadvantages of online media was being attacked personally by viewers. They said this affected them psychologically but has resulted them in ensuring that they make sure that they establish and verify all facts in their news articles. This in turn contributes to a richer media content as it becomes devoid of untruths. Thus the viewers now have a platform to bring journalists to social justice and hold them accountable for their work, which also entails upholding utmost professionalism.

Converged newsroom platforms entail the use of written, audio and video content to rich consumers on various platforms. Findings by the researcher through focus group discussions with viewers showed that such converged newsroom platforms content is better and easier to comprehend. One participant explained that apart from reading a news story, availability of videos enriches the content. This is because audio and video content is more appealing and is easier understand. Video content makes news stories come to life and more realistic as when one sees it is easier to believe. Another participant added that reading requires a certain level of literacy hence it is not convenient for every consumer thus videos present a better option. Audios also don't require much concentration as required by reading hence it becomes more convenient. Thus the packaging of content as audio and videos online enriches media content.



## 5.6 Economic benefits brought by converged media platforms to local print media organisations

The findings obtained from interviews with CEOs revealed that internet availed new opportunities and platforms for revenue generations. Advertisers are the main source of revenue for both organisations. The CEOs stated Telecel, Econet and Zol as some of the major advertisers are common for both publications. Advertisers rely on a huge customer base from media publications to sell their products. The online print publications have provided a platform that gets in touch with a large number of audience. Hence a large number of audience presents greater opportunity for advertisers to market their products. The fact that *The Herald* is the largest daily newspaper in the country and the daily News is second (ZAMPS 2015) makes both publications ideal for advertisers. The pie chart below illustrates the revenue that is obtained monthly by *The Herald* and *daily News* from July 2014 to date.

**Fig4: Pie chart on average monthly advertising revenue from *The Herald* and *daily News* online publications.**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Highest number of views</b>	<b>Average monthly revenue</b> \$
<i>The Herald</i>	<b>120 000</b>	<b>30 000</b>
<i>Daily News</i>	<b>55 000</b>	<b>6 000</b>

The above findings show that the larger the viewership translates to a higher income revenue generated from advertising. Advertisers prefer the most popular medium to reach their audience. The viewers confirm that the pop up ads and banners that they came across as they read news somehow influences them to purchase some products and also to be aware of promotions such as the Telecel mega juice and Econet scratch and win promotion.

The research findings revealed that time is a very important factor in determining returns from online publishing. The instantaneous nature of new media allows for immediacy in updating information online and this also affects advertisers. *The Herald* CEO revealed that with the advent of new media, the publication ensures that *The Herald* updates its websites at exactly

midnight daily. The *daily News*, on the other hand is updated later at midday. This affects the *daily News* negatively as most viewers would have read news articles first elsewhere. Although the news formats differ, viewers confirmed through the focus group discussions, that they prefer to know new information earlier and faster. Thus the audience need to get information as early as possible hence more viewers visit the herald to get fresh news. Such trends therefore influence advertisers to know which medium provides information first and is convenient to consumers.

The CEO, Mr. Deketeke also added that the use of live blogs for major political events and breaking news presents a very large number of audience. He added that live blogs present spot on news which is what the modern day consumer needs in the age of technology developments. The CEO stated that their live blogs have the highest number of viewers. For instance, *The Herald* Live blog of the First lady Dr Grace Mugabe's speech in Marondera rally on 17 October 2014 had more than 120 000 viewers in a day. Advertisements flooded the page as advertisers tried to take advantage of the large audience. Thus such strategies present *The Herald* with competitive advantage economically over the *daily News*. On the *daily News*, Mr. Goko said that the publication, since retaining their license in 2010 was still growing hence needed more time to introduce such strategies. However, he noted that the *daily News* boast of more than 55 000 viewers on a good day such as when covering the MDC-march on April 15, 2016 hence it would not be taken for granted.

### **5.7 Initiation and enhancement of multi-tasking by converged newsroom**

Interview findings also revealed that journalists have acquired more skills with the emergence of the converged newsroom. The CEOs, through the interviews carried out noted that while journalists had prior qualifications on traditional print media journalism, both organisations carried out various training on new media. The training programs helped to initiate and familiarize journalist with how to use new media technologies and were carried out intensively at initial stages of introduction and continue to be carried out on a regular basis.

Through their questionnaire responses, journalists added that they have learnt to use new methods of information gathering so that they feed the convergence desk. They added that they have harnessed the numerous ways that they can use the smartphones, cameras and recorders to support newsroom convergence. Hence writers have become bloggers and photographers have become videographers as a result.

All questionnaire responses also revealed that journalists have enhanced their skills through newsroom convergence. This development has led to a multitasking as journalists can cover one event and disseminate the information via multiple platforms at once. This means that after making video and audio recordings, the modern day journalist can use many platforms at once to distribute the information. The fact that journalists can access their websites at any time makes it easy to continue updating information. For instance, Delta Ndou who leads *The Herald* convergence desk confirmed that she regularly tweets even in the comfort of her home or while she is writing an article for the newspaper. This means that with the reliability of new media, one can keep up to date without having to incur transport costs or change geographical locations to update information.

Similarly the *daily News* sports editor Nigel Matongerere concurred that while newsroom convergence is essential, it does disrupt their traditional routines but rather enhances them. He added that while he continues to carry out his sports journalism, he manages the daily news convergence with great ease. This means that newsroom convergence runs concurrently with traditional media hence it does not compromise the quality of work that journalists produce on a daily basis. He added that while there is a need to update information on the *daily News* website, this does not take a lot of time but rather the time is insignificant. Thus such findings suggest that the newsroom leads to multitasking of journalists. Newsroom convergence is restructuring the roles played by each journalist in the newsroom. Such multitasking helps journalists in the age of technological developments and makes them better equipped for a modern day newsroom and diverse modes of communication.

However, there seems to be evidence that as journalists become more conversant in digital production techniques, they find less use for their news gathering skills. Journalists stated that with new media technologies they can obtain diary items, information to back it up and also search for previously written articles to provide a background of news stories. As Berger (1997) postulates, the internet provides media personnel with unlimited access to information on any subject. Furthermore, Mabweazara (2013) argues, that this leads to challenges such as creating a new generation of desktop journalism due to the use and over reliance on new media technologies. Most junior journalists disclosed that they could spend an entire day chatting with their friends on social media platforms in the pretext of sourcing news online. Thus whilst

newsroom convergence initiates multitasking, it can also lead to deskilling through desktop journalism that relies on previously document and recycled information.

### **5.8 Challenges to ethical journalistic practices caused by new media**

Focus group findings also revealed that while newsroom convergence has opened doors to new possibilities in the newsroom, there are various ethical challenges that they also bring. When asked whether they were happy with all the content that they view online, audiences noted that there are sometimes when media content on the two platforms is unethical. One participant noted that at one point, one of the two publications (which she was not comfortable naming) showed a corpse during a certain burial. She described the experience as “gross”, adding that not everyone was indifferent about a dead person. While such content would not be found in any hard copy on social, cultural and moral grounds, use of satellite communication has brought about a new dispensation. Most journalists suggested that even if they might not publish some of the stuff, it would find its way to the social media either way. Such responses suggested that with the advent of new media technologies more ethical challenges would be faced each day.

McQuail (2000) envisaged that with digitalization significant changes in civic affairs are to be expected. The protection of children and their rights is another aspect that poses ethical challenges in converged newsrooms. During the focus group discussion, one participant noted with concern that there is no more adequate protection of abuse victims. She noted that while there might be efforts to protect children, news media does not do much to protect their images. The participant made reference to an incident when a maid physically abused her employer’s daughter by hitting her and standing on her. She said while effort was made to protect the identity of the child by not mentioning her name, a link provided by both publications provided a video to the gruesome act. This link which featured the child without any censorship made all efforts to protect the victim unrewarding as the identity was eventually revealed. This suggests that protection of children and their identity becomes a challenge with the advent of new technologies and converged newsroom platforms.

Interview findings brought out the fact that reliance on online sourcing also poses challenges of plagiarism. Quandt (2005) states that competition and the need for speed presented by newsroom convergence leads to “turbulent” journalism. While internet is a source of various information, it

may result in the promotion of laziness which emanates from the need to acquire information quickly and update online publications. Editors from both publications concurred that there were incidences when they would have scoops and post them online but other media houses would download, edit the stories and update them as their own, without acknowledging them. Through these interviews both CEOs stated that to curb such theft they adopted encryption of their websites so that one could not steal. This encryption makes it almost impossible for one to copy and paste stories elsewhere or to even download them. However journalist noted that there was a way around encryption on such pages such as downloading the page as text only. Hence the study reveals that newsroom convergence owing to media technologies presence print media in Zimbabwe with a new challenge of plagiarism. Such ethical issues negate the benefits that new technologies present to print media

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted and discussed the findings from the different research methods that were used during the course of this study. These results as noted by the researcher have got a lot of bearing on the objectives and significance of the research. . The findings are the ones which the researcher derived some of the recommendations and research conclusion. The next chapter will look at the overview of the study, recommendations and areas for further research.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The study has highlighted literature for review purposes, theories data analysis and assessment. This chapter sums up the research, grounded on the findings the data presented. A conclusion as well as the researcher's recommendations based on the findings of the data presented in chapter five. These recommendations are set with close relation to the research problems presented in chapter one as well as the findings of the research. The achievement of objectives or lack thereof is clearly illustrated in this chapter.

#### 6.2 Summary of findings

The research has shown the media environment that *The Herald* and *daily News* journalists operate is not conducive for professionalism to be fully practiced. Journalists rather conform to codes of conducts and ethics that apply in their specific newsrooms. Thus while newsroom convergence presence its own news set of challenges to the media profession, these challenges do not necessarily cloud the advantages brought forthwith. The two publications are highly polarized hence have always been biased even before the advent of newsroom convergence. Of importance to note I the fact that journalists are caught in between a contestation of power relations whereby media owners and controllers use them as tools to manipulate the masses and gain relevance. No publicity is negative as either way it will always work in determining who or what is newsworthy for both publications. The two newspapers under study have proven that ownership and control together with the forces that are related to regulation and advertisers are major setbacks to professional journalism in the newsroom. These pressures take toll on journalists whose roles are constantly negotiated.

Newsroom convergence is a global trend that arises from satellite communication whose effects have not spared Zimbabwe. Cognizant of the above pressures that have been inherited from traditional newsrooms, convergence has brought its own unique set of characteristics in the way media operate on a daily basis. Both newsrooms have been transformed in some way to accommodate the new phenomenon. Thus where a journalist carried only a pen and paper to the field, they are now moving around with cameras and voice recorders or precisely the smartphone to feed the numerous platforms that have emerged in their working environment. Thus newsroom convergence has transformed the roles and practices of print journalists from writers to multi-media personnel.

As Rodney (1973) notes development in human society is a multi-faceted process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Therefore newsroom convergence when embraced well and applied in a local homegrown context, it presents unlimited opportunities for the journalist, the media organization and the audience as well. The integration of audience and mass media helps to shape a more accountable, diversified media with utmost journalistic professionalism. Thus Zimbabwean local print media can become part and parcel of the globalized cooperate world. Thus the researcher found out that local print media is shaped by newsroom convergence as barriers such as gatekeeping are broken to establish a more accountable media.

The study established that newsroom convergence enhances media content. This is through the readily available information to enhance news article that can be sourced online and produce re-informative content. The study revealed that journalists use the internet not only for distribution of news but also to source news items. The use of case studies, views and opinions from around the globe assists provide a framework in shaping news locally. Thus people become more informed and networked with the rest of the world through newsroom convergence. Although some media managers added that they fear that this could signal a new age of desktop journalism that is characterized by laziness, the study revealed that most journalist still go into the field to get their news. Thus showing that the internet sourcing is still minimal and has not affected professionalism in a negative way.

Newsroom convergence by local print media has been proved to enhance content in the sense that through it information is disseminated in various forms. The combined use of written, audio

and videos assists audience in decoding and comprehending news articles. Print media requires a certain level of literacy whilst audio and videos are easy to comprehend. Thus the newsroom convergence through websites, blogs, twitter and Facebook among others are more easily compatible with audience. Audience acknowledged that while it takes time and concentration to read and understand written news stories, audios and videos are more captivating. Thus it was also noted that use of videos and audios brings news stories to life and they become more realistic than ever. Thus newsroom convergence enhances the duties of the journalist that are underpinned on educating, informing and entertaining audiences.

The ease at which viewers access online publications and other newspapers sites also presents print media houses with economic benefits. The study revealed that advertisers make use of the newspapers' multimedia platform to make their products known. Thus those strategic media managers use newsroom convergence to maximize their profits as it forms the basis of all commercial media organisation. Thus study showed that the amount of viewership directly translated into higher income returns as advertisers target those media organisations that present them with a larger market. Thus proving that newsroom convergence brings about economic benefits to media owners.

As postulated by Mano (2009:277), there is need to take an African scholar approach on newsroom convergence. The use of Western based scholarly assertions does not fit into the Zimbabwean situation as there is more to it than what meets the eye. Thus the study focused on *The Herald* and *daily news* also sought to establish whether newsroom convergence leads to multi skilling. The study revealed that the same journalist who write for the two dailies are the ones who provide material for all the other platforms. Whilst the media organisations do carry out regular staff training on newsroom convergence, journalists have proved to be versatile and have responded positively to the changes in their daily routines. Thus by sourcing news in various formats they have contributed to the successful implementation of newsroom convergence at *The Herald* and *daily News*.

The researcher used a combination of methods to get data for the study. These include critical discourse analysis and content analysis. To collect information from the field, the researcher used questionnaires, focus group discussions and carried out interviews. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the Research. Methods of data



analysis were very effective as they had to be validated by information from the field. Interviews were carried out with CEOs and editors at both *The Herald* and the *Daily News*. Questionnaires were distributed to the reporters whilst online audiences were engaged in focus group discussions. However, some questionnaires were not returned to the researcher and due reasons to that could be best known to them.

### **6.3 Recommendations to *The Herald* and *daily News***

The research findings prompted the researcher to make the following recommendations to both *The Herald* and the *daily News*. These recommendations are to ensure that the publications improve their respective products but also adhere to the professional conduct expected of them in the dissemination of their stories. In as much as the *daily News* has managed to survive to date with donor funding, the organization should device long term solutions that will in turn get rid of external influence imposed on their media covering due to funding purposes. That way they can be more impartial and can carry out their duties according to journalistic professionalism standards. Getting rid of external influence can liberate the editorial department and can be able to steer its future in any direction, apply new media technologies in any they deem necessary. Similarly, *The Herald* should not prioritize newsroom convergence on political grounds only but should use the same platform for other developmental issues in the country. As the study noted that *The herald* uses live blogs for Zanu PF events only, it is thus recommended that they use the same platforms for apolitical developmental and public interest news coverage. This will dilute the bias that the publication is popular for.

As *The Herald* and *daily News* journalists produce content for multiple platforms to reach a mass audience, hence there is increase in hurriedly done work. Convergence clashes with traditional newsroom in terms of internal competition and media specific culture. There was agreement amongst most audience that convergence has forced everyone to do more work. Producing more content for other platforms is time consuming and requires skill. Similarity of content across. *The Herald* and *daily news* platforms reinforces the fact that professionalism is being compromised due to newsroom convergence. Thus journalists in converged newsrooms should not only be adequately trained but also be compensated for the extra tasks they perform as a result of newsroom convergence.

Both media houses should also device new media ethics that provide a more viable code of conduct to ensure that professionalism is upheld. The study revealed that with the advent of newsroom convergence, not much emphasis is being put on ethics and this poses cultural and societal challenges. These ethical discrepancies if not addressed might cost media house their viewership. While there are increased numbers of viewers accessing newspapers and other media on digital platforms, audience are still grounded to local cultural and societal norms and values.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted various conclusions that were arrived at in the study. The chapter highlighted all the other chapters and intertwine them to come up with a summary that concludes the whole study. It also put forward recommendations of what can help the two newspapers that were under study to adhere to professional journalism when adopting newsroom convergence. This therefore marks the end of the study.

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