

# MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



## FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

### DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY STUDIES

*THE UPTAKE OF CONVERGED NEWSROOM PLATFORMS IN ZIMBABWE. CASE STUDY OF MEDIA CENTRE FROM 2016 TO DATE.*

**BY**

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## **Abstract**

The study explored the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre from 2016 to date. The study aimed to explore the uptake of a converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre from 2016 up to date; determine how converged newsroom platforms enhance democracy and free circulation of news across the globe; and establish how converged newsroom platforms lead to multitasking while enforcing professionalism. The study was qualitative in nature and data was collected from targeted population through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation. Furthermore, the study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques that are purely qualitative. The study was also guided by three theories namely social network site theory, the virtual sphere revisited and critical theory of technology. The findings were analysed using critical discourse and also presented. The study deduced that Media Centre engages in activities like streaming of press conferencing, posting videos and texts on their online platforms. Newsroom convergence has brought changes to audience since they operate differently from traditional media which is not accommodating. The study also deduced that converged newsroom platforms enhance the digital public sphere and democracy in Zimbabwe. The researcher recommended MC to put extra effort in covering issues affecting marginalised communities like they do in covering issues in towns, press conference fee for less privileged people should be open for negotiation and that MC should be partial and avoid being a Civil Society organisation during the day and political players by night.

**Acronyms**

Media Centre.....	MC
Information Web and Resource.....	IWRC
Zimbabwe Democracy Institute .....	ZDI
Civil Society Organisations.....	CSO
Media Institute of Southern Africa.....	MISA
Zimbabwe Election Support Network.....	ZESN
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.....	ZLHR
Information Communication Technology.....	ICT
Non-Governmental Organisation.....	NGO
Executive Director .....	ED
Senior Programs Officer.....	PO
Finance Administration Officer.....	FO
Administrative Secretary.....	AS
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer .....	M & E

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

This study seeks to examine how converged newsroom platforms, particularly at Media Centre shapes the practise of journalism and creates a digital sphere, from July 2016 up to date. This is because the researcher was an attaché at Media Centre from July 2016 to May 2017, and has gained insight on newsroom convergence. It is also concerned about how the organisation has managed to embrace the web 2.0. Converged newsroom refers to the use of a combination of various technologies in the gathering, processing and dissemination information Avies et al (2008). The study has been greatly influenced by the researcher's interest in camerawork and desktop publishing which was part of what the researcher was doing at Media Centre. The organisation integrate print and online media through multitasking, making it easier for them to run a converged platform.

The online media has been celebrated for its viral and liberating nature since people are able to see information and share with their friends' pages making it easy for more people to access information. Therefore the coming up of converged newsroom platforms and online media like Media Centre, made citizens resort to the internet where there is diversity of opinions and views. The study is guided by a qualitative case study which made use of interviews, questionnaires and participant observation. The study is also guided by theories such as the virtual sphere revisited, social networking site theory and critical theory of technology. The theories have been used because they tally well with the research topic.

## Background to the Study

Media Centre can be coined as an organisation that is a typical example of the converged newsroom platform in Zimbabwe. This is so since it offer a variety of services besides news gathering and dissemination. Media Centre facilitates journalist training for media students. It has a functional Information, Web and resource Centre, editing equipment, broadcasting studio, video conferencing equipment, space for public meetings like press conferences and round table discussions which interface journalists with policy makers, civil society and other stakeholders

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with vision of promoting critical informative and subjective reportage that foster transparency and accountability in Zimbabwe.

Media centre was established in 2010 as a non-profit making media organisation which operates as a Trust. It is an unbiased resource hub for journalists and civil society information departments. The organisation closely works with various civil society organisations like Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI), Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Media Centre strives to be people centred, unbiased and resourceful podium for media and Civil Society interaction and sharing and awareness rising through the provision of a secure space, information, access to communication technologies and training.

The study is of interest to the researcher as it goes hand in hand with Media and Society studies, the degree programme that the researcher is currently doing. The modules that the researcher learnt can be well incorporated with newsroom convergence. Modules like journalism and Desktop publishing and Print Journalism suit the study well as they focus on gathering, processing and dissemination of news through writing. Information technology is also another module that is of great importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century since this era mainly focuses on online technology which is what converged newsroom platforms are mostly about. The researcher's passion for media related matters like newsroom convergence has encouraged her to pursue this study. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology has advanced, for example through the use of web 2.0 which is user friendly, Media Centre has also managed to get information and feedback from followers on different platforms.

The researcher's camerawork experience which she gained both from her modules (Photo Journalism, Television studies, and advertising) and her work related learning period has made her develop an interest and pursue this particular study since converged newsroom also entail multitasking. This is whereby an individual may be managing a camera at the same time sending updates on twitter about the goings on of an event like press conference.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The statement of the problem of the study is “The uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe by Media Centre”. This includes how the organisation operates as a converged newsroom platform. For example, how they manage to run various platforms and departments under one organisation. It also includes how they manage to run a converged newsroom platform through multitasking. The researcher worked as an intern at the above mentioned organisation for a period close to a year. That is from July 2016 to May 2017 and during this period the researcher got an opportunity to experience the day to day run of the above mentioned converged newsroom platform and noticed how they manage to multitask. The study focuses on the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe examining the social, political and economic benefits that are associated with this observable fact. The study was also provoked by the need to boost economic, social and political benefits that the newsroom convergence brings to local media organisation owners, media practitioners and the public at large.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study contributes in filling the gap that other scholars who wrote on newsroom convergence have left (Cottle 2003, Erdal 2007, Singer 2004). Other literature has covered the influence of converged newsroom platforms to the practice of professional Journalism. Most of other literature is from Western scholars and this study focuses on newsroom convergence in the Zimbabwean context focusing on Media Centre in particular. The study also intervenes in policy issues as Media Centre has a space for public meetings like press conferences and round table discussions. This would interface journalists with policy makers, civil society and other stakeholders with vision of promoting critical informative and subjective reportage that foster transparency and accountability in Zimbabwe.

The study is relevant since the researcher is currently studying Media and Society Studies and Media Centre as the case under study. Media and Society studies provided several modules that are of relevance to the case under study. Modules like Converged and Hypermedia Production are of relevance since it deals with media convergence which is what is studied here. The researcher gets to know how various online media platforms can be used to disseminate same information to various people on these various platforms. Journalism and Desktop publishing is

another module that effectively connects with the case under study, since Media Centre practices desktop publishing.

## **Research Objectives**

- Explore the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre from 2016 up to date.
- Determine how converged newsroom platforms enhances democracy and free circulation of news across the globe.
- Establish how converged newsroom platforms lead to multitasking while enforcing professionalism.

## **Research Questions**

### Main research question

- How does Media Centre enhance the uptake of newsroom convergence?

### Sub questions

- How does converged newsroom platform at Media Centre uphold multitasking and professionalism?
- To what extent does newsroom convergence influence democracy in Zimbabwe?

## **Assumptions**

This study had to pass the following assumptions:

- The researcher assumes that Media Centre have adopted new online media technologies.
- The researcher assumes that converged newsroom platforms have implication on democracy and professional journalism.

- The researcher assumes that all respondents would be forthcoming to respond to interviews and questionnaires.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations according to Franklin (2009) are those boundaries that are set by the researcher to control the range of the study. This study therefore, is delimiting itself to the exploration of the uptake of converged newsroom platforms, its implications to democracy in Zimbabwe and their contribution to the public sphere. It also focuses on the period from July 2016 to date. It would also assess how multitasking and professionalism can be bolstered by converged newsroom platform concept .It is also limited to Media Centre as a case study from 2016 to date for feasibility purposes. The research focuses only on one media house which is Media Centre in exploring how converged newsrooms multitask. She would assess the online platforms that are used by Media Centre as an organisation. The study also deal with the Director of MC, three heads of departments and two of their subordinates and online audience. The researcher dealt with 30 online followers of Media Centre of which 15 are males and the other are females who are between the ages 19 and 40, as these age groups are the most active on online activities.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control (Simon and Goes 2013). The problems or challenges that may arise during the course of the research may include that of methodologies, data collection methods and theories that the researcher decides to use. Data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires may result in the researcher getting biased information. This is so since some of the interviewees are from the organisation and they may end up doing public relations for their organisations leading to incorrect information and gate keeping. Some of them may also give answers they think the researcher wants to hear. Theories like revisited public sphere are said to be incorporating audience in the dissemination gathering and processing of information.



### **Structure of the Study**

The study comprises of six chapters. The chapter gave introduction, background, delimitations and limitations to the study. Chapter two focuses on literature review and theoretical framework, chapter three consist of methodology, data collection and data analysis methods. Chapter four focuses on organisational analysis and political economy of Media Centre; chapter five provides data presentation, analysis and discussions. Chapter six consists of the summary, recommendations and conclusion.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter provided background to the study, statement of the problem and significance of the study. The researcher indicated the objectives that would guide the study, the research questions, assumptions, delimitations and limitations. In the chapter, the researcher also pointed out the structure of the study from chapter one to chapter six. The next chapter focuses on literature review and theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the literature related to the topic under study. The chapter investigates the uptake of converged newsroom platforms focusing on Media Centre. Literature review guides the researcher in digging the information that is still unknown. The chapter also discusses the theories related to the problem statement such as critical theory of technology, social networking sites theory and the virtual sphere revisited.

#### **Literature review**

Literature review is an exercise to review existing literature related to the topic in order to gain an understanding of how other scholars have argued as well as to bring the significance of the study in light of already published literature (Bryman 2007). Mabika (2007) argues that literature review is a legitimate and publishable scholarly document carried out to display various authors' opinions about specific area of study. This is done to identify what is already known about an area of study and questions a body of research does not answer. Literature review is important when conducting a study since it makes a case why further study of research is important to a field. In this study literature would be extracted from published and unpublished dissertation, journals and other books that were published in relation to the area under study. This literature would be reviewed thematically. This means that it would be reviewed through themes derived from the main and sub research questions.

#### **Newsroom convergence**

Murali (2009) defined convergence as the interdependence of various media. This means that convergence entails the use of various media platforms to disseminate information. This is relevant to the study as MC has also embraced web 2.0 which entails the incorporation of various media both online and offline media platforms. This definition is relevant to the case under study since it is a converged newsroom. The definition also helps the researcher to understand what convergence is, thereby understanding the case under study as it is a converged newsroom. This is supported by Harrower (2008) who says that sharing a newsroom encourages cross-platform Corporation. For example, when editors from different media attend the same meetings and plan coverage together, they can steer each story to the format that tells it best.

Avies et al (2008) postulates that newsroom convergence follows technological convergence developments and is accompanied by new phenomena, as subsumed by the specialist term "Web 2.0". This web 2.0 is allowing millions of recipients to be new producers of online content by using interactive potential of the internet. The above assertion helps the researcher in determining how converged newsroom platforms enhance free circulation of information across the globe. Online participants of an organisation are not as before limited to mere consumers of media products but they are opportune to produce as well as consume making them "prosumers". The study helps the researcher to determine how converged newsroom platforms enhance democracy and free circulation of news across the globe. MC as a converged newsroom has embraced web 2.0, but the researcher would explore the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe

Convergence is defined by Erdal (2007) as the melting together of information structures, communications, media advancement, the society and culture. The researcher through this understands the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe and the extent to which this influence democracy. The advent and adaptation of new technology in newsrooms have brought changes in the roles those individuals play. Bresserand and Meeds (2007) also describe convergence as a process by which the newspaper journalists create content for television and vice versa. This means that journalists are trained to multitask. They are therefore taught how to use various technologies for various mediums. This is of great significance to the study since the researcher would examine and appreciate how converged newsroom platforms lead to multitasking while enforcing professionalism. The study highlights how converged newsroom

platforms manage to multitask at the same time uphold professionalism. Emphasis will be placed on the understanding of the operations of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe looking at their contribution to the public sphere concept and its implication on democracy.

### **New Technology and Democracy**

Online social media platforms have been celebrated for its liberating nature since it gives ordinary citizens to create share and distribute content (Bryfonski 2012). This is relevant since it helps the researcher in understanding newsroom convergence as an agent that broadens the public sphere concept and the extent to which newsroom convergence influence democracy in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe the liberty audience have had through the advent of new media technologies have contributed to the rise of the likes of #Tajamuka and #This flag who were opportune to spread their demonstrations against the government on various political, economic and social issues through online media platforms and through Media Centre. The above assertion lacks the critical eye which can review that ordinary citizens are at times not liberated since some organisations sensor comments and contributions that are given by audiences for Public relations sake. The researcher seeks to explore if the organisation is really broadening the public sphere concept or not.

Newsroom convergence's use of online social media today have helped to make the idea of a 'global village' real, which was first put forward by McLuhan in the 1960s. Many governments especially in Africa have tried to block diverse and open communication, but social media have disrupted their efforts. An ideal example is that of the Egyptian Revolution, part of the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, (Lynch; 2011). This helps the researcher to understand how converged newsroom platforms enhance democracy and free circulation of news across the globe. This helps the researcher in exploring how newsroom convergence influence democracy in Zimbabwe. The above assertion is relevant to the study as MC mostly publishes information that the main stream media would not publish.

According to Borgmann (1984), the values of democracy can be realised jointly only according to the pattern of technology. This means that at times the level of democracy is determined by technology. For example, before the advent of new technology that is the internet, people could not air their views and be heard since the mainstream media in Zimbabwe made it difficult for

ordinary citizens to participate. The advent of new technology which has led to newsroom convergence has made broadening the public sphere possible. Borgman's assertion is relevant to the study since it helps the researcher to understand the problem at hand. By enabling audience to participate in various online platforms MC has broadened the public sphere concept thereby influencing democracy since it is the voice of the people.

### **Practice of Professional Journalism in the context of new technology**

Banda (2010) notes that, "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. The new media de-motivates journalists to abide by the ethics. This is of relevance to the study since it helps the researcher in understanding how converged newsroom platform manage to uphold multitasking and professionalism focusing on Media Centre. Chari (2013) argues that, the way in which news is conceptualised, produced, disseminated is changing in the context of new technologies. This study is therefore based on issues like plagiarism and explores the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe and its effects on the practice of professional journalism in Zimbabwe.

Banda (2010) also describes how newsroom convergence is shaping the practice of professional journalism through employing words like 'de-institutionalised' and 'de-professionalised'. This means that journalism has lost its ideal structure and practices. De- professionalised also connotes lack of training and regulatory framework. This can be related to how anyone and everyone can gather and disseminate information through various platforms without actually following the principles, channels and laws that guide the practice of journalism. The researcher is helped by the above in the assertion in trying to understand how Media Centre as a converged newsroom platform is managing to uphold professionalism since ordinary people who are not guided by any regulatory framework are nowadays posting and uploading the news at any given time without reporting to anyone. Ward (2008) argues that "journalism ethics often fall back on simplistic appeals to general concepts such as 'truth seeking', 'freedom', 'serving the public' and 'democracy', the terms which are highly contested.

The advent of new technology have brought about challenges in the journalism profession as cited by Chari (2009) when he says that journalists do not feel obliged to stick to ethical stipulations, factual errors, untruths and plagiarism. The advent of new technologies that has seen ordinary citizens become news gatherers, processors and disseminators has made professional journalists feel pressured that they at times breach the set of ethics that binds them. The above assertions helps the researcher as she explores how and if MC as a converged newsroom is abiding by the ethics as expected in the media industry.

Erdal (2008) states that, "Newsroom structures, journalistic practices, and news content are all evolving". Erdal further argues that the practice of journalism is undergoing intense changes, which in turn, are influencing its professional nature. The researcher therefore seeks to explore how MC is adapting to these changes and how this is of advantage and disadvantage to the organisation and the journalist's professionalism. The study seeks to understand and investigate what the organisation is doing to make sure that their journalists are upholding media ethics and professionalism in the advent of new technologies.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework is defined by Breckwell and Hammon (2007) as a summary of the researcher's theory about a specific problem that is advanced through a review of hither to tested knowledge of involved variables. A researcher must try to identify relevant conceptual and theoretical framework which bears relation to the problem under study. This study is guided by critical theory of technology, social network site theory and the virtual sphere revisited.

### **Critical Theory of technology**

Feenberg (2009) is of the view that Critical Theory of Technology is about technology and its relationship with society. The researcher would examine the relationship that new media technology has with newsroom organisation and their audiences. This is so since audience can now be creators of media messages. Feenberg (2009), states that technology is a neutral tool that can be used for different purposes, that is, to achieve good and bad things. In the media industry technology has made it possible for media organisations to reach a wider audience through the use of web 2.0. Web 2.0 has made it possible for these media organisation to publish the same

information on different platforms catering for audiences on these different platforms. The researcher would therefore examine how the organisation manages to operate as a converged newsroom despite the challenges they face.

Technology according to Feenberg (2009) is therefore, seen as an improving factor, that increases efficiency in every era, society and country. This means that technology has brought a solution to a certain extent to the barriers that people have been facing in the era of traditional media. This theory is of relevance to the study since it is concerned about technology and its relationship with the society. In this case, converged newsroom as technological advancement has helped the researcher to understand and determine how converged newsroom platforms enhance democracy and free circulation of news across the globe and find out how they broaden the public sphere concept

Klein and Kleinman (2007), suggest that technology design is an open process that can produce different outcomes depending on the social circumstances of development. This is important to the study since the researcher would like to explore the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre. Feenberg (2009) states that the owner of a factory has not merely an economic interest in what goes on within it, but also a technical interest. He goes on to say that by reorganising the work process, he increases production and profits. The researcher therefore would investigate the operations of Media Centre and how they are keeping up with the continuously evolving technology since they need more technologically advanced equipment.

### **Social Network Site theory**

Social network sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Social network theory is the study of how people, organisations or groups interact with others within their network (Claywell 2016). This explains why the organisation uses various platforms in their reportage since people who are for example, on twitter might not be the same people who are on Facebook or can access YouTube. The theory is important to the study as it enlightens the researcher on how converged

newsroom platforms manage to operate and reach a wider audience as it is explained in the above assertions. It is of relevance to the study since we cannot talk of converged newsrooms and not include social network sites.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that, Social Network Theory is the study of how people, organizations or groups interact with others inside their network. Understanding the theory is easier when you examine the individual pieces starting with the largest element, which is networks, and working down to the smallest element, which are the actors. Boyd and Ellison (2007) argue that after joining a social network sites, users are prompted to identify others in the system with which they have a relationship.

Sunden (2013) postulates that while social network sites have implemented a wide variety of technical features; their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of friends who are also users of the system. For example, if a person likes a page, a story or a video his or her friends are also able to see them also. They may also choose to like or share with their other friends also which makes an organisation or a page popular if their work is crowd pulling. Media Centre has a variety of platforms and search engines like You Tube where they do their live streaming of events. This may pull a lot of audiences since some of the people might not be able to come to the event in person but can see the proceedings of say a press conference in real time.

### **The Virtual Sphere Revisited**

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 the potential (Papacharissi 2002). Akinsanmi (2010) in agreement with Papacharissi's view states that Zimbabwe has enshrined within its constitution, the freedom of expression but in reality for the last decade and half has not adhered to the provisions. This made media organisations to practice self-censorship and not being critical of the government. The researcher would therefore investigate how newsroom convergence broadens the public sphere concept and enhance democracy. The theory is of importance to the research since it helps the researcher in understanding how the organisation operates as a converged newsroom platform in broadening the public sphere concept.



Papacharissi (2002) is of the view that, online media provide themselves to a number of uses, but they attain agency as they facilitate the re-negotiation of that which is considered private and that which is considered public in public life. She further argues that, a political opinion uploaded on a blog or a video sketch posted on YouTube present an effort to colonize the public agenda, and possible, privately expressed, challenge, to a public schedule determined by others. Papacharissi (2002) is also of the view that, in its truest structure of democracy, intervention of that which is measured public and that which is measured private happens within the public sphere. For example, Media Centre's use of various online media platforms has enabled the people from these various platforms to respond to the media messages without being curtailed like what the old public sphere did.

The internet and its nearby digital technologies offer a public space, they however do not certainly provide a public sphere. Bimber (2001) and Kaid (2002) argue that larger access to information which is enabled by online media does not unswervingly lead to rises in political participation. The internet's advantage as a public space is that it can be enjoyed by a limited number of people who have access to it, thereby harbouring a delusion of an open public sphere (Sassi 2005). According to Hill and Hughes (1988) though digitally empowering citizens, online media concurrently reproduce class, race, gender and inequalities of the public sphere. Access can also be understood as greater access to political elites that shape the public agenda, and the ability of these elites to communicate directly with the electorate. According to Grossman (1995) in agreement with the above, these online media enable privately motivated people and groups to dare the public agenda. This study therefore, seeks to find out how newsroom convergence broadens the public sphere concept in Zimbabwe through Media Centre.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter presented literature review which is the literature that has been done on the topic under study before and theoretical framework providing the theories which are related to the study. The next chapter focuses on the methodology, sampling techniques and data collection methods used in the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The chapter focuses on the methodology, sampling techniques and data collection methods used in the study. The chapter therefore justifies the reason behind the use of selected research approaches. This study used qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research paradigm analyses social phenomenon in terms of texts and images than mere numbers and statistics (Flick 2014).

#### **Methodology**

Robson (2008) postulates that a methodology is a system of models, procedures and techniques used to discover the results of a research problem. Research can also be defined as a procedure of looking for and getting answers (Keyton 2011). These methodologies are important as they help the researcher to uncover issues that may be of interest to the study. It is important to incorporate methodologies in conducting investigations as they would be a guideline of how the researcher gathers information. It is a plan on how the person would bring an outcome since a person who cannot plan fail.

Methodology helps the researcher in investigating which type of research design can be of great use to the study rather. It also helps in not wasting time on unnecessary research designs. Planning on what methods the researcher would incorporate would be of great importance in

doing research since it helps in avoiding the use of irrelevant methods leaving out the important and relevant ones. This study made use of the qualitative research design since according to (Flick 2014) this research design analyses social phenomenon in terms texts and images rather than numbers and statistics.

### **Qualitative Research Design**

Qualitative research design tries to broaden and or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world (Hancock 2009 et al). This type of research design can be well incorporated in the study since it is also looking at how converged newsrooms operate in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre. Qualitative research methods are related with social sciences than natural sciences because it is interpretative, the researcher therefore, interact with people at Media Centre and their audiences on different platforms. Qualitative research is used to gain insight into people's feelings, value systems, concern, conduct, motivations, standard of living and or customs (Bless 2009)

The study also made use of the case study approach of Media Centre a converged newsroom platform, which is a non-governmental organisation. This is done to have an understanding on the day to day running of a converged newsroom platform. This type of research enables the researcher to gain information that the research is thriving to get. This enables the researcher to have first-hand information from authorities and other people associated with Media Centre. It also enlightens other newsrooms on which methods on which methods to employ when upgrading to a converged newsroom.

The use of qualitative research paradigm may be advantageous to the study since it provides with details about human behaviour, emotions and personality characteristics that quantitative studies cannot match. Since numbers cannot be reduced to descriptions, the qualitative research paradigm becomes an ideal method considering the subject under study.

### **Targeted Population**

Targeted population comprises of all the subjects under study. Population according to Yin (2009) is a major unit that as study is focusing on, like who or what is being studied. It is important to have targeted population since unlike the quantitative research paradigm, the

researcher cannot get information from too many people. The targeted population therefore, should be where the researcher is expecting to get information that contributes to the study without consulting too many people. According to Flicker (2009), it is the group of elements to which the researcher wants to make reference. In this way, the population can be limited and be counted hypothetically. In this study, the researcher is targeting MC Director, three heads of departments and two of their subordinates. The researcher targets 30 online audiences of Media Centre, of which 15 are males and the other 15 are females who are between the ages of 19 and 40. These people would be selected from the Media Centre's Facebook page, Twitter, YouTube and website. The age group is selected since it is the justifiable age group of online active participants.

### **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). In this regard the unit of analysis is the uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe focusing specifically on Media centre. The study focuses on the contribution of the convergence of newsrooms to digital public sphere concept and its implications to democracy. The participants include the director of Media Centre and the company's journalists and online pronsumers of Media Centre would also participant. The participants include Media Centre director, three heads of departments and two of their subordinates. The research targets 30 online audience of Media centre of which 15 are males and the other 15 are females who are between the ages of 19 and 40. In the case of Media Centre the director is the fundamental part of decision making and policy making which include the purchasing of new technology and the budget for news gathering and dissemination therefore, he is not to be left out in the study. Online audiences are very vital in the study as this study mainly focuses on newsroom convergence which is greatly rooted in the use of online media.

### **Sampling approach**

Sampling can be defined as a process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample the researcher may fairly generalise the results back to the population from which they were chosen (Finn and Jacobson 2008). The sample size of this study consists of 30 respondents. The researcher in this study employs non-probability sampling which is a sampling

technique whereby the odds of any member being selected for a sample cannot be calculated. Non-probability sampling incorporates various techniques and this study makes use of convenience and purposive sampling technique which adapt well with the qualitative research approach.

### **Convenience sampling**

According to Brikci (2009) convenience sampling selects whoever is easiest, closest. This means that participants can be found wherever they can find them and typically wherever is convenient. This is of great advantage to the research since it saves time, money and effort. Convenience sampling technique would be incorporated in coming up with the study sample of 30 participants conveniently selected from online platforms of Media Centre. The researcher arrived at a decision to using this type of selected sampling technique since some participants might not be willing to participate. For example, “it may be that the organisation you intend to use as a case study is ‘convenient’ because you have been able to negotiate access through existing contacts”. This means that the researcher takes advantage of a convenient situation to investigate issues that have to do with the study.

### **Purposive sampling**

In purposive sampling, what the researcher seeks to establish who interview and how many people to interview. David and Sutton (2014) state that purposive sampling technique is when the researcher judges who fits into the study through the use of expert’s choice. This is whereby the researcher decides on the most appropriate respondents. The study makes use of the purposive sampling technique in coming up with a sample of the director of media Centre, three heads of departments and two of their subordinates, 30 online audiences in which half of them are women and the other half are men between the ages of 19 and 40. Purposive sampling is the most effective sampling technique in dealing with people that are not many in number. This applies in the research since the researcher would be using interviews to get information from participants.

### **Methods of data gathering**

Methods of data gathering is the process whereby the researcher gathers the information needed to answer the research questions or problems (Awaisu 2013). The study therefore, uses verbal and non-verbal data collection methods. In this case the researcher made use of interviews, participant observation and questionnaires in gathering data to deal with the problem at hand.

### **Questionnaires**

“Questionnaire are documents containing a set of questions presented to respondents in a sample group in order to collect research data” (Moore 2006). This means that through these questionnaires the researcher is able gather as much information within a short period of time in a relatively cost operative way. The researcher made use of questionnaires to collect information whereby people would answer questions in the form of writing. Popper (2010) postulates quantitative data can be used to create new theories and test existing hypothesis. He further says that the distribution can be done by the researcher or by any number of people with limited affect to its validity and reliability. The use of questionnaires allows the respondents to give the researcher an opportunity to have access to information that may prove difficult to gather directly quickly since a large number of people can be reached. The researcher is also able to gather information that respondents might not be able to give in a face to face interview.

Questionnaire are some of the most effective means of gathering information that is based on what respondents do, believe or think. Questionnaire are used in in carrying out this research since they may be able to give people room to think and fill in the comfort of their homes, work places and so on. This therefore give s them comfort to write what they actually feel since they do not reveal the respondent’s name. Another advantage of using questionnaires as method of data gathering is that it limits the respondents to parameters of the researcher by minimizing instances of irrelevant information. The researcher, in the study comes up with questions that were distributed to the above mentioned respondents from Media Centre and online audience. Both open-ended and close ended questions were employed. This means that in close ended questions the respondent only answers a specific answer. For example, a simple yes or no but in open ended questions the respondents were given an opportunity to give detailed information in her own words just like in interviews.

### **Interviews**

Interviews can be defined as a qualitative data collection method that uses direct, one on one engagement with individuals (Steber 2017). An interview is advantageous as it helps the researcher in getting detailed information that is not distorted. It also helps in such a way that if the researcher is excellent at probing she would get information past that which she would have gotten from other methods. An interview is defined by Gray (2006) as a conversation between two persons whereby one probes the other. Interviews can be done with just a few participants.

Interviews were also conducted in order to have a better understanding of the political economy of an organisation, its editorial policy, mission, goals and values. In-depth interviews according to Kvale (2016) are designed to elicit a vivid image of the participant's perspective on the research topic. Kvale (2016) is of the view that interview length can be considerably longer since the participant has greater commitment to participate. This is advantageous if the researcher is a good interviewer since she can probe the interviewee such that he or she may end up disclosing helpful information to the research. The participant may release information that might not have been released if it was a questionnaire or a quick interview. This serves as proof that the researcher is not being misled or lied to since there would be tangible materials that can actually support the word of mouth.

### **Participant Observation**

Hancock (2009) is of the view that participant observation is a technique that can be used when data cannot be collected through other means, or those collected through other means are of limited value or are difficult to validate. In this case, participants from Media Centre may decide to gate keep some of the information or to lie but as the researcher was part of the organisation for a period close to a year, she may have information on how the organisation operate. This is in agreement with Windsor (2016) who says they produce qualitative data which shows pictures of how people really live since the researcher can see for herself.

Participant observation is important, advantageous and relevant to a study since the researcher has access to more suspicious groups that can gain connection and trust. It also helps when questioning is ineffective (Cicourel 2014). An example is a scenario where the researcher is studying how police categorise juveniles through unconscious assumptions it would be pointless to question them. Participant observation becomes very necessary in that study since the

researcher would not see the need to question people about certain issues since through participant observation she would already have the answers. Participant observation was employed in the study since the researcher was an intern at Media Centre for period close to a year and was involved in the day to day running of the organisation from July 2016 to May 2017.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Data can be defined as the attempt to identify the presence or absence of meaningful themes, shared or conflicting ideas (David Sutton 2004). According to Silverman (2011), data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously. Flick (2014) therefore asserts that, “qualitative data analysis is important in research as it is used to reach an overall summary and or conclusion”. The researcher analysed data using the qualitative paradigm, content and critical discourse analysis.

### **Critical discourse analysis**

Critical discourse analysis is a technique that covers a wide collection of aspects from semiotics to narrative analysis. The researcher would critically analyse data obtained from MC Facebook, Twitter pages, YouTube and other online social media platforms. The researcher would critically analyse how posts review the organisation’s contribution to the public sphere concept and its implication on democracy. Critical discourse analysis interrogates the use of language as power resource related to ideology and socio-cultural change (Bryman 2012). In this regard the researcher would therefore be able to analyse newsroom convergence and its implications on democracy in Zimbabwe. “The analysis of data collected is important because it would have been collected within certain interactive context. This can lead to bias within its content. It must therefore be analysed with this analysis in mind.” (Dane 1990). Critical discourse analysis is important to the study since it would help in obtaining meaning from the answers given by the participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**



Stake (2008) notes that, ethics are employed to enhance the validity of the research results but most of all, to protect the rights and participation of the participants. The researcher should maintain honesty on reporting information, results, methods, procedures and publication status. She should not fabricate, misrepresent or falsify information. According the use of research ethics like voluntary and informed consent enables the researcher to earn respect from participants and to ascertain that respondents are not forced into participating in the research. This means that the researcher will not deceive colleagues, research sponsors, or the public. Privacy and confidentiality is the other thing that the researcher should maintain. She should be keen on preventing participants from any form of harm that may be brought about by the study. The study is going to respect intellectual property rights.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter provided the methodology, sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis techniques to be used in the study. The researcher articulated how the targeted population would be sampled and the advantages it brought to the study. The next chapter focuses on organisational analysis and the ownership and control pattern.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Organizational Structure and Political Economy**

#### **Introduction**

The chapter analyses the organizational structure and political economy of Media Centre. Issues of ownership, funding, control of the organization are discussed in relation to how they affect its operations. Understanding the environment that the media operates helps in assessing the trends, policies and techniques adopted by the newsrooms in light of new media technologies. This therefore gives a background on factors that affect newsroom convergence and professionalism.

#### **Media Centre Mission**

A mission statement is a brief description of a company's fundamental purpose. It answers the questions, "Why does our business exist?" (Ward 2016). MC's mission is to assist in the realization of a Zimbabwe, in which the Media and Civil Society are free to exercise their right

to the freedom of expression, association and access to information, through various ways. These include delivering relevant training in print and broadcasting skills to working media practitioners throughout Africa. It also include helping media practitioners from across Africa meet, learn from each other share experiences. Supporting and initiating training programs which help stimulate the development of sound news values and an appreciation of the key role of the media in society; working with media practitioners to improve professional standards and developing conducive working conditions and technical expertise; having a particular commitment to assisting media practitioners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds; supporting the right to free speech and freedom of information; supporting media and training policies which uphold non-racialism and gender equality, and oppose all forms of harassment; and Uphold integrity and truth-telling in the media by all democratic means.

### **Media Centre Vision**

A vision statement is sometimes called a picture of your company in the future but it is so much more than that (Ward 2016). The vision of the Media Centre is for a Zimbabwe in which the Media and Civil Society are free to exercise their right to the freedom of expression, association and access to information using various platforms and channels including, but not limited to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), public meetings and such other forums that may be relevant to the advancement of their socio-economic status. The Media Centre strives to be a people centred, neutral and efficient platform for media and civic society interaction, information sharing and awareness rising through the provision of a secure space, information, access to communication technologies and training. MC hosts round table discussions which involve panellists from different societal groups like the Civil Society Organization.

### **Political Economy**

“In its more ambitious form, it is the study of control and survival of social life” (Mosco 2009). Mosco (2009) argue that “Political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources, including communication resources.” He also views political economy as being centred in power relations. In agreement with Mosco (2009), Veseth and Balaam (2015) defines

political economy as a social science branch that studies the relationship between markets and the state, using a diverse set of tools and methods drawn largely from economics, political science and sociology.

McChesney (2008) asserts that political economy is mainly concerned with the operations of journalism and its relationship with democratic practices of a country and how media organisations and markets operate. McChesney (2008) further argues that political economy is the proper understanding of propaganda from governments, commercial interests from private sectors and the relationship with democratic practices that affect how media firms and markets operate. This means that even when the government does something positive they always opt for the negative side of the story. The above view is supported by (Herman and Chomsky 1988) who argues that political economy deals with issues of ownership and control and key funding mechanisms.

## **Media Centre Ownership and Control**

According to McChesney (1989) the media actively frame issues and promote news stories that serve the needs and concerns of the elite. He further argues that political economy of the media has become more political than political. This means that Media Centre has certain issues that it covers because of its funders since they are the source of income. MC is a registered trust which consists of the Board of Trustees, management board and the Secretariat. Members of the Board of Trustees were drawn from the media, Civil Society and media institutions. Board of Management: The Board of Management oversees the day to day running of the Media Centre. Members of the Board of Management were drawn from the media, media institutions, business and Civic Society. Secretariat: The day to day running of MC is carried out by the secretariat.

## **Funding Mechanism**

Jain and Sharma (2014) argue that funding is the backbone of any organization's operations since every person or organization into business has to make profit for the business to survive. Media Centre is a non-governmental organization that receives most of its funding from donors. Donor funded organisations have subsequently been associated with pushing a regime change agenda. The organisation is pro-opposition since their content is what would attract Western Funders.

For these services MC charges \$30 per month per person. Press conferences are held at the Media Centre to follow up on issues taking place at community level. These bring a large amount of money considering that the press conferences charge \$100 per hour.

As follow up to issues emanating from project based engagement platforms, roundtable discussions are held to deliberate on pertinent human rights issues affecting marginalized social groups in communities and come up with appropriate policy recommendations that promote socio-economic inclusion and human rights enjoyment for these social groups. Roundtable discussions inform policy and promote debate around key national issues. Participants in the roundtable usually include policy makers, representatives from communities, civil society and the media. The Media Centre's provision of venues for such discussions brings income to the organization.

## **Structure of the Organization**

### **Board of Trustees**

Media Centre's organogram begins with the board of trustees which consists of five individuals. These are Cris Chinaka, NhlanhlaNgwenya, SibongileMpofu, Olivia Gumbo, and John Gambanga. These people play a vital role in the development and success of the organization. They voluntarily act as MC's guardians and are supposed to protect, and maintain its core values, mission, objectives and vision. In this regard, the board often sit with the Director on a monthly basis and MC presents a monthly report. This helps in figuring what is lacking and what needs to be done to maintain vision, mission, core values and objectives. They make sure that the organization supports and initiates training programs which help stimulate the development of sound news values and an appreciation of the key role of the media in society; working with media practitioners to improve professional standards and developing conducive working conditions and technical expertise.

### **Board of Management**

The management board consists of 8 members. It includes Harrison Nkomo, Ellen Kandororo, DumisaniMleya, Fazila S.K Mahomed, BhekinkosiNcube, Frank Chikowore, Wallace Chuma,

and Patience Zirima. Their roles are to attend meetings, provide input, vote on issues, communicate with board members and outside organizations, provide ideas and be above criticism so that the organization maintains its credibility. They are also the ones that have the primary responsibility to see that MC continues to operate through funding decisions, compliance with the law. They ensure that the organization works with media practitioners to improve professional standards and develop conducive working conditions and technical expertise.

### **Executive Director**

The director is Earnest Mudzengi is in charge for tasks like Strategic Planning, developing and implementing the organization's strategic Plan and Annual Action plans in conjunction with the Board and other members of staff. He is also in charge for program development and management whereby he develops, implements and supervises programs and services that are consistent with the organization's mission and Strategic Plan that meet the needs of constituents. The director is also in control of Fund Development/Grant Oversight and Fiscal Management together with the Board, develops and manages the fundraising and financial strategies of the organization, developing an annual budget for approval by the Board, overseeing the management of all funds, consistent with the organization's accounting system. He is also responsible for Staff leadership and management motivating and developing the professional management team, hiring, supervising and evaluating staff, coordinating work with the Board's Committees, volunteers and partner organization. He oversees Community Relations by developing effective working relationships within the country.

His strengths are that he is able to meet with the board regularly discussing issues that would be affecting the organization and planning action plans and is usually successful since MC has events planned and organized.

### **Senior Programs Officer**

The duties of a programs officer are overseeing the programs department, write proposals, and organize workshops, public meetings, forms of engagement and other relevant platforms of engagement. These will be relating to the MC's Advocacy programs, preparing reports, promotional material and proposals pertaining its advocacy, research and training programs. The

senior programs officer also has an obligation to effectively represent the organization at appropriate seminars, workshops and other platforms.

The programs officer helps to fulfil the core values, mission and vision statement by organizing workshops whereby journalists from various parts of the country meet and share experiences, support and initiate programs which help them to stimulate the development of sound news values. They are also educated on how to improve professional standards and assisting media practitioners from different and disadvantaged backgrounds. The programs officer is also responsible for preparing reports thereby fulfilling the mission and vision and core values since people and journalists from various platforms that the organization use are able to access information.

### **Finance Administration Officer**

The Finance Administration Officer is responsible for preparing and presenting work plans for the Finance and Administration department. Preparing financial reports for the Media Centre Board, preparing organizational budgets as in close conjunction with the Director are part of the finance administrator's duties. The finance director contributes in fulfilling the mission and vision statement since journalist workshops and training cannot be possible if there is no financial muscle. The weakness is that, at times it is impossible to hold some of the important events if there is lack of finance.

### **Administrative Secretary**

The duties of an administrative secretary are executing timely, efficient and effective operations of the organization; prepare administrative reports for the senior management team. Handle information requests from clients and visitors; arrange, schedule and organize board meetings and other organizational meetings when required. The weakness so far at Media Centre is that there is no administrative secretary and this makes it difficult for the mission statement and the vision statement to be fulfilled since some people who are tasked for that role may forget since they would have other commitments.

### **Monitoring an Evaluation Officer**

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Builds up the framework of the M and E system for all projects including routine monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual data collection system that record and document observable both qualitative and quantitative inputs ,output and outcomes. Also guide the process for identification and designing key indicators for projects progress reporting and impact evaluation. The Officer also monitors and evaluates performance of organizational program activities as well as takes lead in organizing and undertaking survey. This is so since it becomes easy for the organization to measure its performance thereby perfecting where the officer indicates that it is lacking. This contributes to the mission and vision statement in the sense that the officer would assess the performance and measure its nexus with them.

### **OBJECTIVES OF MEDIA CENTRE**

MC strives to be a neutral and efficient platform for media and Civic Society interaction, information sharing and awareness rising. This is achieved through workshops and round table discussions in which the civil society and, members of other media organization interact to discuss issues that affect the country and how they can be best solved. These are a platform for the above mentioned to share information whereby they get to educate each other in terms of reporting and professionalism in the media industry. This helps in fulfilling its mission and vision statements.

MC Facilitates for media training for journalists and media students in areas such as investigative reporting, media security and information communication technologies through holding workshops for journalist training. The organization also trains interns in areas that has to do with media like news writing, reporting, videography, photography and online reporting.

It also provides a platform for public debates, press conferences, roundtable discussions, public meetings and think tank sessions with the view of upholding truth telling and integrity in the media by all democratic means. These bring civil societies, policy makers and journalists together to discuss issues of public interest and also journalist's upholding of professionalism, values and ethics.

### **Links with other organisations**

The Organization closely works with various Civil Society Organizations including Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe Election Support Network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. MC is linked with these organizations in different ways.

ZDI is a politically independent and neutral public policy think-tank based in Zimbabwe. It generates and disseminates innovative ideas and cutting edge research and policy analysis to advance democracy, development, good governance and human rights respect in Zimbabwe. The institution's aim is to promote open, informed and evidence-based debate by bringing together pro-democracy experts to a platform that offers new ideas to policy makers with a view to entrench democratic practices in Zimbabwe. Their connection with MC begins with sharing their work premises. They also work together in terms of organizing and participating in round table discussions and public debates whereby they interact with journalists and policy makers.

MISA, is a non-governmental organization which try to find ways to promote the unrestricted flow of information and co-operation amongst media personnel, as a primary means of cultivating democracy and human rights in Africa. MISA primarily takes the role of a coordinator, facilitator and communicator. ZESN is a Network of thirty independent, non-partisan non-governmental organizations that have all aspects of the electoral process in Zimbabwe since the year 2000. The organization is linked with MC in the sense that it is a non-governmental organization and it is also involved in educating the masses about voting

ZLHR is a non-profit making human rights organization set to foster a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe. This is to encourage the growth and strengthening of human rights at all levels of Zimbabwean society through observance of the rule of law. The above mentioned organizations are intertwined in such a way that they in a manner share the same views, goals and objectives. These include upholding the rule of law, free flow of information, freedom of expression, association and access to information.

## **Conclusion**

Organization analysis is vital in that it looks at the political economy of the organization under study. This chapter gave a thorough analysis of MC. It starts with underlying the Introduction,



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Mission, Vision, Political Economy, Ownership and Control, Funding Mechanism, Structure of the Organization, Objectives then links with other organizations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of research findings, analysis and discussion. The data was obtained qualitatively. The findings are grounded on the uptake of converged newsroom

platforms in Zimbabwe focusing on Media Centre from 2016 to date. The researcher obtained information through interviews, participant observation and questionnaires in which the respondents included the two heads of departments and one of their subordinates. Data was analysed using content analysis, critical discourse analysis and interview analysis. The research findings were presented thematically and the themes were drawn from the research questions of the research problem.

**Response Rate: methods used and number of respondents.**

**Table 1**

<b>Methods of data gathering</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total participants</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Interviews	3	3	6	75%
Questionnaires	12	13	25	83%

From the above table it is clear that the research purely used qualitative research paradigm. Judging from the above table six people were interviewed from Media Centre: that is, programs officer, monitoring and evaluation officer, finance administration officer, assistant programs officer, assistant monitoring and evaluation officer and assistant finance director. Interviews were relevant in the research as they allowed the researcher to probe further. The interviews were conducted separately, but the questions were the same to augment consistency. The researcher could not get responses from all the targeted respondents as she had anticipated due to the circumstances beyond her control. All the interviews were carried out over the phone as the researcher was in different town as the interviewees. These interviews sought to understand how the organisation as a converged newsroom platform uphold multitasking and professional journalism. The total number of interviews equalled to six therefore, intended number was not achieved and so was the intended response rate.

A total of 30 online participants were handed out questionnaires, which consists of close ended and open ended questions. This was done so as to get detailed information since the study is also

grounded in qualitative research. They were distributed to 10 Facebook participants, 10 YouTube participants and another 10 from Twitter. Those who completed the questionnaires forwarded them back in 3 days' time. This gave them enough time to respond fully to the questions. Media Centre online audience who were given questionnaires constituted fifteen males and fifteen females of the age between 19 and 40. This was because these age groups are the most active on the internet. However, from the thirty distributed questionnaires, only 25 responded and the other five did not forward back due to challenges beyond their control.

### **Uptake of newsroom convergence by Media Centre**

The researcher conducted six interviews with Media Centre's Programs Officer and his assistant, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and his assistant and the finance director with her assistant. Interviews sought to examine how Media Centre enhances the uptake of newsroom convergence. The three Media Centre heads of departments (finance director, programs officer and monitoring and evaluation officer) and the subordinate from the above mentioned departments' responses reveals that the organisation enhances the uptake of converged newsroom. The range of the responses by the three heads of departments and three of their subordinates indicate that the organisation engages in a lot of activities (like the use of Facebook, Twitter and website to disseminate news) that makes it suit to being a converged newsroom and improving the use of newsroom convergence.

Judging from 25 questionnaires responses from Media Centre's online audiences from the Facebook, Twitter, blogs, website and YouTube it emerged that, Media Centre enhances the uptake of newsroom convergence through its integration of these online platforms in disseminating information. The questionnaires were administered to thirty online audiences of which fifteen were women and the other fifteen were men. The study established that the enhancement is done through the incorporation of new media technologies and social network sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, website, email and YouTube. 15 audience from the total number of audiences that responded noted that they are aware of the various platforms that Media Centre uses in disseminating information. Three of the respondents were actually from outside Zimbabwe.

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One of the women said that Media Centre allows organisations like Women's coalition in Zimbabwe to have the same access that men have. Using critical discourse analysis, the researcher noticed that the organisation is not biased towards women as it gives them a fair opportunity to air their views. One of the men also said, "Media Centre give us an opportunity to have an insight of the happenings in the country even when we are far away from home where we have access to our televisions". The respondents also show that Media Centre enhances the uptake of newsroom convergence since the information they publish is not restricted by boundaries or geographical location.

The researcher also used participant observation since she was part of the organisation for a period close to a year as an intern, which is advantageous to the study since she has detailed information about the organisation. She analysed how media Centre enhances the uptake of converged newsroom. Having been an intern at Media Centre for a period close to a year, the researcher engaged in participant observation, where she was involved in the day to day running of the organisation. During this time, the researcher could write, edit, and post videos, texts and audios on various interlinked online platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Website, Twitter, Blogs and WhatsApp.

### **Discussion**

From the general findings through questionnaire, interviews and participant observation it emerged that Media Centre resourcefully use new media technologies like Twitter, YouTube, and website, Blogs, Facebook and WhatsApp to improve newsroom convergence in Zimbabwe. According to Feenberg (2009) technology is seen as an improving factor that increases efficiency in every era, society and country. This means that technology has brought a solution to the barriers that traditional media have been facing.

Feenberg (2009) in the Critical Theory of Technology is of the view that technology is an improving factor that increases efficiency in every era, society and country. This means that technology has brought solutions to the barriers that the traditional media had been facing. For example, some places especially the rural areas due to their geographical location could not access newspapers and or television signals but through web 2.0 and the use of smartphones, people can easily access information online. The rural areas have often been neglected in terms

of reportage but the advent of new media technologies have made it possible for the rural areas to be covered as well in the reportage through citizen journalism. Media Centre has incorporated Citizen Journalists from as far as Chipinge so as to bridge the gap that has always been there before newsrooms converged.

Papacharissi (2002) in the Virtual Sphere Revisited Theory states that the internet promises to revive the public sphere but several aspects of technology extend or limit the potential. This means that technologies either give an opportunity for the people to participate in the virtual sphere or restrict them to participate due to factors like literacy and poverty. Media Centre therefore, tries to fight these restrictions by using various platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and WhatsApp in disseminating information. This is to make sure that those that are technophobic also get a chance to get information and respond to these media messages. Media Centre through the uptake of newsroom convergence therefore manage to cater for their various audience as they get information from the most the platforms where they feel free to use.

Social network sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. This means that those who are friends with Media Centre's online followers are therefore provided with the opportunity to also follow the organisation on any platform. This therefore goes hand in hand with the research findings of which most of the respondents stated that the organisation has embraced newsroom convergence.

### **Upholding multitasking and professionalism through converged newsroom platforms at Media Centre**

From the interviews with Media Centre's Programs Officer, Monitoring and evaluation officer and his subordinate, it can be reasoned that the incorporation of citizen journalism and the use various ways of gathering data like desktop publishing has brought in new ways in the production and dissemination of news. The organisation however, is not grounded in

multitasking although at unavoidable times multitasking is done. In the interviews with the above mentioned two heads of departments and the subordinate acknowledged that although upholding professionalism is crucial in the industry, it is at times difficult to effectively curb the unprofessional acts. This is because some of the journalists although they know professional means of gathering information they sometimes resort to unprofessional ways thereby making it difficult to uphold. The programs officer nonetheless, specifically mentioned that, the director makes it a point that if one is caught on the wrong side at Media Centre they risk expulsion as he is intolerant of such behaviours.

Findings from the 25 questionnaire responses of Media Centre's online audiences reflects that newsroom convergence affects professional journalism to a certain extent. This is because according to questionnaire responses from males, "Ethics appear to forms of mediums of communication". This means that due to the advent of new media technologies, it has become difficult for journalists to abide by the media ethics. Findings from the 25 questionnaire responses of Media Centre's online audiences gave detail on whether the organisation is upholding professionalism in its reportage. Responses from female respondents show that they agreed that although it is hard to uphold professionalism in the era of new technologies the organisation is doing well in upholding professionalism especially by making sure that no fake news is posted on the organisation's online pages and websites. The female respondents also said that newsroom convergence affects professional journalism by putting all forms of journalists under one roof.

The researcher's insight through participant observations helped her to specifically observe the information that is of importance to the study. The researcher managed to notice that Media Centre is by all means upholding professional journalism by organising workshops for its internal workers, citizen journalists and every other journalist that is interested in learning. They are able to meet and discuss how best professional journalism among other issues can be upheld in the advent of new media technologies. As the researcher observed in Media Centre's WhatsApp group that has various professional journalists and citizen journalists, she observed that the director restricted people from posting news that they did not verify to be true. This shows that the organisation is by all means trying to sustain professionalism in its reportage.

## **Discussion**

The following discussion was guided by the findings of the study obtained through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation which strongly supports that journalism practices in Zimbabwe and the whole world have been transformed in a huge way through the advent of new media technologies as postulated by Chari 2013. The fact that media practitioners have to learn to use the continuously evolving media technologies also means that they have to change the way they conduct their work. This has led to multitasking at Media Centre whereby a person can be updating twitter audiences on the proceedings of a press conference at the same time live streaming the press conference on YouTube. Web 2.0 has made it possible for Media Centre as a converged newsroom to be able to publish the same information on different platforms to cater for audiences on these different platforms. For example, videos are sent on the Facebook page and on YouTube are broadcasted live and on Twitter there are constant updates posted on press conference to inform audience on the proceedings. Using critical discourse, the researcher concluded that Media Centre to a larger extent upholds journalists' professionalism, since they verify information before it is posted online.

Banda (2010) states that journalism is guided by a set of principles which transform into moral values that are either globally decided on or based upon a given media institute. New media demotivates journalists to abide by the ethics. This means that issues like plagiarism rise due to desktop publishing where journalists do not see the need go and gather news physically when they can access it online and making phone calls and sending emails. The findings reflects that the organisation often holds workshops for journalists so as to coach them on how to conduct themselves professionally when dealing with news gathering, processing and dissemination.

Critical theory of technology has led Ling and Donner (2009) to argue that the evolution of mobile technology is increasingly affecting broad aspects of human life. They further argue that, access to both voice and non-voice applications on these hand held devices has given way to multitude of social opportunities and engagements, impacting both the most advanced and marginalised societies globally. Media Centre has tried to make sure that technology has a positive effect to the society. The organisation through noticing and trying to avoid abuse of social media has incorporated citizen journalists in their reportage. The organisation also

organises workshops for these citizen journalists so as to coach them in how to effectively gather news in a more acceptable manner. This was done to avoid confusion in the journalism profession as people are through social media disseminating fake and or plagiarised news.

According to Claywell (2016) social network theory is the study of how people, organisation or group interact within others within their network. Media Centre in enhancing converged newsroom has managed to gain a large following. The responses from 25 responses through questionnaires from their online audiences, said that there have never been a situation where they remember the organisation posting somethings that are not ethical and unprofessional. Papacharissi (2002) allude that the internet and its surrounding technologies hold the promise of reviving the public sphere; however, several aspects of these new technologies simultaneously curtail or augment the potential. Media Centre as a converged newsroom has made it a point that they use most of the online platforms to cater for audiences on these various platform.

### **Enhancement of public sphere through Media Centre.**

Interviews sought after examining the role played by Media Centre in broadening the public sphere. The research responses show that Media Centre is indeed broadening the public sphere. It is so as the organisation engages in various activities which promote the public sphere. The responses from the heads of departments and their subordinate reflected that the organisation holds a lot of press conferences where everyone is welcome to come and say out his or her story and journalists are informed through WhatsApp and Facebook a day before or hours before the conference. Using critical discourse analysis, the researcher concluded that the organisation is doing a great job in improving the public sphere since everyone is welcome despite of their political affiliation or status in the society.

Questionnaire responses from 25 online audiences reviewed that Media Centre is really broadening the public sphere as a converged newsroom. The respondents stated that the organisation always get news events and sources at their premises. This means that it makes sure that people with different ideologies unite, share and discuss information which might be of public interest. The 25 questionnaire respondents from Media Centre's online audiences mentioned that Media Centre's engagement with various civil society organisations as well as



many other organisations makes it possible to bring people with different views to come and discuss.

After thorough participant observation, the researcher noticed a variety of ways in which the organisation is broadening the public sphere. Media Centre through offering spaces for press conferences and public debates helps in bringing various influential people on their platforms. For example, they have a WhatsApp group where people bring different topics which are of interest to the public and are discussed. The group consists of Media Centre's employees, professional journalists, citizen journalists and everyone despite political affiliation is able to discuss issues without fear of victimisation. Through critical discourse analysis, the researcher figured that the organisation under study is broadening the public sphere concept by accommodating everyone on their various platforms.

## **Discussion**

Findings of the study through questionnaires, interviews and participant observation supports Erdal (2007) who argued that convergence is the melting together of information structures, communications, media advancement, the society and culture. This means the communication is not what it used to be like in the traditional media era. Media Centre, in this regard broadens the public sphere as it always get news events and sources at their organisation. The organisation accepts any news source to hold their press conferences at their organisation despite their political affiliation. They also hold round table discussions where policy makers and members of the various civil societies meet and discuss issues that are of public interest. This also gives room for various voices to be heard and participate therefore broadening the public sphere.

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 the potential (Papacharissi 2002). Media Centre through its various platforms, audiences are able to participate by commenting on their online pages and platforms. However, although people post their comments and issues that might be of public interest on Media Centre's website, Facebook page, Twitter, blogs and YouTube, not all of their comments and issues are taken into consideration. This means that democracy becomes a bit difficult to enhance since some of the people's responses are not heard or seen by other members of the public.

In the Critical theory of technology it is stated by Feenberg (2009) that technology is a neutral tool that can be used for different (and possibly opposed) purposes, that is, to achieve good and bad things. In the day to day running of Media Centre, technology has made it easier for the organisation to reach a wider audiences through embracing the use of web 2.0. This has made it even easier for the organisation to publish same information in a way that suits audience depending on the platform. This has also enabled the audiences to give feedback and input to the gathering, processing and dissemination of information. The various platforms that the organisation uses has made it easier for those who would like to hold press conferences at Media Centre have quick access to the organisation.

Through critical discourse, the researcher found out and concluded that the organisation enhances the public sphere concept through giving everyone an opportunity to comment, discuss and bring about issues up for discussion which might be of public interest. The researcher also discovered that not everyone has access to the virtual sphere due to financial shortages. It was also discovered in the seven questionnaire that were answered by women that the majority of them are quite happy that they are also included in the digital public sphere. Media Centre's acceptance of everyone despite their gender to speak to the public through press conference and their inclusion in the round table discussions has made the researcher come to a conclusion that the organisation enhances the public sphere concept.

### **The influence of newsroom convergence to democracy.**

Findings of the study through six interviews that were conducted with the Programs officer, Monitoring and evaluation officer and his subordinate, newsroom convergence has a very huge influence to democracy in Zimbabwe. The responses given by the Media Centre's two heads of departments and their subordinate brought out that democracy in Zimbabwe through Media Centre is influenced through giving an opportunity to various organisations that are pro-democracy to holding press conferences whose videos are put on various Media Centre platforms like Facebook, Website and YouTube. An example which was given by the Monitoring and evaluation officer who is one of the interviewees is that of the 'Tajamuka' press conferences which became familiar in mid-2016. This led to the national shutdown which was a threat to the

then government which then retaliated by mobilising the riot police to discipline any supposed demonstration.

Findings of the study through 30 questionnaires distributed to the followers of Media Centre of which 25 responses came, indicate that media is a very critical element in any constitutional democracy. It is widely known for its watchdog role in the national administration of the country. It keeps citizens abreast of the activities of the country and any other business pertaining to governance. To that end, newsroom convergence through Media Centre is positively influencing democracy through interfacing Civil Society, pro-democracy social movements, political actors with the media said the Monitoring and evaluation officer's subordinate. This is often done through the conduct of press conferences at Media Centre. Through critical discourse analysis, the researcher reckoned that the organisation's provision of press conference venue, livestreaming to various groups of people despite their political affiliation, gender and status in the society has made it easy to conclude that the organisation as a converged newsroom influences democracy in Zimbabwe.

Through participant observation, the researcher discovered that Media Centre is greatly influencing democracy in Zimbabwe. This is through its social network sites in which they publish their videos, and texts on certain issues that advocate for democracy in Zimbabwe. The organisation's links with various civil society and Human rights organisations has seen most of the press conferences that take place there to be critical of the government and policy makers. The press conferences that are held are given coverage on the organisation's YouTube channel, Facebook and on twitter through constantly updating information on the proceedings of the press conferences. The use of these various platforms makes it easy to spread the issues that are of public interest like democracy to various ends of Zimbabwe.

## **Discussion**

Findings of the study strongly support that newsroom convergence's use of online social media today has helped to make the idea of a 'global village' real. This is shown by the Media Centre's engagement with various, Civil Society organisations, human rights organisations, activists and other pro-democracy organisations. As defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) social network sites are web based facilities that allow personalities to construct a public or semi-public profile

within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Their engagements through events like press conferences have helped their democracy gospel reach a wider audience through the organisations various platforms.

Through critical theory of technology the researcher found out that the relationship that new media technology has with newsroom organisations and their audiences influence democracy. New media technologies are playing a significant part in supporting politicians to communicate their messages and accomplish their aim of retaining many voters (Kaid 2007). Media Centre provides a platform for any party to engage with the media and to gain publicity. This is done through press conference where journalists from various organisations are informed of the conference so that the parties gain a lot of coverage thereby encouraging democracy. It is encouraged whereby the ordinary citizens are able to hear what each party has to offer without the interruption of the government or ZANU PF. This influences democracy as they have a clear understanding of who they might want to vote for without being manipulated.

The virtual sphere revisited according to Papacharissi (2002) asserts that the internet and its immediate technologies hold the promise of reviving the public sphere, however, there are several facets of these new technologies concurrently restrain and enhance the potential. Through Media Centre most people, Civil Society organisations, policy makers and politicians are given fair opportunity to freely express their opinions. According to the findings through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, the researcher discovered that Media Centre as a converged newsroom influences democracy. This is through allowing everyone despite their political affiliation or societal status to freely express their opinion in the digital public sphere. Through critical discourse analysis, the researcher concluded that MC influences democracy in Zimbabwe through accommodating everyone's opinion through the various platforms to comment on these platforms.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the research findings that were obtained through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation. The research findings were given thematically

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through presenting commenting and discussion. The next chapter therefore, provide the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

The chapter gives a summary of the entire research. This chapter concludes the research, through giving a general overview and the extent to which objectives of the study were achieved. This chapter would pass recommendations based on the findings of the study and also propose an area of study that need to be conducted.

#### **Summary**

The study focused on “The uptake of converged newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe by Media Centre”. The researcher outlined the objectives to be achieved, the research questions, assumptions, delimitations and limitations.

The study also explored the literature related to the research topic. Literature review guided the researcher in digging information that was still unknown. The literature review themes includes practice of professional journalism in the context of new technology, new technology and democracy, new technology and the Media and newsroom convergence. The theories also include critical theory of technology, social network site theory and the virtual sphere revisited. These theories were discussed in relation to the research topic and the organisation under study.

The study also discussed on the methodology used in the study. It also brought out how the researcher gathered information during the study. The chapter described the targeted populace, sampling techniques that were engaged in coming up with the results of the study. The researcher in the chapter justified the reason why the selected approaches were used in the research. The chapter indicated that the research made use of the qualitative research paradigm

The research also analysed the organisational structure and political economy of Media Centre. Issues discussed includes ownership and control patterns, funding etc. The chapter explained

how understanding the environment that the media operates helps in assessing the trends, policies and techniques adopted by newsrooms in light of new media technologies.

Furthermore, the study presented the research findings, analysed and discussed them. Information was collected qualitatively through interviews, participant observation and open ended questionnaires. The researcher used content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interview analysis which are purely qualitative. The research findings were presented thematically and the themes were drawn from the research questions.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings which were gathered through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, the researcher passed on the following recommendations:

- The researcher recommends that the Media Centre should put an extra effort in covering issues that affect the marginalised communities as much as they do in covering issues in towns so as to make them be included in the digital public sphere and for democracy purposes.
- The researcher also recommends that the organisation should acquire more space since sometimes press conference attendance is affected by the limited spaces such that some people end up not attending due to limited space. The press conference fee for less privileged people should be open for negotiation.
- The researcher recommends the organisation to be partial and avoid being a Civil Society organisation during the day and a political players by night. This is because as a civil society organisation Media centre should not be biased in their reportage

### **Area of further research**

From the findings of the study, the researcher realised that her study only focused on Media Centre as a converged newsroom. The researcher proposes that another research should be conducted focusing on effect of multitasking in the practise of professional journalism since Media Centre is not really grounded in multitasking. The proposed research is important as the

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results would help in finding solutions to the negative effects of multitasking. The proposed research should be conducted through interviews and questionnaires as means of data collection.

To a larger extent, the researcher's research objectives were achieved since the findings answered all the objectives. However, to a lesser extent they were not met since one of the objectives was not fully answered since Media Centre does not really include multitasking on a daily basis unless it is unavoidable. The research was a success since the research questions were to a larger extent answered



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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire

Research Questionnaire for academic research

My name is Marceline Mugidwa, I am a final year student at Midlands State University studying for a BSC Media and Society Studies Honours Degree. I am currently carrying out a study on: **The uptake of converged Newsroom platforms in Zimbabwe. Case study of Media Centre Zimbabwe from 2016 to date.** I would like you to help me by answering the following questions. Please note that your responses will be held with severest confidentiality and used for academic purposes only.

Instructions: Please tick where appropriate and fill in blank spaces

Male ...

Female ...

#### **What is your age?**

18 – 24 ...

25 – 34 ...

35 – 44 ...

45 – 54 ...

55 – 64 ...

65 and over ...

1. What do you understand by newsroom convergence?
2. Do you think Media Centre enhances newsroom convergence?

Yes.....

No.....

3. Can you outline the new media technologies and social network sites used by Media Centre for news dissemination?
4. What do you understand by the word democracy?

5. Can you comment on how newsroom convergence through media Centre in Zimbabwe influences democracy?

6. Do you think newsroom convergence by Media Centre reinforces democracy

Yes.....

No.....

7. What do you understand by the word multitasking?

8. How do converged newsroom by Media Centre uphold multitasking in Zimbabwe?

9. Do you think converged newsroom practices affect professional journalism?

Yes.....

No.....

10. If yes briefly explain how?

11. What do you think the media centre need to do in order to improve the services that it offers to political players and the media?

12. How does Media Centre integrate print, television and online media?

13. What do you understand on public sphere?

14. Do converged newsroom platforms through Media Centre broaden the public sphere?

Yes.....

No.....

15. If yes briefly comment how?

