



**Online Newspapers and Reader Gratification: Modeling
the Effects of Interactive Features, Content and
Credibility among Zambian Readers**

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Declaration

I, Parkie Shakantu Mbozi, declare that this doctoral is a product of my original and independent research, undertaken at the Centre for Communication Media and Society (CCMS), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Teer Tomaselli. Wherever works of others or the Internet have been used, they have been duly acknowledged and referenced. I further declare that this thesis has not been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it concurrently being submitted in Candidature for any other degree.

Signature:



Date: August, 2020

Supervisor:..... Date:.....

Dedication

To my family, for being untiring cheerleaders during the three-year epic run for my PhD. This is for you!

Acknowledgement

The new media, including online newspapers which are the focus of this thesis, have attracted immense scholarly interest as a subject. They have become a way of life globally and in Zambia. I have found this emerging subject exciting to research and I am sincerely indebted to all the individuals who played a part, one way or the other, in helping me to complete my study successfully. It is hard to put a premium on the contributions of the individuals and institutions responsible for different aspects of this work. However, one place to start is where it had its beginning, the Centre for Communication Media and Society. I am eternally grateful to my supervisor at CCMS, Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, for buying into the original idea and helping me to mould it into a more focused and appealing project. I am also indebted to the entire CCMS for keeping the door open for me to come and pursue my PhD over the 13 years since I was offered a place but was unable to take up due to lack of sufficient sponsorship. For my study fellowship and leave to pursue my dream I am grateful to my employer, the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), and the University of Zambia central administration. The government of South Africa through UKZN granted me a remission of fees over the first six semesters of my programme. Without such support many African students would be unable to pursue PhD programmes.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
CAR	Computer-Assisted Reporting
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
CSO	Central Statistical Office
FB	Facebook
FHI	Family Health Trust
GO	Gratification Obtained
GS	Gratifications Sought
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICT	Information and communication technologies
INESOR	Institute of Economic and Social Research
MIBS	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RQ	Research Question
SD	Standard Deviation
TV	Television
UGT	Uses and Gratification Theory
UKZN	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
UNIP	United National Independence Party

UNZA	University of Zambia
WWW	World Wide Web
ZICTA	Zambia Information Communication and Technology Authority
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

Abstract

Online newspapers have been in existence globally since 1998 and in Zambia since 1999. They have grown exponentially to establish themselves as a mainstream mass media genre and as the tool and symbol of post-modern life. Yet despite the position they occupy today as one of Zambia's main sources of news and information, there are gaps in scholarship, specifically in audience-based empirical research dedicated to investigating, analysing and characterising their use and its effect on readers and media ecology. Applying the uses and gratification, network society and diffusion of innovation theories, the study investigates and models gratifications sought and obtained from the content, interactivity features and social functions of online newspapers. It investigates and characterises the outcomes of obtained gratification in terms of influence on readers and impact on the media ecology, specifically on radio, television and print newspapers. The study uses empirical data that are based on perceptions, attitudes and diverse audience experiences elicited through self-reports of 535 randomly sampled individuals in Lusaka Province of Zambia. Data were analysed using advanced statistical tests (Chi-square and regression analyses). The study establishes moderate but rising selectivity, exposure and attention to online newspapers, albeit only among certain demographic groups (e.g. those with Internet access). Readers mainly seek and are generally gratified by: 1. the surveillance (news and information seeking) and socialization functions of online newspapers; 2. content of a general nature, especially politics and governance news; and. 3. human interactivity features. The study further establishes that online newspapers have a strong displacement effect on radio and print newspapers but a weak substitutability (ultimate displacement) effect, which upholds multiplatform media news and complementarity between online newspapers and the old media. In terms of micro-level socialising influence, the study establishes strong surveillance or awareness influence but weak behavioural change influence or effect, which accords with established 'stages of change' media effect theories. The study also establishes that readers perceive online newspapers to be only moderately credible. However, it concludes that perceived credibility does not 'intervene' in the overall gratification obtained from online newspapers or on their perceived influence on their readers and the extent to which they are perceived as substitutes for traditional media. The study confirms the relevance of all the three main theories – uses and gratification theory, network society and diffusion of innovation – to the study of online newspapers. It also 'discovers' the relevance of subsidiary theories, notably 'reliance' and 'familiarity', to characterising media use behaviour among the respondents.

Key Words: Zambia. Online Newspapers. Readership. Gratification. Displacement. Interactivity

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PART I – THEORETICAL CHAPTERS

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Chapter 2: Introduction

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4: Research Approaches and Methodology

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Online-only or stand-alone newspapers¹ have been around since 1998 when the *Southport Reporter*, hailed as the first online-only newspaper, first appeared on computer monitors.² Zambia's first online newspaper, the *Lusaka Times*, was published in 1999. Online newspapers have established themselves as stand-alone mainstream mass media genre. They play a 'visible role in peoples' lives' (Li, 2006:3) and are the 'tool and symbol' of a number of demographic groups in the post-modern era globally and in Zambia. Online newspapers are part of the new media, which offer opportunities for opening up new frontiers in academic research. However, there is a dearth of research in Africa and especially in Zambia covering the following broad areas: i) relevance of existing media effects theories to new media, specifically online newspapers; ii) relationships between the new and old media; and iii) audience-centered empirical studies that assess all three dimensions of gratification (process, content and social) and the outcomes of gratification (micro-social effects and impact on use of traditional media).

Consumers of online newspapers, who have been conspicuously marginalised from contemporary research on the subject (Boczkowski, 2004; Li, 2006) in Africa, are at the centre of the study. It asks readers about their motivation for, and the gratification they obtain from, using online newspapers and identifies patterns in their responses. This chapter is a guide to the structure of the thesis. It briefly describes the evolution of online newspapers and issues that have arisen out of their growth and which are of interest to academics, journalists and publishers. It highlights gaps and problems in areas of research,

¹ An online newspaper is defined as the online version of a newspaper, either as a stand-alone or online-only publication or as the online version of a printed periodical (Li, et al 2006; Boczkowski, 2004). Throughout the thesis, the term refers to a stand-alone or 'online-only' newspaper, which are the focus of the whole study.

² www.freelancedirectory.org.uk/user.php?user=2549

and sets out the objectives of and the justification for the study. Finally, it describes the structure of the thesis and presents a glossary of key terms.

Background

In *Internet Newspaper: The Making of the Mainstream Medium*, Li (2006:1) wrote that 'each new media medium born from technology advancement has great expectation when launched. But not all end up with mass adoption and remarkable success.' The statement reflects the scepticism that overshadowed the formative years of online journalism and the birth of online online newspapers, initially as online versions of print newspapers, in the last quarter of 1994³ (Li, 2006). The scepticism arose from the failure of other electronic technologies that the newspaper industry experimented with before the advent of Web publishing. These included teletext and videotext, which are regarded as the forerunners of online newspapers. Telex and videotext got off to a promising start as communication devices when they were launched in the 1970s (Boczkowski, 2002; Li, 2006; Ettema, 1989) but were abandoned in just over a decade of experimentation because they failed to make money and because of their high cost, low speed and limited reception capabilities (Li, 2006). Publishers concluded that the technologies did not add much value to existing alternatives (Boczkowski, 2002; Cameron et al, 1996).

The development of online newspapers was different and exceptional. They made an instant impact as a mainstream medium after the invention of the Internet by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, the World Wide Web in 1993 and Netscape's release of beta version of Navigator, a graphic Web browser, on 12 September 1994 (Li, 2006). They emerged soon after September 1994 in the United States (Li, 2006). By the end of 1994, there were only 10 newspapers which were accessible through the Web (Li, 2006; Boczkowski, 2002;2004).

By September 1996 there were 248, and more than 740, or about half of the dailies in the U.S., were published on the Web (Li, 2006; Boczkowski, 2002; 2004). The number of newspapers with an online presence grew by 176% between 1997 and 1998, the year

³ As stated in the overview, the online-only or stand-alone online newspapers, which are the focus of the present study and this thesis, only emerged in 1998.

that the *Southport Reporter* became the first online-only newspaper (Boczkowski, 2002; 2004). By the turn of the millennium, the Web had become the prime arena for multi-media newspapers (Boczkowski, 2002;2004); by mid-2001, more than 3,400 newspapers in the U.S. alone were online (Li, 2006); and by the mid-2000s, most print newspapers had an online presence and online-only ones were growing exponentially (Li, 2006; Boksoy, 2008).

Research and scholarship on the emergence and practice of online journalism and new media generally in Africa has grown considerably over the last two decades (see for instance, Atton and Mabweazara 2011; Robins and Hillard, 2012; Mabweazara, Mudhai and Whittaker, 2014 and Mabweazara, 2015). However, the evolution and growth and political economy of online newspapers as a mass media genre in Zambia and generally in Africa are not well documented. Nor is their exact number known because of a lack of research and because they are not registered. Online journalism in Zambia dates to 1996 when the *Post* started publishing an online version. In 1999, the *Lusaka Times* became what is thought to be the first online-only newspaper to be published in the country. It was followed in 2003 by the *Zambia Watchdog*, which respondents in this study and other studies (Chishala, 2015) rated as Zambia's most popular online newspaper. Since then a flurry of online-only newspapers have appeared and all major Zambian dailies have an online presence. In June 2019 there were at least 15 established online-only newspapers that were owned by Zambians or were covering Zambia (see also Table 2.1). In an exploratory study of these media in Zambia, Mbozi (2014) noted that traditional media were turning to digital dissemination because of the increasing cost of printing. These new media are expected to grow in number.

Evolution of online newspapers - research opportunities and gaps

Online newspapers have undergone revolutionary and evolutionary changes in their design, content and technology in the last two decades (Boczkowski, 2002; 2004; Li, 2006). The changes give a context to the emerging research needs and gaps on the topic. Li (2006:3) observes, "The growth of the new medium offers great opportunities to examine existing media theory, explore relationships between the old and the new media, and explain and predict what the new medium brings to the media industry as well as the

whole society.” Some of the major research opportunities and gaps that inform the present study are discussed in the proceeding sections.

First, site traffic to online versions of newspapers increased dramatically soon after their launch, more than doubling every year between 1995 and 1998, and began to rival that of their print counterparts, according to data from Internet auditing firms in the U.S. (Boczkowski, 2002; 2004). A similar trend was observed in Africa and Zambia where the few studies dedicated to the topic show that online newspapers are rapidly evolving as major sources of news and information to a growing audience locally and in the diaspora with Internet access (Chishala, 2015; Willems, 2016; Chari, 2018). “Online news consumption is a profound experience for the Zimbabwean diaspora community in that it enables one to experience collective memory and identity” (Chari, 2014:105). Chari’s observation echoes that of Chyi and Lasorsa (1999:) who argued on many occasions audiences relied on newspapers on the Internet for information because they are more accessible, updated more often, and richer in content than print newspapers. Online newspapers are now comparable to broadcast media in delivering more up-to-date and varied news content to wider national and global audiences free of charge (Chyi and Lasorsa, 1999; Mathew et al, 2013).

In Zambia, the sparse data available suggest that there is growing use of online news sources among Zambians with Internet access (Chishala, 2015; Willems, 2016). A snap survey by Chishala in 2015 found that 71% of the respondents were getting news online and 52% specifically from news portals. In 2017, the *Zambian Eye* claimed to have as many as 3.5 million daily visitors (65% Zambian) and between 2,000 and 3,000 ‘unique’ or first-time visitors daily.⁴ Willems (2016) conducted surveys during the 15 January 2015 presidential by-election and August 2016 general election and found exceptionally high interest in online news as readers sought updates from campaign announcements and vote-counting centres.

Because of the growing affordability of both smartphones and mobile data (partially due to subsidised access to social media via ‘data

⁴ *Zambian Eye* editor Owen Miyanza in a telephone interview on 27 October 2016

bundles'), popular online publications such as *Mwebantu*, *Zambia Reports*, *Zambian Watchdog*, *Tumfweko* and *Open Zambia* provided Zambians with frequent news updates on their Facebook pages throughout the election period (Willems, 2016:4) .

Zambians appear to have embraced the new media revolution, mainly because of the extensive and rapid increase in mobile phone ownership and access to Internet via these devices (ZICTA, 2018). However, empirical research that asks who the readers are and why they read online newspapers and which measures both exposure and attention to the content is crucial but inadequate. Such data would be valuable to academics, state institutions, civic organisations and the media industry itself.

Second, online newspapers began as versions of established newspapers that lifted news items from their parent publications ('shovelware' or 'repurposing').⁵ They mutated from being sites used to 'introduce the newspaper, or just a claim of its Web presence' or online versions of established newspapers (Li, 2006:3) to become established, stand-alone, mainstream news sources (Boczkowski, 2002; 2004; Li, 2006; Chari, 2011). Online newspapers are today regarded as being serious publications shaped by a new kind of journalism and offering diverse content (Boczkowski, 2002; 2004; Li, 2006). In their comprehensive content analysis and survey of literature, Greer and Mensing (2006:28) find that online newspapers offer 'more of everything' in content diversity. In a snap content analysis on 22 June 2019, Zambia's two oldest online newspapers – *Zambian Watchdog* and *Lusaka Times* – were found to present a wide variety of news and information. The *Lusaka Times*, which has more extensive coverage, carried seven pages of specialised content in addition to general news. Evolutionary changes in design and content diversity have created opportunities for research into the quality and quantity of content, which remains uncharted territory in Zambia and the rest of the world.

Third, technological innovations in the 21st century associated with the Internet, such as Facebook, Twitter and social media metrics, have benefited online newspapers (Chung, 2017). Social media evolved about a decade after the first online newspaper, in 2004 in

⁵ 'Repurposing' and 'shovelware' refer to the common practice of lifting news items from a print edition and publishing it virtually unchanged on its website (Boczkowski, 2004:55)

the case of Facebook. The convergence of online news sites with social media enhances their audience appeal and competitive edge over traditional news media, especially print newspapers (Chung, 2017). Online newspapers also offer quirky interactive features, especially those that allow for exchanges between publishers and readers and among the readers themselves. These were impossible before the advent of the Internet. As many studies have shown, these features bring added value to digital media and offer incomparable affordances for both producers and consumers of content. Some studies (for instance, Yoo, 2011) have found a causal relationship between use of interactive features and overall reader gratification (see also chapter 8). Boczkowski (2002:270) summarises the opportunities that online newspapers offer to producers and consumers:

The evolution of online papers on the Web has made visible taken-for-granted aspects of print's production culture, provided a window into the emergence of new regimes of content creation, and allowed the examination of broader patterns in the construction of information on the Internet (Boczkowski, 2002:270).

All Zambian online newspapers follow the global trend of incorporating a variety of interactive features on their main websites, notably integration with Facebook, Twitter and other social media networks. However, research is lacking on the use and adoption of these features and the degree of readers' gratification.

Fourth, the quality of online news is an important topic of academic and public interest because new media technologies have the potential to be both enablers and disruptors of ethical journalism (Chung, 2017; Chari, 2018). Online journalism takes advantage of emerging Internet technologies to enhance journalists' ability to gather and disseminate news rapidly in a highly competitive industry, often at the expense of accuracy, balance, fairness and other principles of ethical journalism (Chishala, 2015; Chari, 2009, 2018). Chishala (2015) highlights a number of ethical concerns about the practices of some Zambian online newspapers – for instance, plagiarism, derogatory language, invasion of privacy, publishing classified documents and failing to apologise for publishing misleading or false information. Again, almost nothing is known of how readers regard the ethical

conduct of online newspapers, of how their perceptions of credibility affect their continued use of the new media, and, ultimately, their gratification.

Fifth, the introduction of a new medium always affects the media industry. It forces the audience to make choices and the new medium either displaces or complements the old (Bromley and Bowles, 1995; Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). Circulation is falling among Zambian print newspapers in a shrinking market as the proliferation of community radio and TV stations and tabloid newspapers adds to audience segmentation (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Hamusokwe, 2018). Research is being conducted in Western countries on audience shifts to online newspapers, unlike in Zambia whose socio-economic realities and demographics are different.

Sixth and last, several major world events and popular uprisings have been associated with use of new media in the last 20 years. A prominent example is the Arab Spring, the wave of anti-government uprisings and armed rebellions that began in Tunisia in 2011 and spread across North Africa and the Middle East. A notable aspect of the Arab Spring has been the use of social media and digital technologies, particularly by the youth, to bypass the state-controlled media and mobilise collective action. The structural properties of computer-mediated communication, such as anonymity and timeliness (Letlhaku, 2010), and technological trends such as personalisation (Valkenburg et al, 2016), have the potential to influence social and political life strongly (Letlhaku, 2010). Online newspapers are presumed, even expected, to fulfil the traditional mass media functions or social 'motivations' in the context of consumer needs as categorised by Katz et al (1974). In Zambia, political players have increasingly turned to online newspapers during political campaigns (Willems, 2016) and development agencies are exploring the communitarian potential of new media in working for social change.

Several studies have reported actual upswings not only in exposure but also in attention to and use of content of online newspapers (Boczkowski, 2004; Li, 2006). Research is needed, however, to interrogate the actual power of online newspapers and the consequences of their use to gratify expressed consumer needs and to influence social change. A more fundamental need is for research that contextualises the influence of

online newspapers in the light of existing of media effects theories or that explores new concepts that are better suited for analysing them.

Statement of the problem

While online newspapers have grown phenomenally and undergone remarkable changes in just over two decades, an array of research opportunities arising from their evolution in Africa has gone unexploited, as has been repeatedly observed by African scholars with an interest on the topic such as Chari (2009, 2013), Mabweazara, Mudhai, and Whittaker (2014) and Chishala (2015). What has not been brought to scholarly attention are the grey areas in African research emanating from the narrow focus of previous research, methodologically and conceptually. There is increasing research interest in sub-Saharan Africa, much of which is focused on Zimbabwe and is slanted towards the impact of the Internet and new media technologies on the practice of journalism. Methodologically, most studies have been undertaken from an interpretative tradition, from output criteria, external criteria or professional criteria (according to the taxonomic classifications of media evaluations by Campbell et al, (2009). Some of the more notable deficiencies in the current literature are the lack of: i) broadly focused, population-based audience studies, which go beyond Web-based surveys, such as those by Chishala (2015) in Zambia and Chari (2018) in Zimbabwe; ii) studies, whose primary focus is to 'predict some variables of interest' (Lapan and QuartaroLi 2009:65); and iii) particularly in Zambia and the region, explanatory research, whose primary objective is often to test a theory and to validate the theory.

These gaps seem to be as much a problem today as they were 13 years ago. Li (2006:3) lamented that 'with all the development of the newspapers on the Web, and a new medium playing a more visible role in people's lives, newspapers on the Internet have not been a topic adequately addressed by academics'. The media industry is continuously evolving and the emergence of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and new media is creating a demand for new knowledge and theories about the effects of individual or group behaviour in the CMC environments (Valkenburg et al, 2016).

Neuman and Guggenheim (2011:14) state that

perhaps as a placeholder for things to come, there is a newly evolving theoretical tradition focusing on new technologies and interactive properties, New Media Theories, in our terminology. Significant use of the Internet at home for interpersonal and mass communication evolved only in the late 1990s, so given the successive delays of the conduct of research, publication, and citation this work is just now establishing itself.

Scope of the study, objectives and research questions

Overall, the study aims to contribute to scholarly knowledge about online newspapers in Zambia. Specifically, it aims to highlight new insights about the readership of online newspapers, particularly gratifications sought and gratifications obtained from use of these new media. It measures and models how gratification obtained affects: i) the need for and actual consumption of news from traditional news media; and ii) the influence of online newspapers at micro-social levels. Finally, it also measures the probable effects of perceived credibility (as an intervening variable) to the outcomes of reader gratification.

General Objective: *To investigate, analyse and characterise gratifications sought from readership online newspapers and the impact of gratification obtained on consumption of traditional media and on influence to readers.*

The specific objectives follow below.

Objective 1: *To investigate extent of exposure and attention to online newspapers and the social motivations for reading*

This objective is the anchor of the study. It aims to highlight the extent of online newspaper penetration among the populations of Lusaka Province and to characterise how much time readers are spending on these media. It seeks to understand what motivates readers to turn to online newspapers based on the social motivations as described by Katz and Blu (1974) and demographics of the readers. From a theoretical perspective, the objective is intended to contextualise the readers' expressed motivations for turning to online newspapers within the established mass media functions. To fully explore these phenomena, the study asks the following questions:

1. What is the extent of access to online newspapers among Zambian readers?

2. Who accesses and reads online newspapers and with what level of intensity?
3. What motivates readers to turn to online newspapers (gratifications sought) and for what uses?
4. To what extent are the readers' motivations or gratifications sought from online newspapers met (or correlated with the gratifications obtained)?
5. What socio-demographic factors predict use of online newspapers?

Objective 2: *To investigate readers' preferences for, use of and gratifications obtained from content of online newspapers*

This objective investigates audience perceptions about and gratifications sought and obtained from the content of Zambian online newspapers, defined as content gratification (see chapter 3). The focus of the study is on syntactical or information dimension of content. With the rapid growth of the online newspapers as both complementary to and substitutes for the traditional media, the study considers the usefulness and relevance of the content which these media convey to their growing audiences. Digital media take advantage of the versatility of the Internet to instantaneously purvey a diversity of information to global audiences on a range of ideas, expertise and topics (Valkenburg et al, 2016). Twenty years since their emergence not much research has been undertaken to interrogate whether online newspapers are serving the information needs of their readers. Of particular interest to this research is development content (defined in in chapter 7), which should preoccupy every mass medium in a developing country like Zambia. Through this objective, the study seeks to elicit audience perspectives on content preferences, relevance and gratification obtained from the various types of the content. It asks the following research questions:

1. What are the readers' content motivations and preferences?
2. To what extent are the readers making use of the content of online newspapers?
3. To what extent are the readers of online newspapers satisfied with the content from online newspapers and what type of content are they most gratified with?
4. What socio-demographic factors predict content preferences and gratification obtained from content among the readers?

Objective 3: *To investigate readers' preferences for, use of and gratifications obtained from interactive features of online newspapers*

Under this objective the study investigates and aims to uncover the extent of use and gratification obtained from use of the various interactivity features of online newspapers, defined as process gratification (see also chapter 3). Interactivity is a unique characteristic of digital media and online newspapers in particular, as discussed in detail in the foregoing sections and in chapter 8. Studies conducted in some parts of the world have highlighted the extent that these features are used and have explored the correlation between use of the features and reader gratification (Chung, 2008; Yoo, 2011). This has not been the case in Zambia, although online newspapers in the country have adopted a number of interactivity features. The study thus seeks to fill the void in empirical data on the subject by asking the following research questions:

1. What are the readers' preferences for interactivity features of Zambian online newspapers?
2. To what extent are the readers utilising the various interactivity features of the Zambian online newspapers?
3. Which of the specific features are the readers motivated to use, make the most use of and are most satisfied with?
4. Is use of the interactivity features of the online newspapers a predictor of overall reader gratification from Zambian online newspapers?
5. What socio-demographic factors predict use of interactivity features of online newspapers?

Objective 4: *To assess the readers' perceived credibility of online newspapers and effect on gratification obtained from online newspapers*

This object investigates the readers' judgment of the ethical value of news in online newspapers and the quality of journalism overall. Given the rapid growth and the increasing use of these new media by readers, as reported in other sections, concerns about ethical conduct are not only timely but also legitimate. The handful of studies on credibility of online newspapers (for instance, by Chishala, 2015 and Chari, 2009; 2013)

have been done from expert criteria only or had methodological limitations and were narrow in focus. The study extends the scope of scholarship on the subject by asking the audiences of online newspapers the following questions:

1. To what extent do Zambian readers perceive online newspapers as credible sources of news and information?
2. What credibility issues are the readers most concerned with?
3. How do Zambian readers perceive of the credibility of online newspapers compared to traditional mainstream media in general?
4. To what extent does perceived credibility of the online newspapers affect overall gratification obtained by the readers of these media?
5. What socio-demographic factors influence perceptions about the credibility of online newspapers?

Objective 5: *To investigate the impact of readership of and gratification obtained from online newspapers on exposure to and consumption of news from print newspapers and other traditional media*

Zambian traditional media have experienced diminishing fortunes over the last decades (Hamusokwe, 2018). While data are not readily available on the decline in audience numbers for radio and television, reduced print runs and circulations of all major newspapers are all too evident (Hamusokwe, 2018). Studies elsewhere have focused on the impact of online newspapers on traditional media (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002; Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). This study, under this objective, aims to characterise the probable competition for audiences brought about by online newspapers and the impact this has had on traditional mainstream media, especially newspapers. The following questions are addressed:

1. How does readership of online newspapers compare with the respondents' readership of print newspapers and general exposure to other traditional media?
2. Has there been a drop in readership of print newspapers and consumption of news from other traditional media as a result of respondents' consumption of news and information from online newspapers?

3. Do Zambian readers see online newspapers as complementary to, or substitutes for, traditional newspapers and media in general?
4. To what extent does perceived credibility of the online newspapers affect the substitutability effect of these media?
5. What socio-demographic factors predict reduced need for and use of traditional mass media due to the proliferation of online newspapers?

Objective 6: *To investigate the impact of reading and gratification from online newspapers on the influence to readers at micro-social levels*

This objective is intended to analyse the probable influence of online newspapers on their readers. Whereas numerous studies have been conducted on the impact of the traditional media in political communication and social development, corresponding research on online newspapers is lacking, certainly in Zambia. The study investigates and characterises the types and extent of influence Zambian online newspapers have on their audiences. Theoretically it aims to interrogate the relevance of the established influence within existing mass media effects theories. It asks the following questions:

1. To what extent do online newspapers have an influence or effect on their readers from the following media-effects perspectives: surveillance⁶ or information seeking; socialisation; utility?
2. How can the influence or effect of online newspapers on their readers be characterised from a diffusion of innovation model?
3. To what extent does perceived credibility of online newspapers affect their influence on readers?
4. What demographic factors predict the influence of online newspapers on their readers?

⁶ Throughout this thesis 'surveillance' refers to 'news searching habits among readers' (Katz, et al, 1974).

Contribution of the study

This study is intended to contribute to the body of existing research on online newspapers, not only in the specific areas studied but also as a reference for a distinct type of journalism. For scholars interested in Zambia, the study proffers new knowledge of the following: readership of online newspapers, specifically on gratifications sought and obtained from the content, process and social functions of online newspapers; the impact of online newspapers on the media eco-system, their social influence and evolution in Zambia and the policy, regulatory and legal environments under which they operate. An understanding of the relevance of the theories adopted in the study to the era of new media (to which online newspapers belong) is an added value of the study. From a practical perspective, it is hoped that the study will stimulate conversations around policy and regulatory frameworks for online media in general and online newspapers in Zambia in particular.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised into two main parts with 12 chapters covering theoretical chapters in Part I and empirical chapters in Part II. The first part covers introduction, background, theories and methodology. The second addresses the six research questions, each presented as a study on its own, covering abstract, introduction, literature review, brief methodology, followed by a results, discussion and conclusion sections.

Chapter 1, *Introduction*, is intended to provide the reader with an overview of study: the reasons for choosing the topic; the rationale and statement of problem; the background and context of the study, its aims and objectives and the key research questions. It also provides glossary of key terms which are repeatedly used in the study.

Chapter 2, *Country context and evolution of online newspaper*, consists of the country context, a description of the evolution of online newspapers and the growth of and environment for online newspapers in Zambia. It focuses on the demographic, socio-economic, political and technological factors that bear on the evolution and growth of its media industry generally and online newspapers in particular. It examines the relationship between the growth of the media industry and such factors as poverty, literacy, media

literacy and access to information and communication technologies, notably the Internet and mobile phones. It describes the evolution of online newspapers globally and in Zambia in the context of societal and technological development and needs. Online newspapers are defined and described and their symbiotic and inseparable relations with print newspapers explored. The chapter explores the history, ownership, design and content and political economy of online newspapers and ends with case studies of the relations between the online newspapers and the Zambian regulators and readers, thus laying the ground for the analysis in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3, *Theoretical framework*, presents the two main theories that underpin the study: use and gratification and network society. Uses and gratification theory (UGT) is the core concept that runs through all the themes of the study. It is used to analyse and contextualise the readers' choices of, and gratifications derived from, the social functions of online newspapers and their content and processes. UGT also contextualises readers' judgment of the credibility of online newspapers and their choices between online newspapers and the other news media. Network society theory contextualises the catalytic role of online newspapers in the realisation of the ideals of a network society as espoused by Manuel Castells.

Chapter 4, *Methods and methodologies*, elaborates the ontology, epistemology and paradigms of the study as well as the overall methodologies, processes and instruments for gathering and analysing the data. It explains the measures taken to ensure data quality, such as training of enumerators, pre-testing and field supervision and control. It concludes with a discussion of how the ethical considerations associated with the type of study were dealt with.

Chapter 5, *population and sample demographics*, presents the basic descriptive data of the sampled respondents, such as their demographics (response rate and distribution by age, sex, location, residence, marital status, religiosity etc.) and data such as access to mobile phones and the Internet.

Chapters 6 to 11 address the research questions stated above.

The epilogue, Chapters 12, presents a synthesis of the findings and the conclusions of the study. It elucidates how the findings relate to the initial conceptual models or frameworks

that underpins the study. The chapter also expounds the relationships between the hypothesised independent and dependent variables and emerging generalisations and how these relate to some existing media and communication theories.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

This section provides operational definitions of the terms that are repeatedly used throughout the thesis. The terms are; blog, citizen journalism, internet and world wide web, new media, online newspapers, social media and traditional or mainstream mass media.

Blog

Deuze (2001:4) describes weblogs or blogs as highly personal daily diary by an individual, not in the least by a journalist, telling stories about experiences online and offering readers links with comments to content. Other scholars (Hearn, et al 2009; Thurlow et al, 2011) describe a weblog as a personal online journal with the characteristics of being frequently updated; written in a conversational style, with links to other Web content, complemented with analysis from the blogger; and a “comments” link that allows readers to post their own thoughts on the blogger’s post. Blogs differ from online newspapers in that they are ‘Individualised journalism (a.k.a. ‘user-generated content sites’) (Deuze, 2001:4), more often just ‘one person speaking his or her mind about certain issues and provides for reader contents’ (Deuze, 2001:4). The belong to the *Index and Category sites*, which are located outside of the mainstream media, according Deuze’s taxonomy of online journalism. Online newspapers, on the other hand, belong to *Mainstream News sites*, which are “journalism as it is practised in traditional print or broadcasting media” (Deuze, 2001:4) Blood (2002) confirms this view and posits that, “a weblog’s strength lies in its position outside the mainstream media” (2002 in Janssen, 2010:17).

Microblogging is a new term associated with the ‘newest media’ (Thurlow, et all, 2011:5), which refers to the “writing of short messages on the web designed for self-reporting about what one is doing, thinking, or feeling at any moment. This can be performed on stand-alone microblogging platforms like Twitter or on social network sites such as Facebook.”

Citizen Journalism

Put simply, “when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they ‘have in their possession to inform one another, that’s “citizen journalism” (Rosen, 2008). According to the Worlds of Journalism (2019), the term ‘citizen journalist’ has also been used for citizens who are not “professional” journalists in terms of training, standards, and/or compensation sources (if any) but are able to do ‘journalism’ using new media tools. This all-inclusive and diluted definition of a ‘journalist’ is however problematic to this author. It goes against the ‘turn of tide toward understanding of journalism as a profession’ (WJS, 2019:10) and downgrades the profession to mere freedom of expression.

Internet and the World Wide Web

Heinonen (1999:471) argues that the Internet is not a “physical or tangible entity, but rather a giant network.” He adds that, “It inter-connects innumerable smaller groups of linked computer net-works. It is thus a network of networks” (1999: 471). Goel (1997: 3) defines it as “a collection of individual data networks connected together in such a way that data can be transmitted back and forth between any one individual data network and any other individual data network.” Online newspapers are accessible via the World Wide Web or the Web, which was invented in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee. The Web is defined as an information system where documents and other web resources are interlinked by hypertext and are accessible over the Internet. The resources of the WWW may be accessed by users by a software application called a web browser⁷.

New media

‘New media’ is a term used to describe all forms of media that are ‘native’ to and depend on computers for computational and redistribution. “It implies the use of desktop and portable computers as well as, wireless handheld devices” (Odun and Utulu, 2016:57). Mambwe (2013:34) describes new media as “digital technologies that are both collaborative and dynamic, allowing users to access and direct information to others over the Internet or through mobile devices.” Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002:1) argue the

⁷ <https://www.w3.org/Help/#webinternet>

Internet is at the top of the list of new media. Online newspapers belong to this group of new technologies since they depend on the Internet for 'redistribution.' Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002:1) argue that new media "have become everyday technologies." They are a form of independent or self-publishing platforms, which includes blogging, micro-blogging, social media networking, among others (Odun and Utulu, 2016:60). New media are an embodiment of convergence between old and new technologies. Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002:1) sum up that,

New media have not replaced older media, any more than broadcasting replaced print in the mid-20th century. Rather, people's information and communication environments have become ever more individualized and commodified, integrating print, audio, still and moving images, broadcasting, telecommunications, computing, and other modes and channels of communication and information sharing.

Online Newspapers

Not many scholars and writers have attempted to define online newspapers, let alone distinguish them from other types of online publications. This thesis provides an operational definition of online newspapers and justifies the choice of the term 'newspaper' They have also been called 'e-newspapers' (Bokesay, 2008) and, 'Internet newspapers' (Li, et al, 2006). This thesis adopts Deuze's definition which distinguishes online newspapers 'conceptually as the type that is produced exclusively for the World Wide Web (as a graphic interface of the Internet)' (2001:4).

Deuze, in presenting a taxonomy which is widely referenced, distinguishes four types of products of online journalism: mainstream news sites, index and category sites, meta- and comment sites and share-and-discussion sites. This study focuses on the first, which he defines as 'generally offering a selection of editorial content (be it shovelled from a linked parent medium or produced originally for the Web) and a minimal, often moderated form of participatory communication' (2001:4). He observes that mainstream news sites are 'journalism as it is practised in traditional print or broadcasting media'; its examples include websites of acclaimed news media, both print and broadcast, and 'most online newspapers fall into this category as well' (Deuze, 2001:4).

Li (2006:33) call this type news media 'Internet newspaper', defined as 'a publication produced by a newspaper publishing company and delivered through the World Wide Web, a colourful platform provided by navigation software'. An online newspaper can either be an online version of a print newspaper produced or a stand-alone publication (Boczkowski, 2002; Li, 2006). This thesis accepts the latter description. Other scholars call them 'born-digital' and 'online-only' newspapers.

This thesis uses the suffix '-paper': i) as way of distinguishing this online news medium from other genres among the mainstream news sites described by Deuze (2001) above; and ii) as a way of associating them with print newspapers, their progenitors, whose traditions they continue to follow – traditions not only of design, content, purpose and use but also of the ethical codes by which they are judged. Dropping the suffix 'paper', as argued by some scholars, would seem appealing but it would drown this special new media genre among others. For instance, 'online (news) publication' or online news 'site' – terms used by some researchers – would include a wide range of other 'publications' or 'sites'. Publication means a host of others as in this definition, "a *publication* is something made to communicate with the public. *Publications* are usually printed on paper (like magazines and books), but online *publications* are delivered via the Internet"⁸ News 'sites' also includes websites of other types of media; during the early days of the Internet only televisions stations had websites but in this present day even radio has news sites too.

Social media

Among the various definitions of social media, the one offered by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) is adopted in this thesis: 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content'(2010:61). Social media is an umbrella term encompassing applications used for different purposes, among them being collaborative projects (for example Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (such as Twitter), content communities (for instance YouTube), social networking sites (such as Facebook), and business networking sites like LinkedIn (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Murugesan, 2007).

⁸ <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/publication>.

Technological developments over the last decade have led to the convergence of online newspapers and social networking platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Traditional or mainstream mass media

'Traditional mass media' is used interchangeably with 'mainstream media' in the thesis. The terms are used to distinguish and contrast this genre from other media, in particular the new media. 'Traditional media' are described as 'the non-electronic mediums which work as part of our culture and as vehicles of transmitting tradition from one generation to another'.⁹ In this thesis, the term is used to refer to 'those methods indicative of print-based newspaper and television. They include the electronic, the print and the narrowcast media'.¹⁰ In this thesis traditional news media is used specifically in reference to television, radio and print newspapers.

⁹ <http://download.nos.org/srsec335new/ch25-core.pdf>.

¹⁰ Ogidi, O. and Utulu, A.U. 2016. 'Is the new media superior to the traditional media for advertising?' *Asian Journal of Economic Modelling*, 4(1):57-69.

CHAPTER 2

COUNTRY CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

This chapter consists of three parts: country context; a brief description of print newspapers and their development and the evolution of online newspapers; and a specific account of the evolution of online newspapers in Zambia. The country context highlights the phenomena which have a direct connection with the proliferation and growth of online newspapers; they include socio-economic and demographic factors, media policy and the regulatory environment, and access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT). The second part defines and describes online newspapers, as they are referred to throughout this thesis, to distinguish them from other forms of digital media. It draws a link between online and traditional print newspapers in order to buttress the point that the two belong to the same mass media genre; that is why most scholars call them 'news-papers' even though they are Web-based. The last part describes aspects of the evolution of online newspapers in Zambia – audience use, design and content, the political and economic context, the legal, policy and regulatory environment and how they are regarded by their readers and the authorities.

Zambia: country context

History, geography and demographics

Zambia is a land-locked country covering 752,610 km² (CSO, 2015). It became independent of Britain on 24 October 24 1964 and changed its name from Northern Rhodesia. It is bordered in the south by Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia; in the west by Angola; in the north by the Democratic Republic of the Congo; on the north-east by Tanzania; on the east by Malawi; and on the south-east by Mozambique.

The population of Zambia was recorded as 13,092,666 in the 2010 census and projected by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) to be 15,933 883 in 2016, of which 50.7% are females and 60.5% live in rural areas (CSO, 2015). The International Youth Federation classified Zambia among the three youngest countries in the world (IYF, 2014) with a median age of 16.6 years compared to a global average of 29.2. According to the latest Central Statistical Office report, youth unemployment ranges from 45.5% to 51.1% in 2017 (CSO 2018). The overall literacy rate among Zambians between the ages of 15 and 24 years is 65.76% (CSO, 2015). Literacy affects

readership – the more educated the population, the more likely it is to read newspapers. Lack of disposable income reduces readership. A survey found in 2015 that 54.4% of Zambians lived below the poverty line and monthly household income was the equivalent of \$18 (CSO, 2015).

Zambia is described as politically stable country, having changed political systems and governments peacefully in the last 54 years. Soon after independence in 1964, Zambia adopted a multiparty system of government. It became a one-party state in 1972 and reverted to a multiparty system in 1991, ushering in a period of economic growth and decentralisation (Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). Since 1991, two pro-democracy parties have been in power, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) until August 2011 and the Patriotic Front, a breakaway of the MMD, since 2011.

Media landscape

The introduction of multiparty politics in 1991 brought many positive changes to the media landscape, notably organic growth, plurality and freedoms. The changes were largely due to the media reforms introduced by the MMD government with the adoption of amendments to the Second Republic (1972-1991) Constitution in 1996 that enshrined protection for freedom of expression (Chishala, 2015). Other landmark developments were the enactment of the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) Act of 1991, the Telecommunications Act of 1994 and the Radio Communications Act of 1994.

Zambia launched its first official media policy in 1996. The aim initially was to liberalise the airwaves by allowing private ownership of media. Liberalisation had started in 1992, a year after Frederick Chiluba and the MMD had succeeded President Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) government. Since Chiluba and the MMD found it difficult to access the media during the 1991 elections, they undertook to free the media once elected. Soon after winning the polls, the MMD government enhanced its popularity by promoting media reforms and promising to privatise the public media. Nevertheless, it maintained control of the state media, just as UNIP had done (Mwale, 2015 quoted by Hamusokwe, 2016). The launch of the Media and Information Policy in 1996 gave rise to private and community media. Before the reforms, there had been only a handful of media outlets in broadcasting and print. The state-owned national broadcaster, ZNBC, owned the only television station and the only three radio channels (Chishala, 2015; Hamusokwe, 2016). Radio was the biggest beneficiary of liberalisation. Radio Phoenix, operating in the capital, Lusaka, was registered in 1994 as the first private commercial radio station in Zambia (Muzyamba, 2009 quoted by Hamusokwe, 2016; Chishala, 2015). By December 2016, there were 103 commercial and community radio stations, according to records obtained

from the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in January 2017. Investment in television increased especially after 2011 when the Patriotic Front (PF) came to power, and in 2018, according to the IBA, Zambia had 34 TV stations. Investment in print media was smaller in scale. Until 1991, the state owned the only two dailies and their weekend editions, *Times of Zambia*, *Sunday Times*, *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Sunday Mail*. The only private newspaper was a weekly tabloid, the *National Mirror*, owned by the Catholic Church. Though print newspapers have come and gone since the start of the Third Republic in 1991, at any given time there were at least five privately owned dailies and weeklies registered in Zambia.

The *Weekly Post*, the forerunner of the daily tabloid that came to be known as *The Post*, was registered on 28 February 1991, one of the first private newspapers to be launched after the era of one-party rule. In line with its motto as ‘the paper that digs deeper’, *The Post* championed Zambia’s democracy and crusaded so actively against corruption during its 26 years that it ran into trouble with successive governments. It came as no surprise therefore when the government shut it down on 1 November 2016 after a court ruling that it owed the Zambia Revenue Authority the equivalent of \$5,300,000 in taxes and other statutory obligations.¹¹ Privately owned tabloid and online newspapers continue to emerge. Scholars regard this development as grounds for a media industry boom in Zambia (Ndawana, 2016; African Media Barometer, 2017).

Until the constitutional amendments came into force on 5 February 2016, the media in Zambia had operated without laws that specifically promoted media freedom (Simutanyi et al, 2015). Previous constitutions merely guaranteed freedom of expression, ‘in which relevant language could be interpreted to allow legal restrictions on various grounds’ (Simutanyi et al, 2015:5). Article 20 (1) of the amended Constitution provides for the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy. It states that

Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to impart and communicate ideas and information without interference, whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons, and freedom from interference with his correspondence.

In spite of the explicit provisions for freedom of the press and expression, however, Zambian media houses and journalists face various restrictions under criminal, civil defamation, sedition and

¹¹ *Times of Zambia* 2 November 2016

obscenity laws and provisions of the penal code, including the State Security Act (Freedom House, 2016). A Freedom of Information Bill of 2002 was tabled in Parliament but withdrawn by the government in November the same year without consultation with stakeholders as provided in the draft bill. It has never gone back to Parliament despite numerous promises by successive governments (Simutanyi et al, 2015). In 2018, the government announced that it had begun reviewing the draft bill and stated that it would be taking it to Parliament once the process was concluded. This has not happened.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 2002 and the Information and Communications Technology Act (2009) provide a legal framework for broadcasting in Zambia. The former was amended in 2010 to transfer powers of appointing the board of the IBA from independent stakeholders (NGOs, media associations, interest groups etc.) – as provided in the original Act – to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services. The minister is also directly responsible for issuing and revoking broadcasting licences. In June 2013, the government appointed a director-general for the IBA before the appointment of a board of directors and other governance structures. Similarly, the minister can appoint the boards of all the state-owned media, even – as was the case in 2011 under the new PF government – in the absence of a board of directors.

Such developments give credence to assertions that the Zambian media, whether state or privately owned, are not free from political interference, direct or indirect. Media houses and individual journalists who are regarded as critics of the government of the day have complained of official harassment. A 2015 Freedom House report cited various cases of political interference and harassment of journalists in both traditional and online newspapers, as well as attempts to deny citizens access to online news media that were seen to be critical of the government. The report highlighted that in 2011 then President Michael Sata ordered Attorney General Mumba Malila to investigate how online newspapers such as *Zambian Watchdog*, *Tumfweko*, *Zambia Online* and *Zambia Reports* could be regulated.

In June 2013, three journalists linked to *Zambian Watchdog*, an online newspaper, were arrested and charged with possessing articles censorious of the government. Two of them were acquitted of all charges in 2016 after lengthy court proceedings. In July 2013, the government temporarily blocked Zambian readers' access to *Zambian Watchdog* and *Zambia Reports*. In February 2014, the Zambia Information Communication and Technology Authority (ZICTA) required all citizens to register their mobile phone SIM cards under their real names, failing which their phones would be deactivated. The requirement was ordered on the grounds of security, but many Zambians complained that it compromised their ability to communicate anonymously and freely. Citizens are

also prohibited from accessing state information that the government has classified as confidential or top secret (Freedom House, 2015). One such incident was when the controversial re-election of President Edgar Lungu by a margin of 2.72% was contested in the courts of law.

Regulations and policies aside, the media in Zambia have sometimes failed to uphold professional standards and to avoid partisan politics. Despite the self-regulating provisions of the Zambia Media Council and its predecessor, the Media Council of Zambia, some media houses have been nakedly partisan and polarised in their political coverage. They have been criticised for casting aside ethical standards of objectivity, fairness, accuracy, truthfulness and balance for the sake of political expediency.

The high stakes of competitive electoral politics are reflected in the practices and regulation of the media. Several partisan 'news' websites and opposition-sponsored tabloid newspapers have emerged since the PF came to power. Journalistic standards among these new sources are questionable and the daily news agenda appears to be marked by factionalism, rumours and partisan scandal-mongering (Simutanyi et al, 2015:7).

The media have often paid a high price for this partisanship, especially when the party or an individual they supported loses power or usurps the instruments of power. The shutting down of *The Post* in November 2016 is a case in point. After the death of the national president and PF leader, Michael Sata, in October 2014, *The Post* campaigned openly against the candidature of Edgar Lungu during the PF primaries, the presidential by-election of 15 January 2015 and again in the 11 August 2016 general election. Lungu won all the elections. On 1 November the *The Post* was forced to close down amid heavy police presence.

Information and communication technologies

Access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and their impact on online sources of news and information are crucial topics of this study. While access to mobile phones and the Internet has improved in recent years, ownership in Zambia is less than in Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria (Simutanyi et al, 2015). According to the 2018 ZICTA survey, only 8.1% of households nationally had access to a computer. Individual ownership of mobile phones was 83.4% (88% urban, 77% rural) but active use was only 53.5% nationally (71% urban, 42.1% rural), with 56.9% among males and less among females. Active use was defined as having used a mobile phone in the previous three months. Only 29.6% (42.1% urban, 14.3% rural) of the individuals who owned a mobile phone had a smartphone. Active Internet users were only 14.3% (77.8% urban, 22.2% rural).

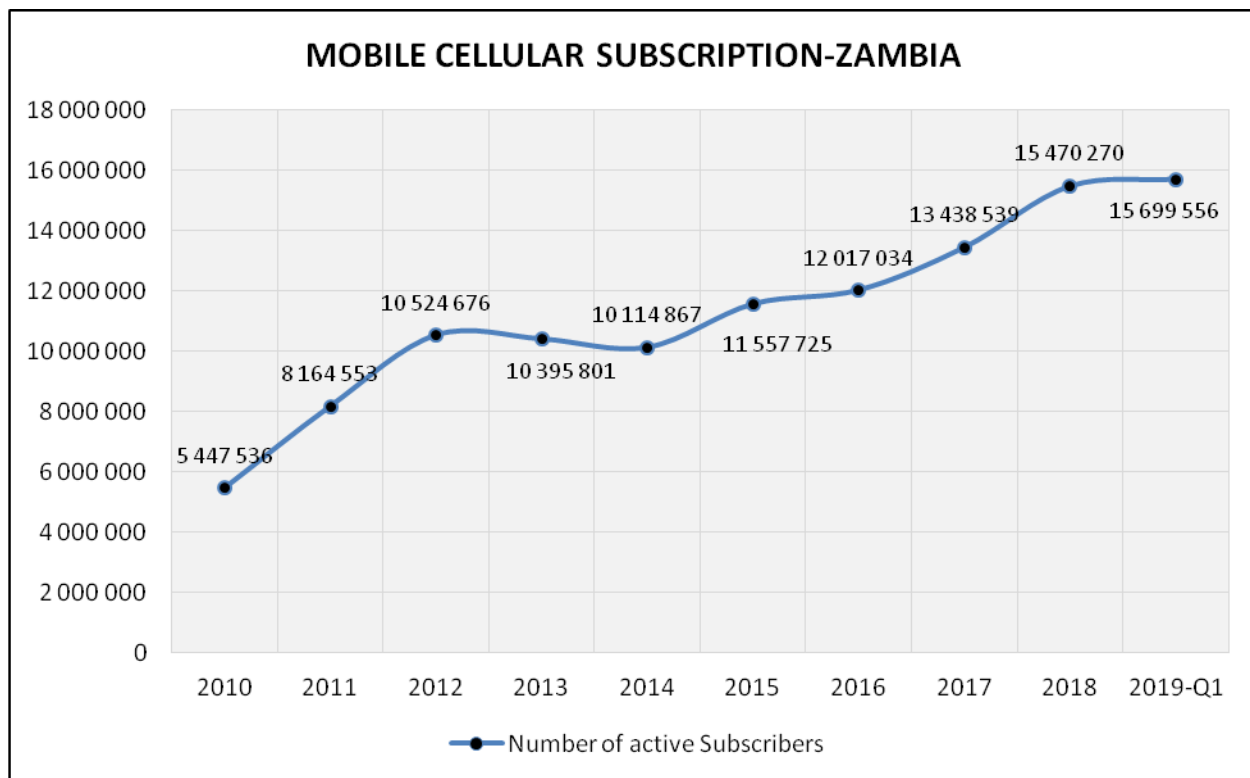


Figure 2.1 : Number of active mobile phone subscribers in Zambia as at December 2018.
Source: ZICTA, 2018

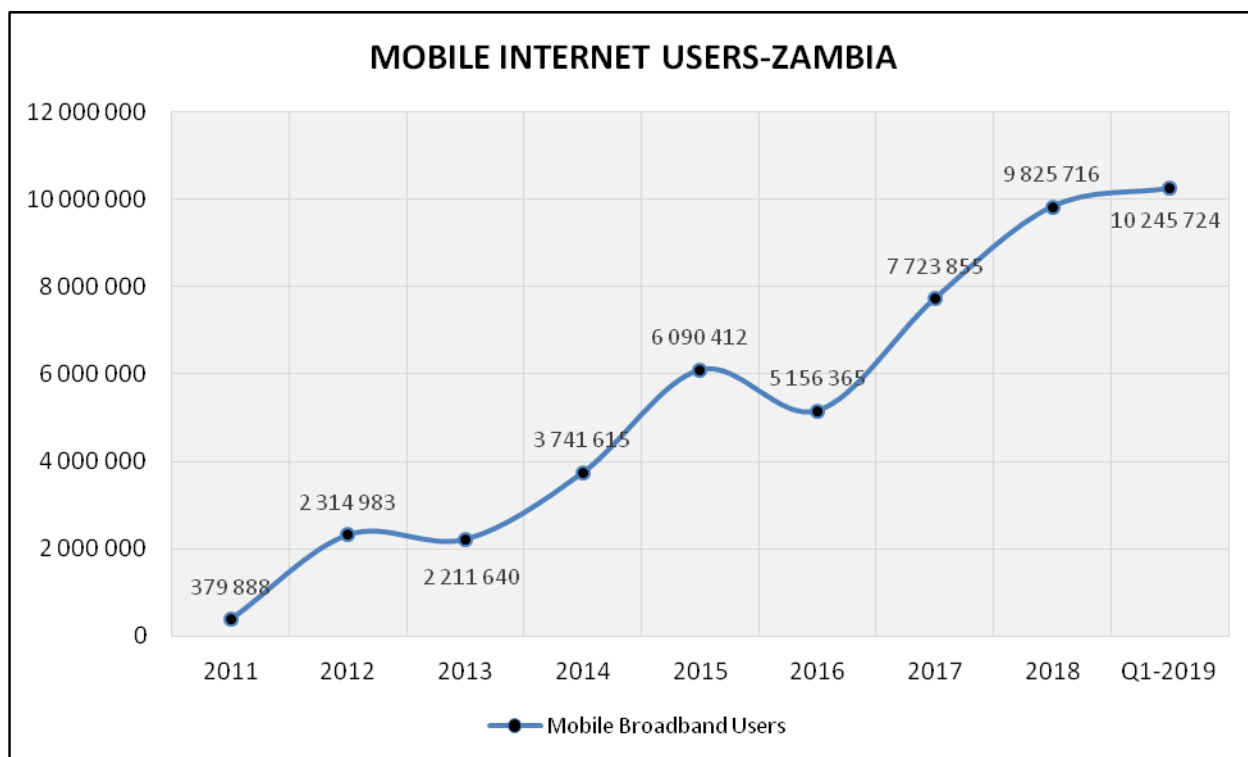


Figure 2.2 : Mobile broadband users in Zambia as at December 2018. *Source: ZICTA, 2018*

The disaggregated data of the ZICTA study reveal some positive trends and opportunities for digital communication. For instance, 82% of the households with Internet accessed broadband using a mobile phone. Of the Internet users, 78.4% had at least one social media account; of these, 91.4% had a Facebook account; 74.5% WhatsApp and 16.7% Instagram. Six in every 10 Internet subscribers were active surfers, accessing the Net once daily, and 33.1% once a week (ZICTA, 2018). The findings show that most individuals with Internet are able to access online newspapers regularly through social networking sites, especially Facebook. Another noteworthy topic is why the respondents used the Internet. The ZICTA survey found that 68.5% of subscribers used the Net to surf social media, followed by 'downloading things' (47.6%), 'research' (37.3%) and 'emails' (29.5%). 'Reading publications' (presumably including online newspapers) was ranked fifth and cited by 23.5% subscribers.

Young people (35 years and below – the majority of the Zambian population) constituted 72.3% of the Internet users. The survey found that use of Internet services had 'increased from the findings established in 2015' (ZICTA, 2018:54) and that network coverage is relatively high at 86.9% (97.8% urban areas and 79.7% in rural areas). Reasons cited for reluctance to use the Internet were: 'do not need it' (33.8%); 'lack of skills to use the services' (33%); 'high cost of the

required equipment' (26.1%); 'cost of the Internet (20.1%); and 'no service in the area' (9.1%). It is noteworthy that 75.9% of households nationally (77.1% urban and 71.3% rural) viewed Internet services as affordable. Although lack of access to smartphones was cited as an obstacle to Internet use in the 2015 survey, it was not among the stand-out issues in 2018.

In summary, the findings presented in the foregoing sections show that Zambians are mostly young and moderately literate and that many are unemployed. Poverty levels are high. The country is politically stable and lacks a clear media policy but the prospects for media growth are predictable and favourable. There has been exponential growth of private radio and television stations since the start of the Third Republic in 1991. The ICT sector has also seen substantial growth in the last 20 years, in mobile phone ownership and active use, social media use and available mobile phone signal ('network'). Internet penetration and use remain moderate overall, with a clear digital divide between rural and urban and other socio-economic demographics. Most Internet subscribers use the Net for social media while fewer than one in every four cite 'reading publications'.

Online Newspapers – An Evolutionary Perspective

Newspapers – the forerunner of news online

Mass media scholars regard printed newspapers as the oldest, most ubiquitous and most highly standardised form of human communication (Boczkowski, 2004; Stephens, 2007). The newspaper is defined as a publication that appears regularly and frequently carries news about a wide variety of current events (Stevens, 1988). Various organisations and interest groups – trade unions, advertisers, corporations, religious groups and clubs – produce their own specialised news publications. However, the term 'newspaper' applies only to publications that carry news of a general nature to large sections of the public in a specific geographic area (Stephens, 2007). Stephens adds three more attributes that distinguish newspapers from, say, trade publications: i) frequency of publication – as a daily, weekly or bi-weekly; ii) covering a diversity of issues; and iii) displaying a 'consistent and recognisable title or format' (1988:150). Newspapers are also distinguished by the rigor of their production processes – how news is gathered, written, edited, laid out and distributed (Stevens, 1988). In other words, any newspaper worthy of the title must be judged by these criteria.

Boczkowski (2004:270) observes that 'newspapers have changed considerably since Timotheus Ritzsch established the *Einkommende Zeitung* ('incoming news') in Leipzig, Germany, in 1650, which according to Smith (1979 quoted by Boczkowski, 2004) was the first daily publication.

These changing roles and functions and form and character reflect the social and cultural dynamics of the society they operate in.

Fusing together a history of the political economy of newspaper production and organization, the development, style, character and content, as well as the changing social, technological and cultural context within which newspaper production and reading happens, rests on the premise that the nature of the newspaper can only be explained through the understanding of the interaction between external pressures that were brought to bear on the medium in any era and the internal mechanisms by which they are produced (Williams, 2010:4).

Evolving perceptions of the needs of readers have also had a bearing on form, content and character of newspapers. “Satisfying perceived changing habits and requirements has brought about new writing styles and techniques, as well as changing the nature of what appears in the newspaper” (Williams, 2010:4). Newspapers also stand out from other publications in terms of the role they play in society. Cultural theorist James Carey categorises the roles of the newspaper as: transmission of information (transmission model) and bringing the readers together as a community (ritual model).

Historically, the general communication newspaper has endeavoured to fulfil a wide range of functions to meet the perceived and evolving needs of readers. In its maiden edition in 1785, *The Daily Universal Register*, which became *The Times*, articulated the need to cater for a wide variety of reader news and interests: “A newspaper ought to not to be engrossed by any particular object, but like a well-covered table it should contain something for every palate” (Williams, 2010:10).

Variety of content has thus been part of the evolution and a distinguishing feature of the newspaper (Williams, 2010; Stephens, 1988, 2007). Stephens (2007) sees a fourfold role for this genre of newspaper: conducting commerce through advertisements; providing readers with information of practical value, such as television schedules, weather maps and listings of stock prices; being a source of entertainment; and, crucially in a democracy, providing citizens with information about government and politics.¹² The most profound influence on the form and content of newspapers has been the need to stay ahead of the competition (Williams, 2010). The newness or topicality of content dictates the frequency of publication, which in turn engineers the development of technologies to facilitate speedy gathering, processing and dissemination of news

¹² <https://nyu-staging.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/a-history-of-news>, accessed 18 March 2018

(Williams, 2010; Boczkowski, 2004). This has been the main driver of the development of online newspapers.

The evolution of online papers on the Web has made visible taken-for-granted aspects of print's production culture, provided a window into the emergence of new regimes of content creation, and allowed the examination of broader patterns in the construction of information on the Internet (Boczkowski, 2004:270).

Early attempts to replace newsprint

The ink-on-paper news medium has undergone a number of evolutionary changes over centuries in an effort to replace newsprint and meet the changing needs of society (Ettema, 1989; Boczkowski, 2004; Stephens, 2007). Innovations are traced to the United Kingdom in the mid-1970s and 1980s when text and graphics were disseminated electronically in the form of videotext and teletext (Ettema, 1989; Boczkowski, 2004). Videotext was a computer-based interactive system that delivered screen text, numbers and graphic material via telephone or two-way cable for display on a television or video monitor (Ettema, 1989; Boczkowski, 2004). Teletext involved a one-way system for transmitting text and graphics via over-the-air broadcasting or cable channels for display on television monitors. The British Broadcasting Corporation is associated with pioneering the use of the teletext technology (Boczkowski, 2004).

Ink-on-paper technology was a product of the industrial revolution; videotext and teletext were the tools and symbols of the emerging information society (Boczkowski, 2004). Two factors explain the fast-paced exploration of electronic publishing in the 1970s and 1980s. The first was the trend towards computerisation in the production and distribution of information that began in the 1960s. The second was the rising cost of newsprint coupled with diversified consumer tastes that were challenging mass advertising and the growth in competition for news and advertising (Boczkowski, 2004). Although conditions were ripe for electronic publishing, experiments with teletext and videotext were abandoned by the end of the 1980s. Lack of enthusiasm from both publishers and consumers contributed partly to the decline of these innovations (Boczkowski, 2004; Li, 2006).



Figure 2.3 : Comparison between teletext Level 1.0 and teletext Level 2.5. *Source:* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teletext>. Accessed 20 June 2019.

The World Wide Web and online newspapers

Innovations in electronic publishing became dormant between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s but resurged in the first half of the 1990s owing to a number of global societal and technological developments (Boczkowski, 2004; Boksoy, 2008). The notable ones were: the invention of the Internet in 1989 and specifically the World Wide Web in 1993; changes in telecommunications policy and infrastructure across nations; and mass computerisation in homes and workplaces (Boczkowski, 2004; Boksoy, 2008). After experimenting with various forms of videotext and technical alternatives such as CD-ROM, audio- telefax and portable assistants, in 1995 the newspapers finally settled for the Web ‘as their electronic publishing environment of choice’ (Boczkowski, 2004:73).¹³

By the end of 1995, the Newspaper Association of America reported that 175 newspapers had had a Web presence (Li, 2006; Boczkowski, 2004). Within three years there were 750 and by mid-2001, more than 3,400 (Li, 2006). By the turn of millennium, the Web had become the prime arena for multi-media newspapers (Li, 2006). Until 1998, online newspapers were simply Web versions of established print newspapers. The first online-only newspaper, the *Southport Reporter*, was published in Liverpool, England, in 1998 (Boczkowski, 2004).

¹³ Therefore, 1995 goes down in history as the year when online newspapers in all forms were born and 1998 as the year when online-only newspapers were launched.



Figure 2.4: 'Front page' of the Southport Reporter, regarded as the first online-only newspaper. Source: <http://www.southportreporter.com/>. Accessed 20 June 2019.

The rapid raise in the use of the Web for publishing is associated with the numerous opportunities that the Internet presents to the journalism, media and publishing industry. For instance, a 1999 survey of U.S. online newspapers found that the three top reasons for publishing on the Web were: world-wide and huge readership, ease of publishing and superior graphic presentation (Boczkowski, 2004). Later studies, especially in the resource-poor countries, found additional benefits in reduced costs of publishing. Deuze summarises the flurry of opportunities wrought by the Internet:

The Internet is reaching a level of saturation and widespread adoption throughout the world, the extent of which is that we can now identify and theorize about the impacts the global system of networked computers has had on journalism, specifically the new kind of journalism, otherwise also known as the discipline of computer-assisted reporting (Deuze, 2001:2).

Deuze further explicates the two ways that the Internet affects journalism, which was also the first clear attempt to distinguish the types of online journalism: i) through the inroads that CAR has made in newsrooms and on desktops of journalists working for all media types and ii) 'how it has created its own professional type of news work: online journalism' (Deuze, 2001:3). Scholars are

agreed that there is no single standard definition of online journalism. Steensen (2011:11) observes that 'journalism research is flooded by a range of theoretical concepts that are either interchangeable or are interpreted differently by different researchers'. Deuze (2001) describes online journalistic ventures as 'all media with a Web presence': for instance, associations, city guides, magazines, newspapers, other news services and syndicates and radio and television websites.

This thesis is less about what constitutes online journalism than about one of its products – online newspapers. Deuze, in presenting a taxonomy which is widely referenced, distinguishes four types: mainstream news sites; index and category sites; meta- and comment sites; and share-and-discussion sites. This study focuses on the first, which he defines as 'generally offering a selection of editorial content (be it shovelled from a linked parent medium or produced originally for the Web) and a minimal, often moderated form of participatory communication' (2001:4). He observes that mainstream news sites are journalism as it is practised in traditional print or broadcasting media; its examples include websites of acclaimed news media, both print and broadcast, and 'most online newspapers fall into this category as well' (Deuze, 2001:4).

Mainstream news sites closely resemble but differ from 'index and category sites', which Deuze (2001:4) describes as 'often highly personal daily diary by an individual telling stories about experiences online and offering readers links with comments to content'. Weblogs or blogs, which are sometimes confused with mainstream online newspapers, fall into this category (Deuze, 2001). The other two types of online journalism are not relevant to this study.

Status of online newspapers

Content and presentation

Online newspapers were created with the primary purpose of providing frequently updated news and information (Greer and Mensing, 2006). A number of early ones used their sites simply to provide contact details of the parent newspapers and were irregularly updated (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Boksoy, 2008). However, after starting off as mere Web versions of established newspapers and depending on them for content ('shovel' practices), they have evolved into stand-alone media and most now generate their own content, which is predominantly local news (Greer and Mensing, 2006). This is notwithstanding the fact that most have continued as versions of print newspapers.

Technological developments have profoundly influenced and accelerated the evolution of news presentation of online newspapers (Boksoy, 2008). While they still mimic print newspapers in design and story-telling, they have taken advantage of technological advances that followed the advent of the Web. Thus, in the last 10 years, social networking apps, notably Facebook in 2004 and Twitter in 2006, have become convergence tools of the online newspapers.

Boksoy (2008:2) observes that the elements of traditional design of print newspapers – headline size, dominant imagery, story placement and story length – 'do not always make sense in the virtual world'. "Using these elements, the designer tells the reader how to read the paper, as these factors give clues to the reader about the importance of the news, as well as where to start and where to end reading" (Lowrey, 1999 in Boksoy, 2008:2). Online newspapers, on the other hand, have followed a linear design though gradually gravitating towards an interactive style in which both the editor and the reader define the relevance, importance and even the length of the news; this 'suggests how the news could be read, rather than how it should be read as the role of the editor changes from "gatekeeper" to "pathfinder" reading' (Boksoy, 2008:2).

Multiple interactivity and customisation (discussed in full in chapter 8) are other salient features of online newspapers that give them an edge over their print counterparts. Chung (2008) broadly defines interactivity as the reader's tool and ability to control his or her experience on the Web page and to send feedback to the publishers. Interactivity also allows for communication between many-to-many in a medium that has been traditionally been one-to-many (Chung, 2008; Boksoy, 2008). Various distinctions and typologies of interactivity have been drawn. First and foremost, Deuze (2001) makes a distinction between functional, adaptive and navigational interactivity (see chapter 8). He distinguishes the functional features of multi-mediality – 'media formats that best tell a certain story'; adaptive features – 'options for the public to respond, interact or even customise certain stories'; and navigational features – hypertextuality, being 'ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks'(2001:3). The interactivity features represent the communitarian philosophy of the new media and online journalism generally and reader participation in particular (Deuze, 2001).

Bucy (2004) distinguishes user-to-system interactivity from user-to-user interactivity. Chung (2008) makes a distinction between human and medium interactivity, with features such as forums and chat rooms constituting human interactivity. Different features attract and gratify different audiences (Chung, 2008; Yoo, 2011), which has propelled online newspapers to adopt a wide range of features in order to increase their appeal. Bucy states that for online newspapers, interactive elements provide a competitive advantage by inviting readers to the page, keeping

them there for a longer period of time and making them return at a later time (Bucy, 2004 in Boksoy, 2008). Boksoy (2008:3) cites Spyridou and Veglis (2008): 'Readers, on the other hand, enjoy interactivity because of the freedom to filter the news according to their own interests and the opportunity to evaluate and give feedback on the stories, which creates a feeling of empowerment.'

Schoenbach (2007) and others argue, however, that the reader's ability to select and filter the news does not necessarily empower the individual or society; rather, it enlarges the gap between those who are actively participating and interested in the policies and events surrounding them and those who are not (Boksoy, 2008). However, this argument does not invalidate the empowering properties of interactivity. Boksoy (2008) states that a critical test of maturity of online newspapers is how much they strike a balance between content and design: too close a focus on interactivity or technological abilities has tended to compromise editorial standards and ultimately the credibility of the online newspapers (Salaverria, 2005; Boksoy, 2008). There are also concerns that too close a focus on news presentation style, including interactivity, has tended to overshadow content development.

While photos and illustrations are regarded as entry points to stories for both print and online newspapers, technology allows for various multimedia options, or multi-mediality, According to Deuze's typology. Multimedia formats that have been adopted by online newspapers include video, animation, photos, maps and audio (Lowrey, 1999; Deuze, 2001; Li, 2006). The scholars caution, however, is that the abundance of choices of media formats has potential to downplay content.

Literature suggests that online publications have struggled to find a sustainability model. As noted by Li (2006), 'When online newspapers were started, publishers expected them to become profitable – or simply self-sustaining – in a few years. But even today, few online newspapers report profits.' Although it is over a decade ago that the assessment was made, it remains relevant in studying sustainability models. Online newspapers continue to search for a successful business model while adding new features and discarding those that have failed to significantly raise revenue (Greer and Mensing, 2006:30).

In summary, online newspapers are historically a product of revolutionary changes in the print media industry. They have undergone evolutionary changes since they made their presence on the Web as versions of established papers in mid-1990s. Internet technology has made it possible for them to develop two variants of the same genre: one that remains a version of the print newspaper, the other that is stand-alone or 'online-only'. Online newspapers continue to mimic and be bound by traditional news presentation and editorial styles and values. However, they are now

'more of everything' in terms of content, news presentation and advertising. Nonetheless, there are concerns about the lack of balance between ethical journalism (editorial policy) on one hand, and on the other, use of interactivity, easy access to news by readers and user participation ('citizen journalism') through content generation. Finding a viable business model remains a serious challenge for online newspapers.

Online newspapers in Zambia

Overview

This section gives an overview of Zambian online newspapers, specifically their history, ownership and control, financing and the operating environment. Lack of research about the evolution of online newspapers in Zambia and of an assessment of their content and political economy hamper detailed analysis. As observed by Chishala (2015:91), 'very little research in Zambia, if any at all, has devoted much effort in this area'. Most of the information in this section was obtained from the websites of online newspapers and an editor who agreed to be interviewed.

History

The first instance of online journalism in Zambia is traced to *The Post*, which published the first online edition of its printed version in 1996, a year after the advent of online newspapers. The online edition carried the same stories, a practice referred to as 'shovelware'. The *Lusaka Times* was the first Zambian online-only newspaper, according to its website.¹⁴ It was launched in 1999 as *Lusaka Information Dispatch* with funding from a Dutch agency, International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), which provided seed capital for the equipment and operational costs for a limited duration. Its website states that the operational model for *Information Dispatch* proved too difficult to sustain at the time. In 2002, it suspended operations after key editorial team members quit the group. In January 2007, the site was re-launched under the new URL called lusakatimes.com and under a new operational model. The website says that *Lusaka Times* is run by many people located around the world who work in an open-source structure and are driven purely by hobby and ambition to provide Zambians around the world with current news content based on facts and not speculation. It adds that day-to-day news content is shovel-ware from established national broadcast and print news media such as the *Zambia Daily Mail*, *Times of Zambia*, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) and the Zambia National

¹⁴ www.lusakatimes.com/about/, accessed July 2019

Information Service (ZANIS). Its feature articles are written by independent writers (including this author) and stringers across the country.

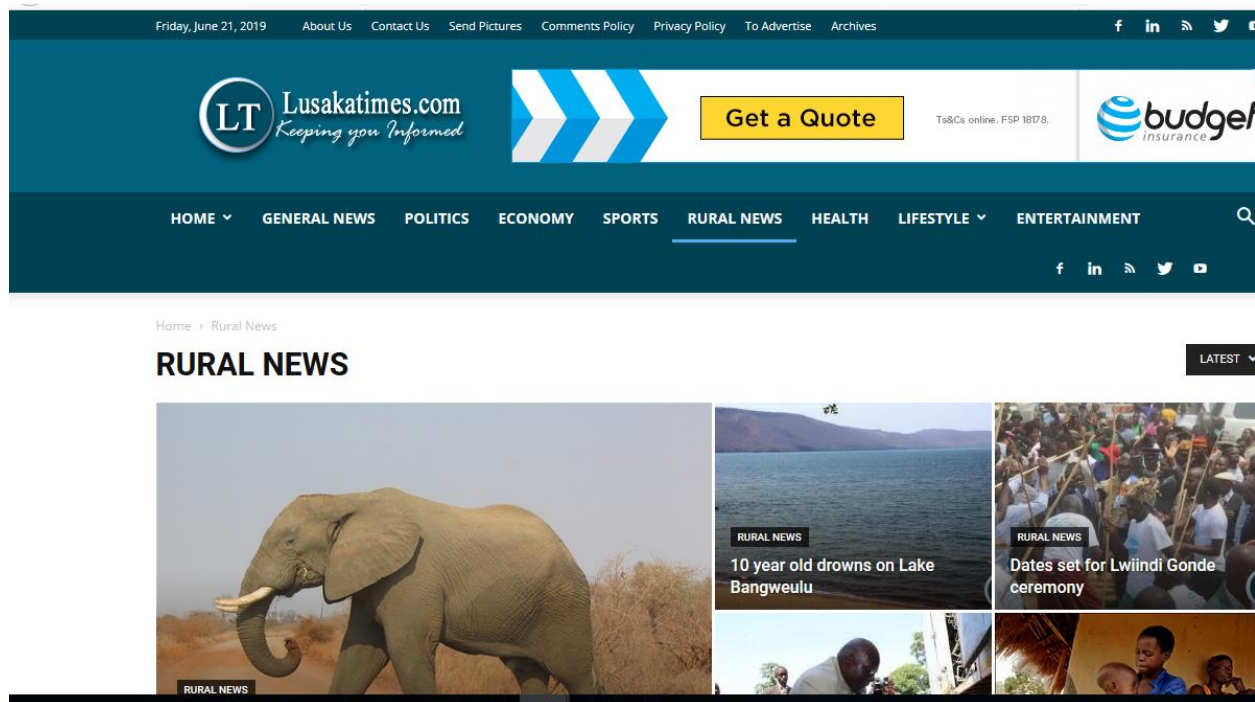


Figure 2.5: The rural news page of the Lusaka Times, the first Zambian online-only newspaper. Source: <https://www.lusakatimes.com>. Accessed on 22 June 2019.

The *Zambian Watchdog* was second major online-only newspaper after *Lusaka Times*, according to available information. It was founded by a Zambian journalist, Lloyd Himaambo. It is reported to have begun in 2002 as a weekly print newspaper but financial constraints and high printing costs forced it to go online. Himaambo, a graduate of Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka, worked for *The Post* and later the *Monitor*. Both have stopped publishing. Himaambo fled Zambia in 2009 when he was charged with contempt of court for covering an ongoing murder trial. The *Watchdog* is arguably the most popular online newspaper in Zambia (Mbozi, 2014; Chishala, 2015) because of its trademark investigative journalism and track record of exposing corruption and other major crimes such as drug trafficking. It often scoops its rivals with breaking political news and other major events. For instance, in 2014 it was the first newspaper to report the late president Michael Sata's secretly arranged medical trip abroad. Two years later it published the full draft constitution before its official release. Its journalists operate undercover and anonymously because of frequent harassment and death threats while its editor continues to live in self-imposed exile (Freedom House, 2015; CIPESA, 2016).

The *Lusaka Times* and *Zambian Watchdog* led the way for the emergence of myriad of online newspapers of different sizes and focus. Their exact number has not been documented partly because there has been no policy or law regulating the online media in Zambia, according to Mathews Mudenda, a public relations officer with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. In an interview on 7 December 2017, Mudenda stated that online newspapers were not regulated and did not require official registration, which made it impossible for his ministry to keep track of who was publishing an online newspaper and where it was being published or registered. A number of the Zambian online newspapers are registered abroad to circumvent deregulation in Zambia. The lack of regulation makes it difficult to locate the owners and office premises of these newspapers and for members of the public to sue for defamation. Most of them operate in secrecy and become known only when they appear on the Internet. The statement below summarises the online newspaper landscape in Zambia:

There are a number of Zambian online news media-run websites hosted in Zambia, the United States and also the United Kingdom whose publishers are either private or public. Most of the private online news media also run Facebook pages where they reproduce some of the news reports of their website. Both websites and Facebook pages for these Zambian private online news media allow blogging as feedback to the news stories (Chishala, 2015:28).

A study for this thesis established the presence of 15 active, major, general-circulation online newspapers as at 20 June 2019 (see Table 2.1 below). This is about twice the number of daily print newspapers. An earlier study (Mbozi, 2014) found that the growth of online media in Zambia has been accelerated by the following factors:

- Enhanced connectivity through ZICTA towers across country
- Increased access to smartphones and tablets
- Convergence of online media with social media platforms
- Increase in number of Internet cafes, leading to reduced browsing fees
- Free mobile Internet access supported by Facebook via Airtel, a local mobile phone network
- Reduced prices of Internet dongles and modems

Table 2.1 : Zambian online newspapers and nationality of publishers. Source: <https://www.google.com/zambiann+online+newspapers>. Accessed on 5 March 2019

Online Newspaper	Website address	Nationality of Publishers
Kachepa360	www.kachepa360.news/	Zambian
Kitwe Times	www.kitwetimes.com/	Zambian
Lusaka Times	https://www.lusakatimes.com/	Zambian
Lusaka Voice	www.lusakavoice.com/	Zambian
Mwebantu	https://mwebantu.com/	Zambian
Solwezi Times		Zambian
Tumfweko	https://tumfweko.com/	Zambian
Zambian Eye	https://zambianeye.com/	Zambian
Zambian Intelligence News	www.zambianintelligencenews.com/	Zambian
News Diggers	https://diggers.news/	Zambian
Zambia Reports	https://zambiareports.com/	Zambian
Zambian Watchdog	https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/	Zambian
Zambian Online	https://zambia.co.zm/	Zambian
Zambia 24	https://zambia24.com/	South African
Zambian Observer	https://www.zambianobserver.com/	Zambian

Revenue

Empirical data on trends in revenue models among Zambian online newspapers are unavailable, again due to lack of research. Such trends can be established only from longitudinal studies, which allow for significant and incremental changes over time (Greer and Mensing, 2006). In the absence of a longitudinal study, the analysis of revenue models presented in this thesis is based on snapshot assessments at two separate moments in the evolution of these media: the case of *The Post* news site during its formative years (1996 to around 2000) and the present situation. From

the assessment it can be deduced that the revenue models pursued by Zambian online newspapers mirror global trends. As reported in the preceding sections, early models focused on six revenue sources, including but not limited to advertising, subscription fees and registration.

The Post attempted to raise revenue through subscription fees, which offered restricted access to the site. However, as seen in other parts of world, the strategy failed to generate enough revenue and the venture collapsed. Other Zambian online-only newspapers tried this model with the same result. Greer and Mensing (2006:17) report a similar global trend: 'some papers experimented with subscription fees, but these experiments were short-lived'. Panda and Swain (2011:57) argue that the 'rapid growth of e-newspapers during the late 1990s was driven not just by the belief that this was the market to get into, but also by the fact that the technological means to do so was readily available'. Even without empirical data, it is logical to conclude that this was case among Zambian online newspapers; they went online without knowing whether the innovation would be sustained financially.

The reason for lack of revenue for *The Post* from subscriptions has never been documented. However, Chyi and Sylvie (1998) and Chari (2009) find that the impact of information and market competition weighed heavily against Web publications, especially with the frequent resort to 'shovelware', which results in identical news content. When different online newspapers carry identical content, it increases competition for advertising markets (Chyi and Sylvie, 1998). Whether this is a factor in the case of online newspapers in Zambia remains unanswered.

In line with the global trend (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Massey, 2000), the major source of revenue for Zambian online newspapers is display and classified adverts, as seen in this statement from *Lusaka Times*:

Lusaka Times has no intention whatsoever of charging people to access the content on our site. Our content is open source and free. All our revenue is from advertising and the bulk of it goes towards ensuring that we provide a Web infrastructure that is fast, reliable, 99% available throughout the year and up to date with the current technological trends.¹⁵

Another revenue source is donor funding, a development which is probably unique to online newspapers in Zambia. For instance, *News Diggers* and the *Zambian Watchdog* have been routinely funded by the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) and International Press

¹⁵ www.lusakatimes.com/about/, accessed 7 July 2019

Institute (IPI), in the case of News Diggers¹⁶. Again, there is no research to indicate whether these revenue sources are profitable and self-sustaining.

Box 1: *Zambian Eye* profile

- Zambian owned, established 2011
- Daily 3- 3.5 million visitors (65% Zambian) and 2,000-3,000 'unique visitors', or first-timers.
- FB group has 70,000 members and 99,787 hits
- Providing accurate, up-to-date and objective information, platforms for dialogue, consensus building and engagement with governors
- Coverage is mainly political
- Revenue: local and Google-sourced advertising as well as sponsorship
- Seven full-time staff

Source: Interview with founding editor Owen Miyanza on 27 October 2016

News content and presentation

Zambian online newspapers are up to step with the global trends in variety of content and news presentation. While the early online newspapers were characterised by simple grey backgrounds, blinking icons and long scrolling pages, online news sites today have 'tightly packed, content-rich news sources available 24 hours a day to significant number of readers around the world' (Greer and Mensing, 2006: 30). The Zambian sites are no exception. Their content is almost exclusively local – news, features, reader-generated content and adverts – as found in a snap content analysis of the two oldest online newspapers, *Zambian Watchdog* and *Lusaka Times*. In the former, 39 of the 40 news items featured over 10 days in June 2019 were local. Of the news stories featured over eight pages in the *Lusaka Times* on 22 June, 94% were local (see Table 2.2 below). Political coverage takes precedence over 'developmental' news.

¹⁶ https://web.facebook.com/Diggers.News/?_rdc=1&_rdr, Accessed 4 October 2019.

Table 2.2 : Comparison Between Local and International News Content in *Lusaka Times*
(Source: snapshot content analysis by researcher).

Type of News	Local	International	Total
General News	37	0	37
Politics	20	0	20
Economy	19	1	20
Sports	20	0	20
Health	20	0	20
Rural	22	0	22
Lifestyle	7	2	9
Entertainment	13	6	19
Totals	158	9	167

While news is the dominant feature, the sites seem to be caught up in the conundrum of striking a balance in space allocation between news and advertising. Research has revealed that this has been the case globally. From a wide review of literature, Boczkowski (2004:375) observes that ‘commodification of online papers may not be congenial with the supposedly more communitarian ethos of the Internet’. In Zambia, this imbalance manifests in variations in the placement of adverts vis-à-vis news and information items. Some newspapers place their front-page adverts below the masthead and above the news items; others give news more prominence. Zambian online newspapers do not position their news stories as their print counterparts do. Almost all of them use selected interactive features and convergence with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Most of them are accessible through their Facebook pages, which enhances their interactivity through user-generated content, reader comments and feedback to stories of the day.

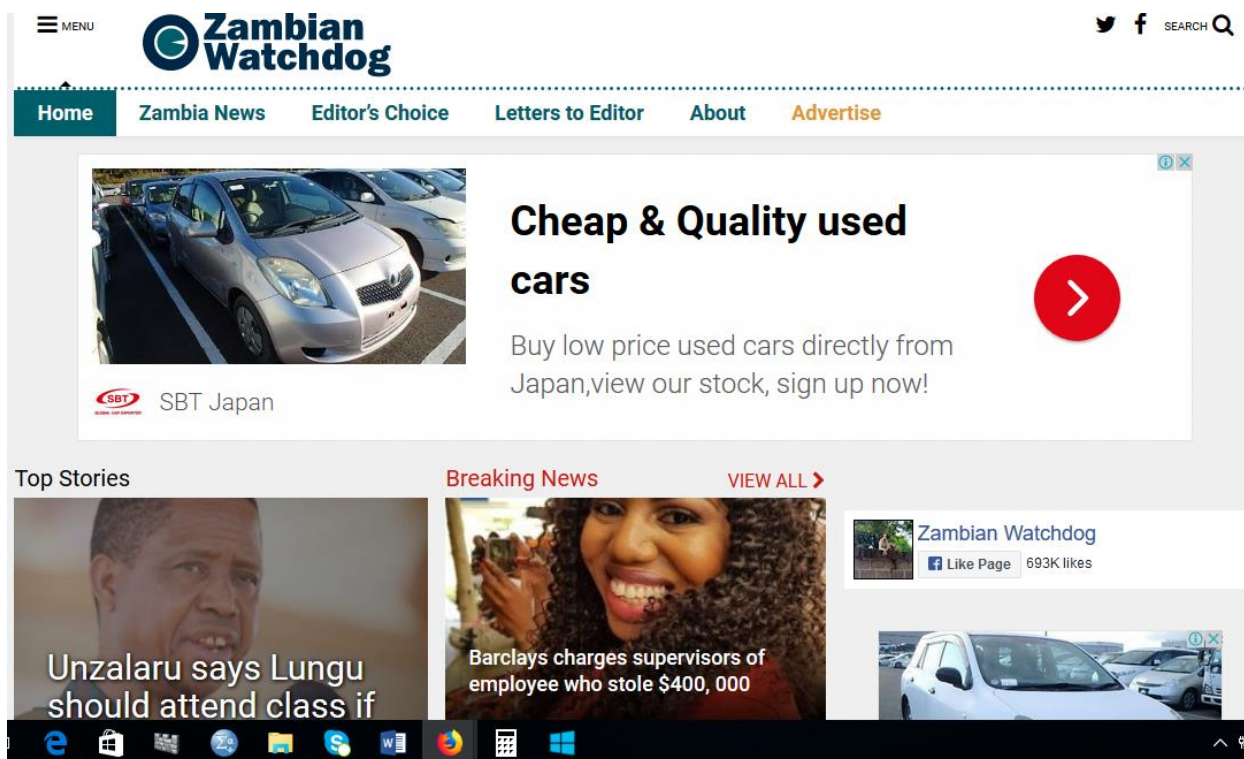


Figure 2.6: Homepage of Zambia Watchdog Featuring Ads above News. Source: <https://www.lusakatimes.com>. Accessed on 22 June 2019.

Zambian online newspapers can also be described as “more of everything” as described of their counterparts in other parts of world (Greer and Mensing 2006). ‘Online newspapers are offering more of everything: news content, multimedia, interactivity, and revenue-generating features. Instead of discontinuing one type of feature when another is added, these sites, on the whole, have added their offerings’ (Greer and Mensing, 2006: 26). The below statement by *Lusaka Times* gives an idea about its editorial philosophy, which also applies to other Zambian online newspapers.

Box 2.2: Self-profile of *Lusaka Times*

Lusaka Times calls itself an electronic news platform that allows all types of users to have an open discussion on current issues in Zambia. It states that it is run by people who are working around the world in an open-source structure and are ‘driven by hobby and ambition to provide Zambians around the world with current news content based on facts and not speculation’. It sources its news from *Zambia Daily-Mail*, *Times of Zambia*, ZNBC and ZANIS among others.

It adds, “Our added value to the commodity called news is the speed with which we deliver it to our readers, and the community feeling and experience we have created around the news content on our website ... *Lusaka Times* also provides a platform for any Zambian who wants their article published, provided they take full ownership and responsibility of the content.

“The ability of our users ... to read news and anonymously provide immediate feedback is something we have always highly valued from the *Information Dispatch* days. This is something we are committed to honour as we move forward.”

Source: www.lusakatimes.com/about/. Accessed on 7 July 2019

Legal, regulatory and policy environment – an overview

While there is no specific policy or law regulating the online media in Zambia, the operations of online journalism are affected by the Constitution of 2016 – both positively and negatively – and by other national and international legislation which oversees Internet governance. As noted earlier, Article 20 of the Constitution expressly provides for freedom of expression regardless of the form of that expression. The United Nations Human Rights Council defines the right as it relates to the Web:

The right to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference, is essential for citizens’ participation in democratic processes. This right to freedom of expression applies to both online and offline activities, regardless of frontiers.¹⁷

Zambia also has laws that inhibit Internet freedom generally and online journalism in particular (CIPESA, 2016). These are the Penal Code Act 2012, the Information and Communication

¹⁷ www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/aboutcouncil.aspx, accessed 25 May 2019

Technologies (ICT) Act No.15 of 2009, and the Registration of Electronic Communication Apparatus Regulations No. 65 of 2011. The Penal Code Act contains wide-ranging provisions that criminalise public scrutiny of the president and government and publication of information likely to cause ‘fear and alarm to the public’ (CIPESA, 2016). This law is open to interpretation and has been used to intimidate online and print journalists on a number of occasions (Freedom House, 2015; CIPESA, 2016). For example, in August 2016 the Independent Broadcasting Authority suspended broadcasting licences for Muvi TV, Komboni Radio and Itezhi Tezhi Radio for alleged ‘unprofessional conduct posing a risk to national peace and stability’ (CIPESA, 2016:6).

The ICT Act and Electronic Communication Apparatus Regulations require registration of mobile SIM cards and personal details of users, provisions that are regarded as a threat to the right to privacy. They allow the minister and other government officials to solicit published content from websites and the appointment by ZICTA of ‘cyber monitors’ by (CIPESA, 2016). Section 94(1) of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act of 2009 states that inspectors who may work with a law enforcement officer are mandated among others to ‘monitor and inspect any website or activity on an information system in the public domain and report any unlawful activity to the appropriate authority’ (CIPESA, 2016: 6). Section 77 mandates Internet service providers to ensure that their electronic systems are technically capable of intercepting online material when required by law. The Freedom of Information Bill of 2002 is supposed to enhance access to information in government ministries, departments and agencies but it has not been enacted.

The legislation has been used selectively from time to time to block websites and force them to pull down undesired content. For instance, *The Post* was forced to take down a leaked government document in 1996, which CIPESA (2016) reported as the first documented act of official censorship of online content in Africa. Anyone found with the document, including the electronic version, would be arrested and prosecuted under a presidential decree. A second case involved the arrest in 2013 of freelance journalists Wilson Pondamali, Thomas Zgambo and Clayson Hamasaka on allegations that they had links to the *Zambian Watchdog*, an online newspaper deemed to be an enemy of the government (CIPESA, 2016). Different charges were later brought against them but they were acquitted. Freedom House (2017) cites instances of government censorship of independent online news outlets and arrests of people who criticised officials on social media. It reports the closure of the *Zambian Accurate and Balanced News*, an online newspaper, after it accused the ruling party of rigging the elections and bribing judges. The Zambian legal and regulatory environment is described as follows:

The right to freedom of expression, especially online, still faces various challenges in Zambia. Over the years the government has deployed a series of tactics aimed at frustrating online rights, including press freedom, freedom of expression and access to information. There have been repeated incidents of government-initiated blockages of websites with content considered to be critical of the state. Frivolous charges have also been instituted against some journalists and online activists because of their online activity, thus curtailing press freedom and freedom of expression. Many have turned to the use of online anonymity to continue voicing their concerns (CIPESA, 2016:11).

The generally unfavourable policy, legal and regulatory environment notwithstanding, Zambian online newspapers have been criticised for the type of journalism they practice. Chishala (2015) points to the *Zambian Watchdog*, which repeatedly referred to late president Michael Sata as 'the ailing dictator'. Chari (2009) made similar observations about Zimbabwean online newspapers (see chapter 10). While some journalists working for online newspapers justify their anonymity on the grounds of harassment, online newspapers like the *Lusaka Times*, *News Diggers* and *Zambian Eye* operate openly within the same environment.

It is difficult to obtain redress for defamation when journalists go underground and report anonymously. Chishala (2015) cites the cases of 'Mahtani and the USA site hosting *Zambian Report*' and 'Sampa and the *Zambian Watchdog*'. Miles Sampa, a PF member of parliament and a deputy minister, had to offer a reward of \$4,000 to anyone who would reveal the location of the *Zambian Watchdog* and the names of its reporters after it repeatedly accused him of extramarital affairs. He successfully sued for damages in a court in the United States but failed to claim the \$50,000 he was awarded because the defendants remained anonymous. Chapter 10 explores the credibility and ethical concerns that readers have raised about Zambian online newspapers. It observes that while readers find online newspapers to be generally reliable sources of independent, uncensored and up-to-date news, they have misgivings about their plausibility.

In conclusion, it seems reasonable to state that the evolution of online newspapers in Zambia and the issues that confront them mirror that of their global counterparts. They began as Web versions of print newspapers in 1996 and went properly online three years later. Many have emerged only to collapse. Like online newspapers generally, they are 'more of everything' in content and news presentation. What appears unique about Zambian online newspapers is their antagonistic relations with the authorities and some of their prominent readers. The legal environment inhibits Internet freedom, makes for hostile relations and leads to questionable conduct of some online

journalists. Finally, although they face the same fate of unpredictable revenue sources, Zambian online newspapers benefit from a unique source of funding – sponsorship from development agencies and donors.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary focus of the study is reader gratification sought and obtained from the content, processes and socialisation functions of online newspapers. It analyses the outcomes of gratifications obtained with respect to the impact on consumption of traditional mass media and influence on readers at micro-social level. Uses and gratification theory (UGT), a media effects approach, is the core theory supported by the network society. Two subsidiary approaches, notably social responsibility theory and diffusion of innovation theory, are used to examine specific objectives. The former explores the ethical conduct of online newspapers and categorises the professional standards by which they should be judged. Diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers, 2003) is used to characterise the social influence of online newspapers within the 'stages of change' trajectory. The two theories are scantily used and do not warrant much attention in this chapter.

Uses and gratification theory

UGT originated in the early 1940s and belongs in the media effects tradition, dubbed the second stage in the evolution of media effects studies (Neuman and Guggenheim, 2011). The theory is traced back to Lasswell's 1948 model of 'who uses which media, how and with what effect' (Papacharissi, 2008: 137). It focuses on creating a comprehension of why and how people seek out media to satisfy their specific socio-psychological needs (Ruggiero, 2000; Papacharissi, 2008). UGT is premised on the understanding that audiences are rational and active and know what they want (Klapper, 1960). Audiences select media, their contents and extent of exposure (attention) based on their needs. These needs are expressed as motives for adopting particular medium use and are connected to the social and psychological makeup of the individual ((Klapper, 1960; Papacharissi, 2008). UGT gives power to media consumers to discern what media they consume in the assumption that the consumer has a clear intent and use for the media (Urista et al, 2008).

The theoritical foundations of UGT are described as resting on the following:

The social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media and other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratification and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (Papacharissi, 2008:138 quoting Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974:20).

Conceptually, UGT is an embodiment of the shift from the mechanistic ('hypodermic needle' or 'bullet' theory) of the Lasswellian tradition of theories of media effects, which holds that media consumers are passive, to a psychologically 'active audience' approach (Klapper, 1960; Rubin, 2009). According to Rubin (2009), five assumptions underpin the uses and gratification theory:

- Communication behaviour is purposive and motivated
- Individuals actively select media and content
- Media behaviour is mediated by a number of factors, among them social, psychological, societal structures, social groups and relationships
- Media compete with other channels or functional alternatives for selection, exposure, attention and use
- Individuals are deemed more influential than the media in the media effects process

Levy and Windahl (1985) provide a useful summary of what it means to be an 'active consumer' of media, which postulates a voluntaristic and selective orientation by audiences toward the communication process. It suggests that media use is motivated by needs and goals that are defined by audience members themselves. Active participation of audiences in the communication process may facilitate, limit or otherwise influence the gratifications and effects associated with exposure. Furthermore, audience activity is conceptualised as a variable construct, with audiences exhibiting varying kinds and degrees of activity (Levy and Windahl, 1985). "In short, the selection and usage of media is a goal-directed, purposive, and motivated action" (Urista et al, 2008:218). Figure 3.1 illustrates the processes involved in media selection and use under UGT.

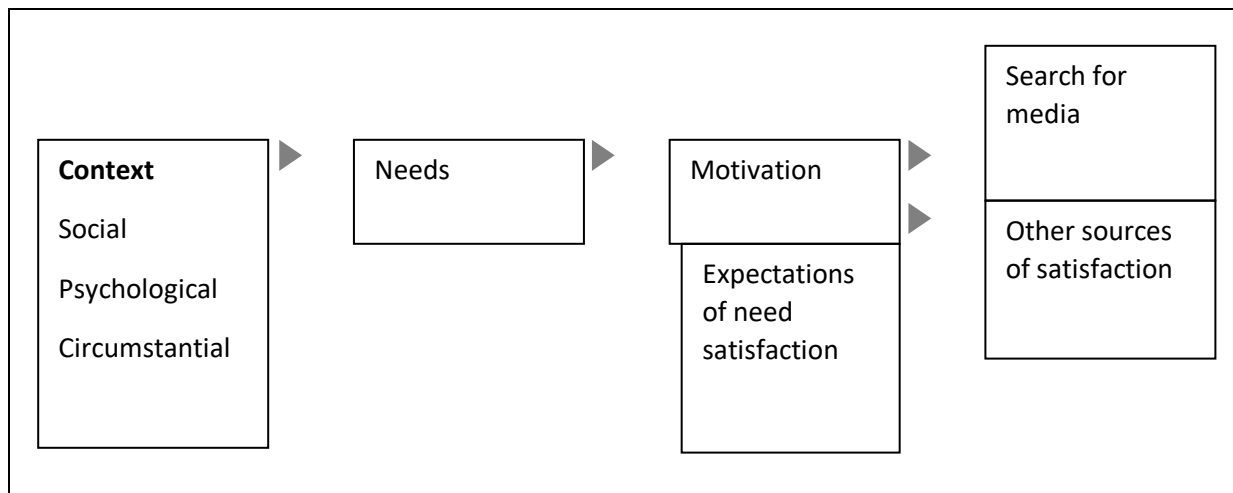


Figure 3.1 : Basic model of uses gratification theory. *Source: Urista et al, 2008:218*

Conceptually, UGT is a functionalist theory with roots in the positivist research tradition (Urista et al, 2008; Stafford et al, 2004). Methodologically, it is grounded on the assumption that individuals can articulate their reasons for communicating and their media choices (Rubin, 2009). Self-reports, through questionnaires, are the primary mode of data collection, although they are often supplemented by ethnographic studies, diary and experimental methods (Rubin, 2009). The reliance on surveys and self-reporting as data-gathering techniques testifies that UGT theorists accept the validity of the assumption that the audiences are by and large aware of their needs. Despite some criticisms, most scholars are agreed that these methods are tested, reliable and valid (Rubin, 1991, 2002; Kayahara and Wellman, 2007).

A reliance on empirical research design and multivariate statistical analysis and techniques is also central in the UGT tradition (Palmgreen, 1984; Palmgreen et al, 1985 quoted in Mings, 1997). Another tenet of UGT is the belief that ‘value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms’ (Katz et al, 1974:22). In other words, the theory relies heavily on audience criteria in media assessment and not on the expert or professional assessment common in studies that employ the interpretative tradition of media research (as articulated by Gunter et al, 2009). ‘Suspending’ value judgments also implies sticking to the ‘facts’ as they are presented in the statistics of the study (Gunter et al, 2009).

Media studies adopting UGT date back to the 1940s, notably the works of researchers such as Herzog and Lazarfeld (Mings, 1997). The theory has long been associated with research and decision making on emerging mass media, initially with radio and television in the first half of the last century (Stafford et al, 2004). The studies proved that the media could fulfil the daily needs of the consumers of their messages beyond being informed, educated and entertained (Papacharissi, 2008). Early studies came up with a list of the needs that prompted audiences to seek one media or another as summarised below:

To match one's wits against others, to get information and advice for daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role (Ruggiero, 2000 quoting Katz et al, 1974: 20).

With the emergence of the Internet, UGT scholars saw an opportunity and need for 'a new and deep field for exploring UGT' (Mings, 1997). Research by Kayahara and Wellman (2007) has re-grouped media gratifications into two categories: process and content. They define 'process' gratifications as arising from the 'performance of the activity, such as unstructured Web browsing or creating content on one's profile' and 'content' gratifications as occurring 'from acquiring information' (Kayahara and Wellman, 2007:826). The definition of process motivations by Mings (1997) relates more closely to the study of online newspapers; it specifically refers to gratification gained 'from the experience of purposeful navigating or random browsing of the Internet in its functional process, of which the predictor is the use of and gratification from interactive and functional features of online newspapers'. As observed by some scholars (Kayahara and Wellman, 2007; Chung, 2008; Yoo, 2011), process motivation epitomises an 'entirely new social gratification that is unique to Internet use' (Lim and Ting, 2012).

The third category is 'social' motivation or gratification, which encompasses a range of opportunities for 'forming and deepening social ties' (Kayahara and Wellman, 2007:826). However, the composition of the gratifications that constitute this category suggests that it encompasses a wide array of 'needs' that consumers seek from the mass media, both old and new, aside from the process and content needs. In essence, the needs listed in this

category are constitutive of all the various traditional functions of the mass media, ranging from informational and socialisational to utility. However, for lack of a better replacement taxonomy and to stick with tradition, the present study refers to this third category of needs or gratifications, the 'social' needs gratification.

The partitioning of the three categories of gratifications from the Internet helps to contextualise and customise the assessment of the gratifications sought and obtained from Internet-based media, of which online newspapers are a part (Kayahara and Wellman, 2007). The inclusion of process gratification entails a need for more emphasis on assessing reader gratification around the functional and interactivity features of the online newspapers (see chapter 9). This study analyses both preferences for and gratifications from interactivity features falling under the two taxonomies of features: human versus medium (Chung, 2008), and interactivity, hypertextuality and multi-mediality categorisations (Deuze, 2001).

In terms of the social motivations, in their study of consumer needs, Katz et al (1973:166) summarise 35 needs brought out by the respondents into five categories:

- Cognitive needs: associated with strengthening information, knowledge and understanding
- Affective needs: strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experiences and feelings
- Personal integrative needs: strengthening credibility, stability, confidence and status
- Social integrative needs: strengthening contacts with family, friends and the world
- Tension release needs: related to escape and diversion

This study has adopted the eight gratifications categories as expanded and modified by later scholars (Katz et al, 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984; Rubin and Perse, 1987b; Wenner, 1985; Palmgreen et al, 1985 in Mings 1997). The first, 'avoidance' motivation, 'implies avoiding traditional print newspapers and other traditional media for one reason or another, such as their failure to give information about issues the audiences are interested in and/or including unpleasant information. It assigns negative gratifications or

disincentives to the consumption of news media (Babrow, 1988; Palmgreen, 1984 in Mings, 1997). In the context of the present study, avoidance motivation is also the basis for measuring readers' attitudes towards traditional media. It is specifically used to analyse the substitutability effect of online newspapers on the old media – radio, television and print newspapers.

The second is 'entertainment' or 'relaxation' motivation, which applies when readers read newspapers for 'fun, enjoyment and to cheer up' (Swanson and Babrow, 1989; Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). A related and third motivation is 'escape' or 'tension release', which applies when readers turn to newspapers 'for diversion from routines, work, school and boring moments' (Swanson and Babrow, 1989; Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). 'Excitement' motivation is the fourth and another of the 'light moment' motivations. It holds that readers turn to the media for 'personal adverts, explore some exciting news and features and stimulating information' (Levy and Windahl, 1984; Palmgreen et al, 1985 in Mings, 1997).

The fifth, 'para-social interaction' or 'social integrative' motivation, 'implies affective gratifications related to some sense of social interaction gained from media consumption' (Levy and Windahl, 1984; Palmgreen et al, 1985; Rubin and Perse, 1987a; Swanson and Babrow, 1989; and Wenner, 1985 in Mings,¹⁸ (1997). It also renders itself to strengthening readers' 'contacts with family, friends and the world, to talk to other readers and as a way to learn about other people's opinions' (Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). The sixth, 'information and news seeking' or 'surveillance' motivation implies keeping abreast of what is going on in the country and around the world (Evans 1990; Katz et al 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984; Rubin and Perse, 1987b) or 'knowing what's going on in the world' (Lain, 1986 in Mings, 1997). Earlier researchers, including Katz et al (1974), called this motivation 'cognitive'.

The seventh, 'utility' motivation, refers to the 'perceived direct usefulness in some matters such as forming opinions and making plans or decisions' (Katz, et al , 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984; Rubin and Perse, 1987b; and Wenner, 1985, in Mings, 1997). In other

¹⁸ www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/007/3/007312.HTM, accessed 23 September 2018

words, this is the information the audiences seek in order to make decisions about what to do next, such as whom to vote for in an election. In the present study, this motivation is used to assess whether the readers could rely on online newspapers to help them decide whom to vote for or whom they actually voted for in Zambia's 2016 general elections.

The eighth and last motivation, 'personal integrative needs' or 'prestige', refers to use of the mass media as a status symbol or 'to strengthen credibility and personal standing/status in society, credibility, stability and confidence'¹⁹ (Rubin and Perse 1987a; Swanson and Babrow, 1989; and Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). Studies in the late 1960s and 1970s examined media processes and effects from functional perspectives (Blumler and Katz, 1974) and media and politics (Blumler and McQuail, 1969; Williams, 2003; Papacharissi, 2008).

UGT and new media

Scholars note that the emergence of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and the new functional features of these technologies, in particular interactivity, have given UGT a new lease of life following a barrage of criticisms that supervened its early evolution (Ruggiero, 2000). "The deregulation of the communications industry and the convergence of mass media and digital technology have altered the exposure patterns of many media consumers" (Ruggiero, 2000:14 quoting Finn, 1997). UGT studies during the new media era (mid-1990s onwards) have mainly focused on the role of interactivity, demassification and asynchronicity features of the new media in enhancing audience gratifications. Overall the studies have concluded that 'as new technologies present people with more and more media choices, motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis' (Ruggiero, 2000: 14).

The underlying principle of UGT is that people will choose media according to their expectations and their drive to attain a gratifying experience (Urista et al, 2008:220). After more than two decades of online media, many scholars have come to the conclusion that UGT is well-suited to studying a medium designed for active use and known for its

¹⁹ www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/007/3/007312.HTML, accessed 23 September 2018

interactivity (see Morris and Ogan, 1996 and Stafford and Stafford, 1998). Consequently, a flurry of studies has focused widely on the Internet and new media, including online newspapers. For instance, Stafford and Gonier (2004) identify several gratifications from Internet use that motivate users' behaviour, including Web searching, acquisition of information, the ability to engage in interpersonal communication and socialisation. Many individuals are motivated to use the Internet by their desire to socialise (Urista et al, 2008). The Internet also satisfies interpersonal communication gratifications through functions like email and chat rooms (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000). Stafford and Gonier (2004) identify several gratifications from Internet use that motivate users' behaviours. These include web searching, the acquisition of information, the ability to engage in interpersonal communication, and socialisation (Stafford and Gonier, 2004). Cho (2007:341) concludes that the Internet is used to seek and gratify interpersonal relations, information and entertainment. Urista et al (2008) find that an individual uses the Internet if he or she believes it will help serve his or her objectives to socialise. LaRose, Eastin and Lin (2004) identify the satisfaction that people receive as members of virtual communities when they generate their own content and use it to satisfy their desires.

Individuals use their home pages as links to others who share their interests and to foster supportive relationships (Dominick 1999; Urista et al, 2008). As for online shopping, Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) find that human-message/medium and human-human interactions have a positive effect on attitudes toward the sites, which leads to positive attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. Studies on social networking sites link social networking to motivations for self-expression in order to fulfil needs and wants, such as looking attractive, increasing social capital and enhancing status and self-esteem in both the online and 'real' world (Urista et al, 2008: 226; Ifinedo, 2016).

Whiting and Williams (2013) identify 10 uses and gratifications for using social media: social interaction, information seeking, pastimes, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility, expression of opinion, information sharing, and surveillance/knowledge about others. Interestingly, all 10 gratifications from social networking sites fit within the categorisation of traditional mass media identified by Katz et al in 1974. Other studies, by Grellhesl and Punyanunt-Carter (2012), for instance, have focused on other newer social networking platforms, such as text messaging.

Like any other theory, the UGT has faced some criticisms, around both its theoretical grounding and its basic assumptions and methodological approaches. Since its inception some mass communications scholars have called it a 'Pluto of communication theory', which is to say that it does not meet the standards necessary to be a social science theory (Roy, 2008). The critics from this group have argued that it instead is more of an approach to analysis or a data-collecting strategy (Roy, 2008; Ruggiero, 2000; Rossi, 2002). Among the most criticised tenets of the UGT theory is the assumption of an active audience, that the audiences are not influenced by the media. Blumler (1979), for instance, presented an interesting point as to why the theory cannot measure an active audience. He stated, "The issue to be considered here is whether what has been thought about Uses and Gratifications Theory has been an article of faith and if it could now be converted into an empirical question such as: How to measure an active audience?" (Blumler, 1979:23). Ross (2002:) argued that, "One may find it hard to believe that the media has no influence over the viewer at all."

Another valid criticism of the 'active audience' trajectory is that media users may not always know the reasons for choosing to use what they are using and may not be able to explain it clearly. It is difficult to measure the gratification structure with self-reported data, i.e., asking the respondents why they use a certain medium (Ruggiero, 2000; Roy, 2008). Although Blumler 1979 responded to this particular criticism by offering suggestions about the kinds of activity the audiences were engaging with in the different types of media, critics maintain that gratifications are more dependent on input by researchers than on decisions made by research subjects (Lometti, et al, 1977). Over-reliance on pure recollection of memory of subjects has also been found to be problematic (Greenberg, 1974).

Media hegemony advocates have further argued that the theory goes too far in claiming that people are free to choose the media and the interpretations they desire (Severin and Tankard, 1997). Early research required participants to identify gratifications associated with specific channels of communication, raising the possibility that they would conflate gratifications and channels. Lometti et al. (1977:323) argued that this could "substantially overestimate" the number of gratifications, and that attempts to address it using in-depth

interviews were problematic. From a sociological perspective, critics have argued that the theory is focused too narrowly on the individual such that it neglects the social structure and place of the media in that structure. Hence, Ruggiero (2000:4) wrote, "most scholars agree that early research had little theoretical coherence and was primarily behaviorist and individualist in its methodological tendencies." Blumler (1979) and other critics have also argued that the line between gratification and satisfaction is blurred and Blumler (1979:15) wrote that "the nature of the theory underlying uses and gratifications research is not totally clear."¹

Despite the early criticism, many scholars, including some of its earlier critics (for example Blumer, 1977 and Ruggiero, 2000), contend that the UGT has been accorded a new lease of life with the emergence of new media. Ruggiero (2000:3), for instance wrote,

I assert that the emergence of computer-mediated communication has revived the significance of use and gratifications. In fact, uses and gratifications has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet.

In summary, previous studies have asserted the relevance and appropriateness of UGT to analyse consumer choices, needs and gratifications from the Internet in general and the new media in particular (Morris and Ogan, 1996; Stafford and Stafford, 1998). "This assumption of an active audience seems particularly well suited to studying a medium designed for active use and known for its interactivity" (Urista et al, 2008:226). The present study is grounded in the UGT theoretically, conceptually and methodologically. The theory has guided the study in analysing the audience perspectives at all three levels of audience activity: selectivity (media options), exposure and attention. The study has adopted the categorisations of gratifications sought and obtained from online newspapers, notably social gratifications (chapter 6), content gratification (chapter 7) and process gratification (chapter 9). The readers' assessment of the credibility of online newspapers (chapter 10) and their expressed preferences, choices and use of online newspapers vis-à-

vis traditional mass media (as assessed in chapter 10) demonstrate that they know exactly what they want from and in the media.

Network society theory

The concept of a network society emerged in the early 1980s and is used to describe the social, political, economic and cultural changes brought about by the spread of networked digital information and communications technologies. The contemporary use of the term, and the network theory itself, is traced to Jan van Dijk (1991) and Manuel Castells in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996). The functionality of networks is described as follows:

dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly organised around networks. Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture (Castells, 1996 in Barney, 2014:2).

The word network describes a structural condition whereby distinct points (often called 'nodes') are related to one another by connections (often called 'ties') that are typically multiple, intersecting and redundant ... a network exists when many nodes (people, firms, computers) are linked to many other nodes, usually by ties which cross ties connecting other nodes (Barney, 2014:2).

The network society is thus described as a society in which a combination of social and media networks shapes its prime mode of organisation and most important structures at all levels, notably individual, organisational and societal (Castells, 1996; van Dijk, 1991). Technological development is the most important individual precondition for the resurgence of networks (Castells, 1996). "While the networking form of social organisation has existed in other times and spaces, the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure" (Castells, 1996 in Barney, 2014:2).

The emergence of networks as an efficient form of social organisation is the result of three features that have proved their usefulness in the emerging techno-economic environment, namely flexibility, scalability and survivability.

Flexibility: they can re-configure according to changing environments, keeping their goals while changing their components. They go around blocking points of communication channels to find new connections. Scalability: they can expand or shrink in size with little disruption. Survivability: because they have no centre, and can operate in a wide range of configurations, they can resist attacks to their nodes and codes, because the codes of the network are contained in multiple nodes that can reproduce the instructions and find new ways to perform (Castells, 2009:23:9).

Network society and new media

The concept 'new media' commonly refers to content available on demand through the Internet, accessible on any digital device and usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation. These include websites such as online newspapers, blogs, wikis, video games and social media (van Dijk, 1991). Their three major structural characteristics are summarised thus: They are media which are both integrated and interactive and also use digital code at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries (van Dijk, 1991). New media, of which online newspapers are a part, are credited with enhancing the work of networks through the following: overcome historical limits of space and flow; decentralised, flexible and autonomous, which allows the emergence of self-directed mass communication; substantially increase sociability; and enhance interactivity among both individuals and nodes in the network. Van Dijk (1991) made two predictions about the future under new media which have profound implications for online newspapers: that as the new media become more advanced, they will gradually appear as 'normal' media; and that paper as a means of communication, notably newspapers and letters, will become obsolete.

The Network Society has had its own critics, including this author. One of the major criticisms is its epistemological approach, which is associated with 'grounded theory'. Like other theories in this ground, it does not provide a methodological approach and tools for empirical research. Rather, it feeds on results from other theories with a methodological approach, such as the UGT (above). Stalder (2006:36) sums it up, "to put it simply, 'grounded theory' does not test theoretical hypotheses through empirical research but aims at letting theoretical categories 'emerge' from case studies." In nutshell, the theory is flawed on the fact that "it is not an empiricist inductive method, where reality is first

observed 'objectively' from which an exploratory theory is then still distilled" Stalder (2006:36).

The network society is a broad theory analysing various aspects of the social, political, economic and informational transformation of society. In this study it is specifically used to analyse the following aspects: the role and influence of the online newspapers on Zambian society; structural features of online newspapers vis-à-vis facilitation of networking among their readers; power relations between the online newspapers and the state regulators; and the flexibility, survivability and scalability of these media. All these are fundamental aspects of the 'ideal' type of network society. The prescient prediction by van Dijk (1991) of the future of traditional mass media the new information society era and specifically on ink-on-paper publishing relates directly to the analysis of the impact of online newspapers on their print counterparts and progenitors (chapter 10).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH APPROACHES AND METHODS

Overview

A question frequently asked during presentations of research findings is, 'How did you arrive at the conclusions?' This question is nuanced. It makes the point that the means are as crucial as the end in any research. Lack of clarity about the principles, methods and methodologies from which the inferences and conclusions are drawn can easily compromise the external validity and acceptability of research. This chapter elucidates the paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis methodologies and methods adopted for the study. It pays attention to the ethical considerations and processes that were followed to ensure that the results obtained were of an acceptable ethical standard in South Africa and Zambia, where the study was conceived and undertaken respectively. It should be noted that whereas this chapter presents the general principles and processes for the study, within each of the five 'empirical' chapters, the steps and processes that are unique to its specific objectives are briefly spelt out.

Research ontology and epistemology

Most research posits a vertically (hierarchical) linear relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology (Lowndes et al, 2018). Ontology is the foundation of the study and is defined as the theory of 'being' or form and nature of reality as defined by the researcher (Lowndes et al, 2018). 'To put it another way, the main question is whether there is a 'real' world 'out there', that is, in an important sense, independent of our knowledge of it' (Lowndes et al, 2018:178). The answer to this question distinguishes two broad ontological positions: foundationalism (also referred to as objectivism or realism) (Lowndes et al, 2018), which posits a 'real' world out there independent of the knowledge of the researcher; and anti-foundationalism or relativism, which treats the world as socially constructed by the researcher (Lowndes et al, 2018). Therefore, while ontology reflects the researcher's view of the world, epistemology is a theory of knowledge that represents his or her view of what can be done to know about the world. 'As researchers, our central

interest in epistemology focuses upon the question: how do we know about the world?' (Lowndes et al, 2018). It centres on certainty, logic and evidence (Lowndes et al, 2018; Meyers, 1997).

A number of considerations influenced the decision on which paradigmatic or ontological approach to adopt between positivism²⁰ and constructivism for this study.²¹ The first and most important consideration was the aim and purpose. At the conceptual stage, the aim was defined in terms of the need to test and ascertain the relevance of the main theories to the phenomenon under investigation. The second was the fact that the phenomena under study were amenable to quantification, with a need for sufficient cases to facilitate both reliability and external validity (generalisability) of the findings. The definability of the issues under study – attitudes, opinions and behaviours – also warranted the use of a particular methodology.

The third consideration was the factor that sufficient variables were required to reliably conceptualise and affirm each of the theories adopted for the study. This suggested that sample size was a crucial consideration. The fourth consideration was the need to test relationships and hypotheses. The phenomena under study and the research objectives precipitated a need to establish or test relationships between sets of variables and the hypotheses developed at commencement of the study. This required a methodological approach that would make it possible to achieve this outcome. The final consideration was the context within which the study was undertaken. Important in this case was that most of the phenomena could be studied independently of the context, requiring an approach in which the researcher would be divorced from the processes of investigations and interpretations of the results.

Taking these considerations into account, the approach was adopted of knowing the 'facts' through 'methods of science', according to the typologies of philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce (Merrigan and Huston, 2004). This method requires the 'establishing of standards by which any claim can be tested for its reasonableness' (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:4).

²⁰ Positivist research is characterised by formal propositions and quantifiable measures of variables articulated to describe the reality that is considered as objectively given (Meyers 1997).

²¹ Interpretivism or constructivism is itself socially constructed, populated with social science researchers (Meyers, 1997; Lee, et al. 1997).

Pierce identified the following properties as part of reasoning in science: ‘observations, experimentation as “systematic analysis” and generalisations as “probabilistic inferences”’ (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:4). Specifically, the study adopted the ‘knowing by discovery’ paradigm, which implies that ‘there is a reality outside of our personal experience that can be known by any observer’ and that ‘we discover knowledge by making precise, systematic and repetitive observations of the same event or thing’ (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:5). This study has endeavoured to ensure accuracy and to be systematic by virtue of having followed clear and known procedures as determined by scholars experienced in quantitative methodologies.

Like other discovery studies, the study began with a general claim constructed from the evidence collected in many previous studies. From past evidence, research questions were developed and predictions (in the form of hypotheses) were made and tested through observation of the new evidence (Myers, 1997; Merrigan and Huston, 2004). The latter state, “This perspective has at its core the assumptions that knowledge is gained by objectivity; that is, any researcher who uses the same definitions and same procedures will observe the same pattern of results in the tests of the research claims” (2004:7), The study set out to ‘discover’ objective realities or facts about the readership of online newspapers in Zambia. It commenced with a set of questions and propositions (hypotheses) based on ‘discoveries’ of previous similar studies albeit undertaken in different settings.

Philosophical perspective

In line with its ontology, the study adopted an epistemological proposition which combines logical positivist and behaviourist approaches in the search for ‘facts’. ‘Positivist researchers believe that there is an objective reality ‘out there’ independent of the researcher’ (Baxter and Babbie, 2004:49). Logical positivist and behaviourist perspectives both subscribe to the empiricist epistemology. Merrigan and Huston (2004:10) explain that ‘both embraced an objective reality knowable through observation or empirical processes rather than through rational thought.’ Baxter and Babbie (2004:49) conclude that, ‘The positivist approach thus believes in systematic and rigorous methods in search of the “reality” in order to minimise researcher biases.’ The choice of this philosophical approach is consistent with the purpose of the study, type of data collected, variables to

be tested and other factors listed under the previous section. The approach permitted the testing of hypotheses and exploration of relationships between selected variables. It allowed for the 'voices' of the readers to be taken into account in order to discuss the active (and polarising) debate around online newspapers, particularly on ethical conduct, role and influence. A number of African scholars have written about these subjects but many lack the readers' perspectives. This is one of the shortcomings that this study aims to address through the adopted paradigm and methodological approaches.

Types of claims

In the context of research, 'claim' refers to the 'central assertion or premise of the study' and is a combination of the descriptive and explanatory, or analytical (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:21). It builds on exploratory studies of other researchers around some of the variables (Chishala, 2015; Mbozi, 2014). 'Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting, or relationship' (Neuman, 2014:38). As an analytical study, it aims to not only describe the state of affairs but also to interpret and explain it. Jensen (2002:215) adds that analytical studies 'also collect descriptive data but attempt to go on to examine relationships among variables in order to test research hypotheses'. By combining the descriptive and analytic approaches, the study aims to offer insights to readers who are interested in both the 'situation on the ground' with respect to online newspapers and the analyses of the implications of the advent of these new media on readership, the media ecosystem and other dependent variables as itemised in the study. Some of the analyses dealt with the relationship between an independent variable, say age or sex of the reader or years of using the Internet, and a dependent variable, for instance reading online newspapers. This mixed-model approach means that some phenomena were described as they are while others were not only described but also analysed for relationships between and among selected variables. Williams, et al. (1988:46) summarise the distinction as follows:

Description is the type of research that provides the context for both adjusting and testing a theory. Explanation is a type of research that tests the extent to which a theory adequately represents the phenomenon being studied.

Overview of study approach

Study orientation and design

The study was designed as a cross-sectional reader survey. The choice of the survey was consistent with the study paradigm and the philosophical perspective. The study set out to be both descriptive and analytical as stated in other sections. As pointed by Gunter (2000:24), 'surveys can be used either to describe phenomena or to explain them'. Further, 'descriptive surveys document a particular state of affairs regarding public opinion or behaviour or population characteristics at one point in time' (Gunter, 2000:24). On the other hand, 'Surveys that have an explanatory purpose do not restrict themselves to collection of purely descriptive data but obtain measurement of variables between which relationships can be analysed' (Gunter, 2000:24). A cross-sectional survey is used to 'obtain self-report data from samples of respondents about their patterns of media behaviour at one point in time. They can reveal degrees of association between claimed media usage and other attitudinal and behavioural measures on individuals' (Gunter, 2000:24).

The study adopted quantitative methodologies and methods. Jensen (2002:209) defines quantitative methods of media research as being concerned with setting up, proving or disproving of hypotheses, and the eventual establishment of theoretical explanations of events or causal laws which explain relationships between individuals' activities in, and experiences with, media and their knowledge, beliefs, opinions and behaviours. The methodology was adopted due to the need to quantify the issues under investigation and arrive at general and specific generalisations about the relationships between and among some of the variables and in order to test the selected hypotheses. The study was also designed to ascertain the relevance of the theories adopted for the study – overall and within specific thematic chapters – to the new media era, specifically online newspapers.

Though predominantly positivist at the paradigmatic level, at the level of methodology the study entertained a new approach known as mixed-model multi-strand design (Cameron, 2009). "Mixed-model designs involve the mixing of the quantitative and qualitative approaches in several stages of a study" (Cameron, 2009:145). The study specifically adopted 'sequential form' in which 'one type of data (quantitative) provides a basis for

collection of another type of data (qualitative)' (Cameron, 2009:146). The mixed model approach was adopted in order to give the respondents a chance to explain their answers to the structured questions in some sections of the questionnaire. In this way some form of triangulation was attained without having to adopt wholly qualitative methods such as focus group discussions. Mixing the two methods in this manner is a growing phenomenon in social science research and a compromise of the polarisation of methods. Guba and Lincoln (in Cameron, 2009) argued that positivists and post-positivists can be reconciled through mixed methods and can be

retrofitted to each other in ways that make the simultaneous practice of both possible. We have argued that at the paradigmatic, or philosophical, level, commensurability between positivist and post-positivist world views is not possible, but that within each paradigm, mixed methodologies (strategies) may make perfect sense (Guba and Lincoln, 2005 in Cameron, 2009:142).

Table 1 (below) summarizes the overall research design, specifically outlining information sought from each of the objectives and the approaches and methods for both data collection and analysis.

Table 4.1 : Overview of research design. Source: Compiled by author.

Broad research area	Information to be collected	Research design	Source of information	Sample size	Methods and tools of data collection	Data analysis methods
Who accesses and reads online newspapers, motivations and intensity of reading	Characterisation of readers, motivations for reading and intensity of attention to online newspapers	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	General population and readers of online newspapers	600	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)
Content motivation from online newspapers	Type of content readers seek and gratification obtained from the content	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	General population and readers of online newspapers	600	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: (SPSS)
Process motivation	Use of and gratification from interactivity features – multi-mediality, interactivity and hypertextuality – of online newspapers	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	Readers of online newspapers	As above	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: SPSS
Perceptions of ethical conduct and credibility of online newspapers	Possibility of perceived credibility as an intervening variable to reader gratification	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	Readers of online newspapers	As above	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: SPSS
Impact of online newspapers on traditional media, especially newspapers	Probable impact of reading online newspapers to consumption of mainstream media	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	Readers of online newspapers	As above	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: SPSS
Behavioural influence of online newspapers	Characterise influence of online newspapers at micro-social level	Non-experimental: cross-sectional	Readers of online newspapers	As above	Survey: questionnaires	Quantitative: SPSS

Data collection sources and setting

Merrigan and Huston (2004) distinguish four types of data sources from which communication data can originate: observation of communication interactions; self-reports of (individuals') communication behaviour, beliefs or characteristics; other reports of communication behaviour, beliefs, or characteristics; and texts (obtained through analyses of printed materials). The study obtained primary data from self-reports of the respondents. Self-reports occur whenever 'you ask people to report their own behaviours, beliefs, or characteristics related to communication' (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:37). The limitations of self-reports are well known as articulated in the following statement:

Depending on the research topic, their relationship with the researcher, and many other factors, people may not report all their thoughts and feelings. Memories can be incomplete, inaccurate and so on (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:37).

These limitations were ameliorated in a variety of ways, in terms of both manipulation of the settings and the instruments used in collecting the data. The measures include the following:

- The respondents were interviewed within the settings of their choice (mostly at home), to ensure that they were comfortable with the whole interview process.
- The questionnaire was structured in such a way as to avoid response categories that challenged the respondents' memories or which required unnecessary precision.
- All the interviews were conducted in the field, specifically 'in places where the communication would most naturally occur' (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:87).

The data for the study were captured through a questionnaire that was primarily structured with closed-format (or 'forced-choice') questions in which the respondents had 'to choose from a fixed set of alternatives or to give a single numerical value' (Watt and van den Berg, 1995:366 in Merrigan and Huston, 2004:96). As in any study that adopts the closed-format questionnaire, there was a need for standardisation of responses for consistent and valid comparisons and classification. The idea of using such structured questionnaires was

to guarantee that all the questions were standardised and asked in the same way, so that responses from different individuals could be counted and compared (Gunter, 2000:96). A few sections of the questionnaire contained open-ended follow-up questions in which the respondents were asked to explain their answers. The rationale was to benefit from the qualitative narrations or justifications for the answers given in those crucial sections, in particular on questions measuring perceived credibility of online newspapers. The responses were adopted verbatim to enrich the report. All the questionnaires were completed by the interviewers during face-to-face interviews and in appropriate settings that were mutually approved by both the interviewer and the interviewee. This approach enhanced the accuracy of the data and the response rate to the questions and helped improve the quality of the responses.

Use of tablets for data collection

To conform with trends in quantitative research, Android-based tablet computers were used to allow for speedy and accurate data collection. The questionnaire was loaded into the tablet and consent forms were kept as hard copy to collect signatures of consenting respondents. The database was developed using open data kit (ODK), a Cloud-based platform. Each of the six interviewers was provided with a tablet, a charger for the table, an MTN dongle and airtime for 'sinking' or sending the completed questionnaires to the server every evening. The use of tablets over paper-based questionnaires had the following benefits:

Enhanced interview experience: The survey software guided the interview process, easing administration of the questionnaire and ensuring data quality. The fact that the interviewer could see one question on the screen at one time helped to increase readability. The use of tablets also did away with the need for the interviewer to remember codes and instructions since the relevant material was displayed on the screen.

Real-time data: The use of tablets enabled access to real-time data along with GPS coordinates of interviewers. In this way the researcher could monitor the quality of data being collected by each interviewer and to communicate immediately any change or mistake.

Reduced delays since all the data were collected in soft copy and sent directly to a server.

Quality control: The use of tablets ensured greater control over the data quality by automatic skip-pattern and validation of the responses, minimising data-entry errors. Due to built-in skips and validation rules, interviewers could immediately rectify the errors in the field and reduce the time lost in correction.

Avoidance of coding errors: a number of research projects lose data reliability and validity at the stage of coding or data entry. This is not the case with digital questionnaires as the data is sent directly to the server for analysis, thereby foregoing data entry. Therefore, questions around inter-coder reliability do not arise.

Greener solution: The use of tablets greatly reduced the need for paper, printing, transportation and storage of questionnaires. Data captured in the tablets were uploaded to the server daily, as were data quality checks. Whenever errors were discovered the interviewer was contacted immediately and the data corrected on the very day. Data quality and consistency checks ran simultaneously with data collection. Verified and 'cleaned' data were exported from the ODK server in Microsoft Excel format, sent back to the research team and then converted to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database for analysis. The questionnaire was structured to capture basic demographic data from readers and non-readers of online newspapers and divided into two parts: Part I with four sections that applied to all sampled respondents, readers and non-readers. Part II had six sections exclusive to readers of online newspapers. Before proceeding to Part II, the questionnaire asked the enumerators to check and confirm whether the respondent read online newspapers. This verification helped to ascertain the extent of readership of Zambian online newspapers, one of the six main research questions of the study. The full descriptions of the sections of the questionnaires follow:

Part I: *For all respondents in sample*

Section 1, Background: 'Identification data' about the questionnaire, the interview process, interviewer, supervisor and location of the interview. The interviewer completed the section before starting the interview.

Section 2, Background information: ‘Classification’, or data relating to the general demographics of all the respondents. This section covered age, marital status, level of education, employment status and source of household energy.

Section 3, Access to and use of Internet: Questions on access to and use of the Internet, which qualified for what is called ‘warm-ups’ and were applicable to all the respondents.

Section 4, Access to media and online newspapers: Responses were asked about access to and use of all types of news media, and specifically online newspapers. The section contained a series of questions structured to distinguish between the readers and non-readers of online newspapers. The interview terminated at this point for non-readers and for respondents who were not willing to proceed to the remaining sections of the questionnaire. Fortunately, none of the sampled individuals opted to terminate the interview even though they were eligible to proceed to the rest of the questionnaire.

Part Two: *Only for respondents who access and read at least one online newspaper*

Section 5, Readership of online newspapers – motivations, frequency and satisfaction

Characterisation of the extent of readership, motivations for reading, use of interactive features of online newspapers and levels of general satisfaction from reading online newspapers, and more specifically their interactive features and utility value. All these were some of the crucial aspects of the study.

Section 6, Relevance of content of online newspapers: The type of content (general or development coverage) the readers were seeking from online newspapers, the type of content they found in these newspapers and the extent to which it satisfied their expectations.

Section 7, Trust, confidence in and credibility of online newspapers: Readers’ perspectives of the credibility of online newspapers, an issue examined by some African scholars from an interpretative tradition. This section contained closed and open-ended questions.

Section 8, Influence of online newspapers: Readers’ responses to questions about the influence of online newspapers at micro-social level. This section also sought to establish whether probable intervening variables, notably the perceived credibility of online newspapers, had an impact on the perceived influence.

Section 9, Views on impact of online newspapers on traditional media: Readers' responses to questions as to whether the growing readership of online newspapers had had an impact on their exposure to traditional media, especially printed newspapers.

Section 10, Views on government treatment of online newspapers: Respondents' views on the policy and regulatory environment for online newspapers in Zambia, specifically the attitude of the government to online newspapers and whether online newspapers should be allowed to operate freely in Zambia.

Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Lusaka Province in central south Zambia, and at 21,896 km² the smallest of the country's 10 provinces. Lusaka is the capital and the most populous city. The population of the province in 2016 was estimated to be almost 2.9 million, representing 18% of the total population (CSO, 2016). Of these 1.5 million were projected to be 18 years and older, the target population for this survey. The national demographic features of Zambia, notably the high population density, poverty and socio-economic disparities (see section 2.1.1) are all well reflected in Lusaka. Zambia's ethnic groups are well represented in the city. It is also the administrative and financial hub, the headquarters of all major media and information, communication and technology (ICT) infrastructure.

A 2015 Zambia Information, Communication and Technology Authority (ZICTA) survey reported 98.9% mobile phone network coverage in Lusaka. Mobile phone ownership, electricity access and Internet connectivity are higher in urban than rural areas (see section 2.1.1). These features favoured Lusaka Province as the ideal location for the study. The province has eight districts, namely Chilanga, Chirundu, Chongwe, Kafue, Luangwa, Lufunsa, Lusaka and Shibuyunji. Three are located along the line of rail and classified as urban. Two are within a radius of 35-50 km from Lusaka city (classified as peri-urban) and the other three are further than 50 km. Luangwa, the furthest, is 228 km away.

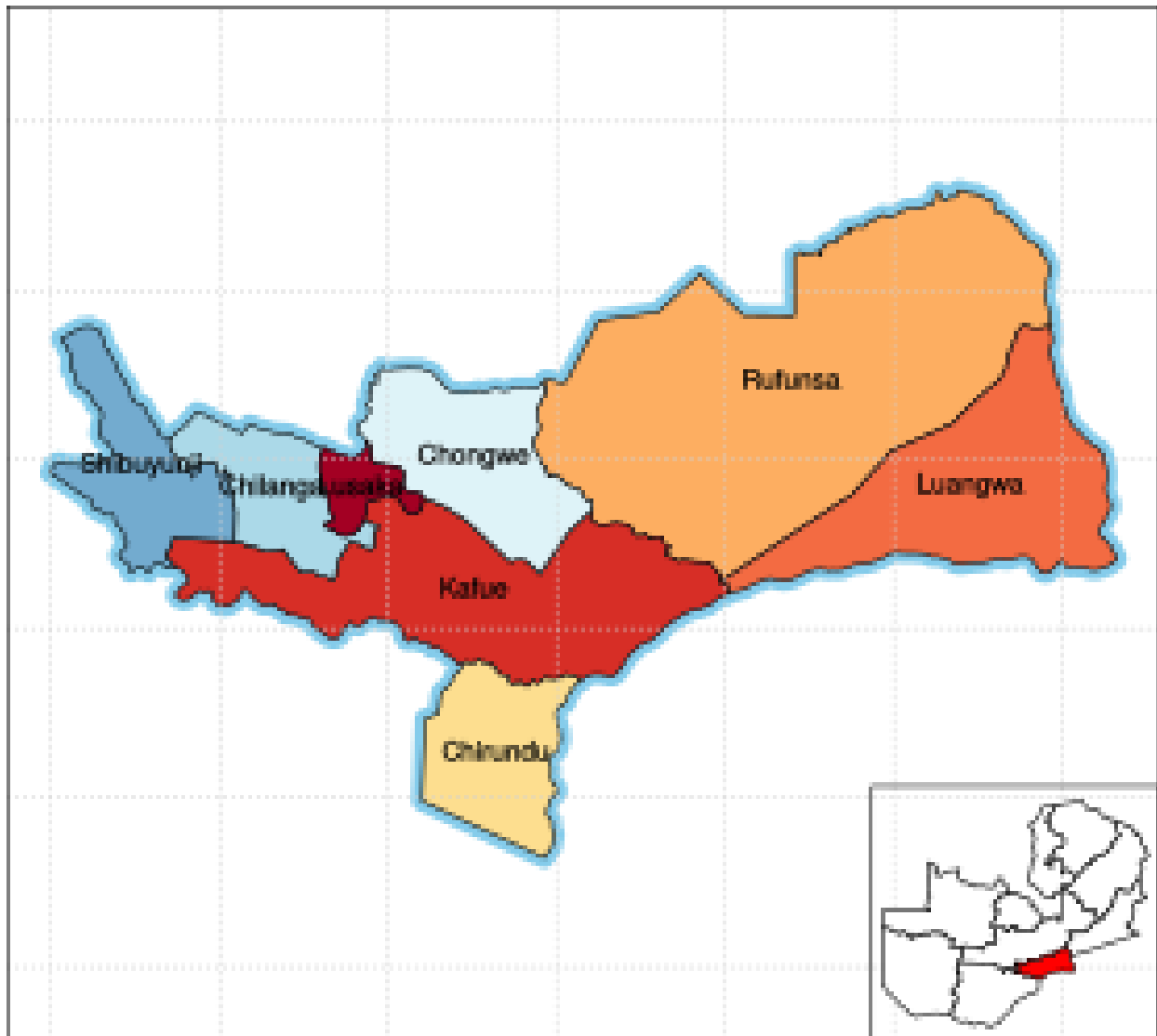


Figure 4.1 : The eight districts of Lusaka Province. Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+lusaka+province+and+districts&tbm>. Accessed 20 May 2018

Sampling design and methods

Another frequently asked question regarding results of studies is how the sample was picked. The choice of sampling techniques was between probability and non-probability sampling methods. For the purpose of this study a probability sampling method, specifically a combination of systematic and stratified methods, was used to sample respondents for the surveys. The aim was to ensure that the sample was representative of the population demographics of Lusaka Province and Zambia as a whole, in order to

enhance the generalisability (external validity) of the results both provincially and nationally. The probability principle holds that 'a sample will be representative of the population from which it is drawn if all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample' (Baxter and Babbie, 2004:134). Jensen (2002:215) states that, 'a probability sample is selected according to mathematical guidelines whereby the chance for selection of each unit is known'. The specific sampling techniques used (in combination) under the probability principle were as follows:

Systematic random sampling: The technique was to draw observation elements (interviewees), defined as 'every k th element in the total list is chosen for inclusion in the sample. If the list contains 10,000 elements and you want a sample of 1,000, you select every tenth element of your sample' (Baxter and Babbie, 2004:134).

Stratified random sampling: This was used in combination with other probability sampling methods to ensure representation of subsets deemed important to the study. Baxter and Babbie (2004:155) explain: "Rather than selecting your sample from the total population at large, you ensure that appropriate numbers of elements are drawn from homogenous subsets of that population." This method was specifically used to take account of the sex subset.

Study populations and sampling procedure

The study population consisted of individuals aged 18 years and older who met the following eligibility criteria: have Internet access; not residing in institutionalised accommodation (such as student hostels or military camps); and living within the boundaries of Lusaka Province. As explained in the 'Data collection sources and setting' section, the respondents were further disaggregated through questions at the end of Part I of the questionnaire in order to ensure that only confirmed readers of online newspapers filtered through to answer questions relating to readership (Part II of the questionnaire).

Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure used for the study was made with the support of the Central Statistical Office (CSO), which is responsible for the national census, demographic and health surveys and other national-level surveys in Zambia. Statistical data, maps and

systems of the CSO were used to identify households from which samples were drawn. For the purposes of conducting population-based surveys, the 10 provinces are divided into districts and the districts into wards. The wards are further divided into census supervisory areas (CSAs) and enumeration areas (EAs). The EAs constitute primary sampling units. Each EA has 100-150 households in urban areas and 80-120 in rural areas. The average family size is five and six individuals for urban and rural areas respectively (CSO, 2016). Lusaka Province has 3,443 EAs of which 30 were sampled, proportionally distributed across the eight districts as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 : Composition of the sampled EAs by district. Source: Compiled by author

District	Number of households	Square root	Ratio	EAs
Chilanga	25,296	159.05	0.11	3
Chirundu	9,834	99.17	0.07	2
Chongwe	31,551	177.63	0.12	4
Kafue	27,733	166.53	0.11	3
Luangwa	5,591	74.77	0.05	2
Lusaka	391,919	626.03	0.41	12
Lufunsa	11,243	106.03	0.07	2
Shibuyungi	10,913	104.47	0.07	2
Total	514,080	1,513.68	1.00	30

The actual sampling of individuals for the interview involved the following three steps:

Step 1, selecting the enumeration areas: The study covered all eight districts of Lusaka Province. The districts were sorted by population size. At the first sampling stage, 30 EAs were sampled using the probability-proportional-to-size principle. The measure of size was based on the number of households identified in the 2010 Census. This sorting allowed for implicit stratification. As can be noted in Table 4.2 (above), most sampled EAs fell in Lusaka District, which has the highest population. Microsoft Excel and the standard formula were used for selecting the sample EAs from the sampling frame, using the steps described above.

Step 2, mapping, profiling and sampling of households: Within the 30 sampled EAs, a mapping of households was undertaken with the help of EA sketch maps containing the identification particulars of each cluster (or EA). Local authorities helped to identify the boundaries of the village or EA and to acquire general information about each cluster. The research teams would systematically walk around the EA to list all the households and their members. The sampling unit was individual eligible members of a household. This mapping and profiling process was necessary for the purposes of updating the list of households in each and every sampled EA to the 2010 census data and, more importantly, to develop a list (by name) and profile (in MS Excel) of all the household members aged 18 and above (whether or not they had Internet access).²² The door-to-door listing and profiling of household members captured a total of 2,399 individuals (survey population) spread across the eight districts within Lusaka Province (see also chapter 5). From this number, 1,245 (52%) reported having access to the Internet. This was the list from which the 593 (rounded to 600) individuals to participate in the interview were sampled. The profiles created contained vital information that was used for stratification purposes (of sub-groups, by age and sex in this case) and for identification (contact details, location etc.).

Step 3, selecting the respondents and sample sizes: The third and final stage involved the selection of individuals from the sampling frame. As reported earlier, a combination of stratified and systematic random sampling methods was used to sample the 600 candidates for the interview. The sample size was based on the projected population of 1,507,850 persons above 18 years of age in Lusaka (CSO, 2016). The stratification allowed for proportional representation of the sample in terms of age and sex of the respondents. From this stratification, 254 (48%) female respondents and 284 (52%) male respondents were sampled (see chapter 5).

To allow for the possibility of non-responses and drop-outs, an additional 10 candidates per district were sampled as replacements. However, this applied only to the four districts

²² Ineligible members of households (i.e. without Internet access) were also listed and profiled for a secondary purpose of establishing the digital divide and to compare the data with the latest national ICT survey (ZICTA, 2015).

that had excess eligible candidates (above the target number of 20 per district. The four were Chilanga, Chongwe, Chirundu and Lusaka. The other four could not even meet the target of 20 eligible individuals (above 18 and with Internet access). The contact details collected during the listing and profiling were used to inform sampled respondents of the survey, to obtain provisional consent for their participation and to fix an appointment for the interview. The profiles also facilitated the replacement of unavailable or unwilling sampled candidates. Full details of the response rate and other outcomes of the interviews are given in chapter 5.

Reliability and validity

Particular attention was paid to reliability and validity of the results. Merrigan and Huston (2004:62) define reliability as resulting when ‘research observations are consistent over time, across settings, subjects, and instruments’, and state that consistency is a synonym for reliability. Table 4.3 presents key considerations for reliability and how they were addressed in the study.

Table 4.3 : Potential threats to reliability and how they were managed.

Source: Compiled by author

Reliability concerns (errors)	How addressed in the study
Random situational or individual differences	Controlling for such adverse conditions as enumerator illness and fatigue or unsuitable environments for interviews. Regular contacts with the enumerators individually and collectively helped to minimize such errors.
Instrument clarity	Rigorous training, practice and piloting of the instruments. Open lines of communication were maintained between the researcher and the enumerators for consultations over the instruments and processes.
Inter-coder reliability	Rigorous training and practice around the codes as provided in the questionnaire, which was minimized through use of tablets, which meant skipping the coding process.
Errors in data processing	Minimized by use of tablets, which avoided transportation of data from hard copy questionnaires to the computer.

In terms of validity, attention was paid to both internal and external validity. Williams, et al. (1988:58 quoting Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Cook and Campbell, 1979) define internal validity as 'the extent to which a measure or research design operationalises what it purports to study in a way that prevents alternate explanations for the results'. External validity is described as 'the extent to which a research study's results are generalisable, meaningful, useful, and applicable to situations and samples other than those studied' (Williams, Rice and Rodgers, 1988:58). External and internal validity were to a great extent controlled by the rigorous probability and systematic sampling methods. The combination of sampling methods guaranteed that the sample was truly representative of the population and therefore the results generalisable. Table 4.4 (below) summarises the potential threats to internal validity and some of the specific measures adopted in the study to ameliorate them. All the measures listed below were aimed at addressing confounding and extraneous variables (factors that could affect the dependent and independent variables respectively).

Table 4.4 : Potential threats to internal validity and how they were managed.

Source: Compiled by author

Reliability concerns (errors)	How addressed in the study
Selection bias	Randomised probability and systematic sampling methods.
Resentful demoralisation	Ensure standard treatment of the respondents.
Demand characteristic (participants varying their behaviour, choosing to cooperate or resist).	Clear explanation of the purpose of the study and what the participants can expect during the consenting stage.
Low total response rate (interviews completed with sampled respondents)	Establish good rapport with prospective interviewees and having enough replacement samples.
Low item response rate (questionnaires 100% completed)	Having simple, clear and straightforward questions, ensuring a conducive environment for the interview and lively, well-trained interviewers.

Quality assurance

Data collection was undertaken over two months, from 2 December 2017 to 17 February 2018. To ensure quality results the following steps were taken:

Pilot study (pre-testing)

Prior to commencement of fieldwork, a pilot study was undertaken in Chibombo District of Central Province, which is within the precinct of Lusaka Province. Chibombo was chosen because its population and other demographics are similar to most of the districts of Lusaka. The questionnaire and all the fieldwork forms and tools for the study were tried on the sample (60 respondents or 10% of the main sample). The main component of the pilot study was the interviewing techniques using the survey questionnaires (as uploaded in the tablets). It covered other processes of the data collection exercise: mapping (including map reading) and profiling of the households; sampling of households and respondents in the households; recruitment processes; and obtaining consent from the local authorities and the respondents. It was followed by a one-day workshop to obtain feedback on all the tools tested and to make modifications, where needed, before embarking on mass production of the final instruments.

Interviewer recruitment and training

Six experienced interviewers were recruited and worked under the direct supervision of the researcher. They were trained over three days in interviewing skills and data collection, particularly in completing the questionnaires using the tablets. Another day was spent on understanding and practical administration of research protocols, notably the information brochure and consent forms. The last day of training was allocated to training in map reading and identification of smallest enumeration areas (SEAs) on the ground. The detailed description of the questionnaire was a major part of the training since not all the interviewers had a media background. The training emphasised the need to ensure that the interviewers gathered accurate data from the field in line with the following guidelines:

Intrude in the research process as little as possible. This means that the interviewer should never direct the respondents toward an answer, should never be judgmental, should not interpret the respondent's answers

according to his or her own beliefs or values. The interviewer must be consistent in his or her communication style and language, so that each respondent is exposed to the same kind of measurement environment (Watt and van den Berg, 1995:359 in Merrigan and Huston, 2004:94).

Classroom training was augmented by practical experience. Demonstration interviews and role plays were conducted, which enabled the rest of the trainees to give feedback. This way the interviewers learnt from each other by asking questions and talking about situations they encountered in actual interviews, particularly after the pilot study.



Figure 4.2: Enumerators undergoing training in map reading.

Source: photo taken by author.

Quality control in the field

The researcher maintained close contact with all the enumerators in the field, conducting spot checks and observations to ensure that the survey instruments were properly used and protocols strictly administered. Data quality was monitored daily in the following ways: a master tracker document recorded the number of assessments conducted in wards or

EAs and the disposition codes entered for missing cases that needed replacement, for instance for prospective respondents who refused to take part, were sick on the day or were unaccountably absent; and a daily issues tracker noted track enumerator errors which needed to be addressed during data cleaning.

Data analysis

For analysis the data were first transferred from the tablets to the server, converted from MS Excel and then transferred again to a computer for all statistical analyses in SPSS. At the basic level, descriptive statistical tests were used for cleaning the data and first-level analysis. Descriptive statistics describe the collected sample data visually and in numerical terms (Merrigan and Huston, 2004:156). At this stage of the analysis, in line with this description, the variables were presented in form of frequency tables and bar and pie charts. Then inferential statistics were used for tests of relationships between and among selected variables and for hypotheses testing. According to Merrigan and Huston (2004:166), inferential statistics estimate the characteristics of the larger group (population) from the characteristics of the smaller group (sample). Specifically, the Chi-square (χ^2) test of independence – at 95% confidence level – was used to ascertain relationships between selected independent and dependent variables through cross-tabulations. Similarly, the Chi-square was used for testing hypotheses adopted for the study. Multiple regression analysis models – specifically logistic and stepwise – were used to assess the extent to which two variables could be used to ‘predict’ each other.

Dependent and independent variables

The study was interested in finding out the outcomes or effects in the audiences, also known as dependent or predictor variables (Lapan and Quartaroli, 2009). The broad outcomes are: reading online newspapers; use of and gratification from interactivity features; perceived credibility; use of and gratification from content; reduction in time spent on traditional media; and influence of online newspapers at individual level. The study was interested in the factors that affect or predict the above outcomes, which Lapan and Quartaroli (2009) call the independent variables. From the extensive review of literature, it was established that socio-demographic characteristics determined individual’s use of the Internet in general and online newspapers in particular (for instance, Katz and

Rice, 2002; Kitamura, 2013). The study was specifically interested in establishing how the following demographic factors or independent variables influenced the readers' choices: age, sex, education, income status, type of residence, location (whether rural or urban) and political activism (defined in terms of whether the respondent is a registered voter and whether he or she voted in 2016 general elections). The others are: Internet skills, experience with the Internet (in terms of frequency of daily and weekly use and years of using) and experience with online newspapers (weekly frequency and years of reading).

Investigating socio-demographic factors that could influence consumers' media choices is in line with trends in uses and gratification research. Carriço Ferreira (2013:8) postulated that

recently, 'typological' studies have advanced with a more complex description and operationalisation of the viewer's background (education, social class, life expectancy etc.) in the motivated behaviour directed to the media...Such studies establish empirical bonds between gratifications and variables, such as age, degree of education, integration to social groups, or conditions of mobility or income, even without a theoretical support of the relation between these elements.

Multivariate regression models were used to model or predict the influence of these factors on the dependent variables and to ascertain the strength and direction of the relationship in the case of continuous variables.

Ethical considerations and clearance

The study upheld research ethics in compliance with standard principles – respect for persons and for communities' values and interests, beneficence and justice – and in line with the following:

The integrity, reliability and validity of the research findings rely heavily on adherence to ethical principles. The readers and the public want to be assured that researchers followed the appropriate guidelines for issues such as human rights, animal welfare, compliance with the law, conflicts of interest, safety, health standards and so on. The

handling of these ethical issues greatly impacts the integrity of the research project and can affect whether or not the project receives funding.²³

Voluntary participation and informed consent

A brochure informed all the participants comprehensively about the purpose and procedures of the study (Appendix...). It described the source of funding, the potential use of the data, methods of data collection and contact details of the researcher and a privately-owned ethics board, ERES Converge of Zambia. Respondents were read – and signed – an informed consent statement confirming their voluntary participation in the study. Respondents were informed at the outset that no inducements would be offered. The costs of transport and refreshments during the interviews were kept to a minimum in line with the provisions of the ethical guidelines as provided for by Zambian law.

Confidentiality

Measures were taken to ensure that the personal details of the respondents and their responses to the questionnaire were kept confidential. Data collected in the study were kept under lock and key and destroyed upon its completion. All the participants signed a pledge of confidentiality. Respondents were asked to provide phone numbers for the purpose of follow-ups but were not required to give their names. Only the research team members had access to the data and information that identified respondents. Access to the completed instruments was restricted to the researcher. The study tools were subjected to the scrutiny and approval of the Institutional Review Board of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and ERES Converge.

²³ Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching:
https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/designing_surveys/survey_ethics,
accessed 30 August 2017



Figure 4.3: Enumerators take a break for a meal during fieldwork reading.

Source: photo taken by author.

PART II – EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

Chapter 5: Population and sample demographics

Chapter 6: Readership and motivations for reading online newspapers

Chapter 7: Content of online newspapers: reader motivations, preferences and gratification

Chapter 8: Interactivity features: Use and effect on gratification

Chapter 9: Perceived credibility and its impact on reader gratification from online newspapers

Chapter 10: Substitutability effects of online newspapers on traditional media

Chapter 11: Influence of Online Newspapers: Modelling the Effects at Micro-Social Level

Chapter 12: The Epilogue: Summary of Findings and Conclusions

CHAPTER 5

POPULATION AND SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter presents results and findings of the study in terms of the sizes and characteristics of the survey population ²⁴ that were captured for the purpose of establishing a sampling frame and the sample itself.²⁵ The survey population consists of all the individuals who were listed and profiled during door-to-door visits to each household in the 30 sampled smallest enumeration areas (SEAs) in all the eight districts of Lusaka Province.²⁶ First, the overall size of the population from which the sample was drawn and the breakdown by district are described. Then the sample population is described in terms of selected demographics and digital divides across gender, age, location (urban versus rural) and other factors. The sample characteristics or demographics ²⁷ are presented as they were requested of the respondents in the questionnaire; they constitute the primary independent variables for the entire study. The listing and profiling of the survey population and fieldwork were conducted between 2 December 2017 and 17 February 2018.

Survey population size and characteristics

The door-to-door listing and profiling captured a total of 2,399 individuals spread across the eight districts in Lusaka Province. Lusaka District had the most respondents in the survey population with 1,040 individuals (43.4%), followed by Chongwe District with 275 (12%), Luangwa with 255 (11%), Kafue with 200 (8.3%), Shibuyunji with 186 (8%) and Chirundu and Chilanga with 165 and 164 respectively, representing approximately 7%. Rufunsa had the fewest – 114 listed individuals representing approximately 5% of the total survey population.

²⁴A survey population is defined as an ‘an aggregation of all the elements from which a researcher’s sample will actually be taken’ (Smith 1998:77 in Merrigan and Huston 2004:166).

²⁵ See Chapter 4 for the differences between ‘population’ and ‘target population’.

²⁶ See Chapter 4 for full description of the methodology.

²⁷ ‘Demographics are the general characteristics common to any group of people, such as age, biological sex, socio-economic class, level of education, ethnicity ...’ (Merrigan and Huston (2004:43).

Table 5.1 : Survey population and distribution by district. Source: Author's field data

District	Frequency	Percent
Chilanga	164	7
Chirundu	165	7
Chongwe	275	11
Kafue	200	8
Luangwa	255	11
Lusaka	1,040	43
Rufunsa	114	5
Shibuyunji	186	8
Total	2,399	100

Most of the respondents (1,595 or 67%) resided in urban areas and 804 in rural areas. Fifty-two percent (1,241) were female and 1,158 were male. Seventy percent (1,689) were youths aged 18-35 years; 710 were older.

Mobile phone ownership

With regard to mobile phone ownership, 2,035 of the 2,399 respondents owned a mobile phone, which represents 85% ownership across the eight districts. Only 364 (15%) did not own a mobile phone. Mobile phone ownership was slightly higher among males in the survey population than among females: 88% compared to 82%. The disparity in mobile phone ownership between rural and urban areas was more significant than for the other demographic factors. As table 5.3 (below) reveals, 94% (1,499 of 1595) of the urban-based profiled individuals reported owning a mobile phone compared to 67% (536 of 804) among their rural counterparts.

Table 5.2 : Area type and mobile phone ownership. Source: Author's field data

		No mobile phone	Own mobile phone	Total
Rural	Count	268	536	804
	%	33%	67%	100%
Urban	Count	96	1,499	1,595
	%	6%	94%	100%
Total	Count	364	2,035	2,399
	%	15%	84.8%	100%

Internet access

Fifty-two percent (1,245) of the survey population reported having access to the Internet (through one means or another); 1,154 (48%) said they had no access. As shown in table 4 below, only 27% of respondents (213 of 804) among the rural survey population accessed the Internet compared to 65% (1032 of 1595) in the urban areas. More males (51%) accessed the Internet than females (34%).

Table 5.3 : Access to the Internet by area type. Source: Author's field data

		Access Internet		Total
		Yes	No	
Rural	Count	213	591	804
	%	26%	74%	100.0%
Urban	Count	1,032	563	1,595
	%	65%	35%	100%
Total	Count	1,245	1,154	2,399
	%	52%	48%	100%

Comparing Internet access by district, Lusaka and Kafue had the highest Internet access (71% and 57% respectively), followed by Chongwe (45%), Chirundu (26%), Luangwa

(17%) and Rufunsa (15%). Shibuyunji, a rural district, had the least access to the Internet with only 10% (19 of the 186 profiled individuals) accessing the Internet (table 5.4). Chilanga district was left out due to a technical error.

Table 5.4 : Internet access by district. Source: Author's field data

District		Access Internet		Total
		Yes	No	
Chilanga	Count	153	11	164
	%	93%	7%	100%
Chirundu	Count	42	123	165
		26%	74%	100%
Chongwe	Count	122	153	275
	%	44%	56%	100%
Kafue	Count	114	86	200
	%	57%	43%	100%
Luangwa	Count	43	212	255
	%	17%	83%	100.0%
Lusaka	Count	735	305	1,040
	%	71%	29%	100%
Rufunsa	Count	17	97	114
	%	15%	85%	100%
Shibuyunji	Count	19	167	186
	%	10.2%	89.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	1,245	1,154	2,399
	%	52%	48%	100.0%

Sample distribution and demographics

As explained in Chapter 4, the target sample size as scientifically calculated was 593 (rounded up to 600) eligible individuals, drawn in equal proportions of 20 from each of the 30 wards and SEAs across the eight districts of Lusaka Province. The principle of proportional representation was used to calculate the number of wards and SEAs per district, resulting in Lusaka having a lion's share of 14 wards and SEAs.²⁸ A total of 535 individuals were sampled to participate in the interview, representing 87% of the target sample of 600. They represent 22% of the survey population of 2,339. From these 47% were drawn from Lusaka district, 12% each from Chilanga, Chongwe and Kafue, 6% each from Luangwa and Chirundu, 3% from Shibuyunji and 2% from Rufunsa. Some of the districts and SEAs could not fill their quota of 20 because there were not enough eligible individuals (those with Internet access). Table 5.5 below shows the distribution of respondents across the eight districts.

Table 5.5: Distribution of respondents across the eight districts. Source: Author's field data

District	Target SEAs	Target	Interviewed	Response rate
Chilanga	3	60	64	100
Chirundu,	2	40	32	80
Chongwe	4	80	63	79
Kafue	3	60	63	100
Luangwa	2	40	31	77
Rufunsa	2	40	13	32
Lusaka	12	240	254	100
Shibuyunji	2	40	15	36
Totals	30	600	535	89

Sample demographics

Of the 535 individuals sampled, 282 (53%) were male and 254 female. Sixty-six percent of the respondents were from urban areas of the eight districts. Of the 261 from urban

²⁸ See Chapter 5 for distributions of wards and SEAs.

areas, 58 (20%) were from low-density (higher-class) residential areas, 127 (41%) from high-density areas and 76 (25%) from middle-density areas. Seventy percent of the respondents were in the 18-35 age range; the rest were older. The sample reflected the gender and the rural-urban demographics of the survey population.

Forty-four percent of the respondents were household heads; the rest were dependants. Fifty-eight percent had never married, 40% were married, nine (2%) either separated or divorced and six (1%) widowed. As for education, 315 (59%) had completed secondary school, 16% had diplomas, 14% had at least a first degree, 8% college certificates and 3% had primary level education. Twenty-eight per cent were not in formal employment, 24% were in the private formal sector, 21% were self-employed (presumably in business), 17% were students and 10% were employed in the public sector. In terms of income, 74% (401) of the respondents had an annual net income of 50,000 kwacha (about \$5,000) or less, 17% had K50,000-K100,000, 6% had K100, 000-K250,000 and seven (about 1%) had an annual income exceeding K250,000.

As for energy for cooking, most of the respondents used both charcoal (80%) and electricity (71%) from the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation. Twelve percent used firewood and 1% used gas. Almost all the respondents (531 or 99%) described themselves as Christians, while three were Muslims, one was Hindu and one was non-religious. Eighty-five percent of the respondents said they were registered voters, of whom 82% reported having voted during the 2016 general elections. Forty-two percent said they were supporters of the ruling party, 37% of the opposition, 4% of both parties and 16% reporting that they supported neither.

Respondents' experiences with the Internet

How the readers use the Internet is an important pointer of access to and readership of online newspapers. The study found that of the 535 respondents, 254 (47%) had been accessing the Internet for the last two to five years, 128 (24%) six to 10 years, 117 (22%) for less than two years and 10 (7%) for more than 10 years. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents owned smartphones; the others had ordinary phones. Thirty-six percent were on one mobile phone network, 51% on two, 11% on three and 2% (11) on more than three. A significant majority (75%) were subscribers to the Airtel mobile phone network,

followed by MTN with (19%), Zamtel (5%) and other networks 1%. Seventy-one percent (277) of the respondents accessed the Internet six to seven days a week (categorised in the study as 'high surfers'), 25% (81) accessed it four to five days a week and 14% one to three days a week (categorised as 'low surfers'). Over a single day, 45% said they surfed the Internet once, 12% twice, 16% three times and 27% more than three times. Four in 10 respondents said they had good Internet skills, 31% rated their skills as moderate, 21% as very good, 7% as poor skills and two people (0.4%) as very poor.

Table 5.6: Respondents' experiences with the Internet. Source: Author's field data

	N	%
How many years have you been using the Internet?		
Less than two years	117	22
2-5 years	254	47
6-10 years	128	24
More than 10 years	36	7
How often do you surf the Internet per week?		
Low (1-3 days)	72	14
Moderate (4-5 days)	81	25
High (6-7 days)	277	71
How many times do you surf the Internet per day?		
Once	237	45
Twice	63	12
Three times	85	16
More than three times	143	27
Self-rated Internet skills		
Very good	112	21
Good	212	40
Moderate	162	31
Poor	37	7
Very poor	2	0.4

N=535

Medium of Internet access

Some respondents reported having more than one digital device and multiple means of accessing the Internet. Ninety-nine percent said they used data bundles, 26% via wi-fi, 8% via a dongle or modem and 4% via a router, while less than 1% reported using other means. As for devices, 97% said they surfed the Internet on mobile phones, 15% on a computer at home, 11% on a computer at the office, 8% from an Internet café and 4% on a tablet. Asked which factors they considered a 'big challenge' or 'problem' in accessing the Internet, 51% cited Internet speed and connectivity challenges, followed by the cost of bundles (48%), cost of smartphones (47%), poor quality of phones (24%), frequent Internet interruptions (22%), poor telecoms infrastructure (30%) and inadequate supply of electricity (14%).

Conclusion

The 635 respondents sampled for the study were drawn from 2,399 profiled individuals in the eight districts of Lusaka Province who constituted the sampling frame. There were slightly more males than females. An overwhelming majority of both profiled and sampled individuals were from urban areas. Given that eligibility to participate in the study was based on access to the Internet, the study found a clear digital divide between urban and rural areas. A similar divide emerged in mobile phone access and ownership. More males owned mobile phones and accessed the Internet than females. In comparison with the national ICT survey (ZICTA, 2018), this study finds slightly higher mobile phone ownership (85% compared to 83%) and smart phone ownership (89% for this study and 29.6 for the ZICTA national survey). Internet access is also higher in the present study at 52% (65% urban and 26 rural) compared to the ZICTA (2018) national survey (14.3% overall – 77.8% urban and 22.2% rural).

CHAPTER 6

READERSHIP AND MOTIVATIONS FOR READING ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

Abstract

This chapter characterises the readership of Zambian online newspapers among individuals 18 years and older in Lusaka Province of Zambia. Online newspapers were envisaged as the antidote to the falling readership of print newspapers, particularly among young ‘netizens’.²⁹ The extent to which they have met this expectation has been the subject of scholarly research since the late 1990s, particularly in the West. Some of the leading studies are referenced in this chapter. Studies of this nature are, however, in their infancy in Africa and none have been done comprehensively in Zambia. The study specifically investigates: the reach and intensity of readership; demographics of readers; the social motivations or gratifications sought (GS) for reading; and the gratification obtained (GO) from the motivations. The results of the study demonstrate that readership of online newspapers is moderate but growing among educated, urban-based, medium- to high-income earners, individuals who access the Internet via mobile phones and the younger readers. The disparity in the numbers of rural and urban readers of online newspapers is particularly apparent. Online newspapers rank third as sources of news and mass medium genre that readers spend most time on, behind Facebook and television. Overall most readers seek and are gratified with surveillance/informational, social interaction and avoidance needs from online newspapers. They are also attracted by the fact that these media offer more up-to-date, independent and uncensored news. A strong correlation is inferred between dissatisfaction with traditional media, especially print newspapers, and avoidance motivation. This connotes growing positioning of online newspapers as substitutes for traditional media, especially print newspapers, in Zambia.

²⁹ “The term **netizen** is a portmanteau of the words Internet and citizen. It is defined as an entity or person actively involved in online communities and a user of the Internet, especially an avid one. The term can also imply an interest in improving the Internet, especially in regard to open access and free speech.”(www.definitions.net/definition/netizen, accessed 10 September 2019)

Key words: Readership. Social Motivation. Gratification. Online newspapers. Zambia.

Introduction

PRINT newspapers, arguably the oldest of the contemporary mass media, have been slipping from their prominent place in the lifestyles of readers in the U.S. and across the rest of the world since the mid-1980s (Mings, 1999; Boczkowski, 2004). The dramatic decline is measured by a number of indicators. Of particular note is reader frequency, readers of more than one newspaper and household penetration (Bogort, 1989 quoted by Mings, 1999). The reduction in numbers of newspapers per household per day from 1.3 immediately after World War 2 to less than 0.7 in 1990 was noted (Mings, 1999). Circulation dropped from 62.3 million in 1990 to 60.7 million and more than 150 daily newspapers had folded in the U.S. alone by 1990 (Mings, 1999:10).

Scholars also postulate that newspapers were not keeping pace with the growth in population across the world, suggesting that the unique audiences of these mass media had aged and that the young were not interested in them. 'For millions of Americans, especially the young ones, the newspapers have never played a significant role' (Mings, 1999:12). Other major reasons advanced for the decline of print newspapers are rising costs of distribution and production – the latter due mainly to increased cost of newsprint – and a decline in revenue as advertisers resorted to strategies that were 'more focused' or offered 'total penetration possibilities', like direct mail (Bogort 1989 in Mings 1999:13). The impact of cable television on ink-on-paper advertising is also noted (Glaberson, 1993 quoted by Mings 1999).

Against this background and with the advent of the world-wide Web as a consumer-oriented mass medium, moving to the online genre attracted huge interest among publishers and editors alike (Deuze, 2001;2002; 2003; Boczkowski, 2004). They viewed this development as a strategy to cut costs and retain and expand the base audiences for print newspapers (Mings 1999). Scholars observed a dizzying pace of transition to online. As one scholar noted, '100 commercial newspapers existed online, worldwide, at the beginning of 1995, a number that grew to 750 by the beginning of 1996, to 1,115 by May 1996, and to 1,587 by December 1996' (Outing 1996 quoted by Mings 1999:16).

The perceived benefits of moving online, besides avoiding high production and distribution costs, were first, that it was a way to recapture the young readers who had grown up in the computer era and migrated online, and second, online newspapers offered the functionality of interactivity, hyper-textuality and hyperlinks (Deuze, 2002), all of which were viewed as attractive to readers. Regarding interactivity, Mings (1999:20) states that 'successful online papers will be those that allow for "talk back" features, allowing the audience to voice their opinions of newspaper coverage'.

The archival properties of online newspapers would also make it easier for readers to access supplementary information, such as audio and video recordings, speeches, documents and transcripts, all of which facilitate 'annotated journalism'. The online newspapers would also offer instant news updates and allow the readers to circumvent the space restrictions associated with traditional media. Consequently, they would give the audiences greater control of the communication process, which was hitherto a preserve of the editors and producers.

All these advantages of the Internet in general, and the online newspapers in particular, were perceived to be what audiences really desired. Yet despite the dizzying pace with which the new newspaper technology was being adopted, not much has been devoted to understanding the audience response to the claimed advantages of moving online. As Mings (1999:21) states,

for such claims to be valid – and any related hopes for newspapers' economic viability to be realized -- an understanding of the audience is necessary. Such an understanding would encompass what that audience looks for in an online paper, and what they do with what they find.

It is against this background that the facets of the study presented in this chapter were introduced. They were premised on the need to fill discernible gaps in empirical data on how Zambian mass media audiences have responded to the global trend of moving to online newspapers. The study answers the following research questions:

1. What is the reach and readership of online newspapers among Zambian readers?
2. Who accesses and reads online newspapers and with what level of intensity?

3. What motivates readers to turn to online newspapers (gratifications sought) and for what uses?
4. To what extent are the readers' motivations or gratifications sought from online newspapers met (or correlate with the gratifications obtained)?

Summary literature review

Reach and readership of online newspapers

'Reach' of mass media is defined as 'the total number of households that will be exposed to the message through a particular media vehicle over a set period of time or it is the measure of the number of different audience members exposed at least once to a media vehicle in a given period of time'.³⁰ It is expressed as a percentage of the total population or households. Reach is of interest to the senders of messages as it is also a measure of the likelihood of optimal exposure to the messages of a particular medium.

The limited empirical studies on reach and readership of online newspapers conducted since the rise of online news distribution in the mid-nineties confirm an upswing in reliance on online sources for news and information in Africa and globally. For instance, a study in 2010 by Uwosomah (2010) concluded that readership of online newspapers was low and that Nigerian online newspapers were meant for Nigerians living in the diaspora. Okonofua (2012) examined the level of exposure to online newspapers and satisfaction from these media among Internet subscribers using cyber cafés in north-western Nigeria. His findings revealed that 50% of the respondents read online newspapers frequently, 7.5% seldom. Mathew (2013) investigated the readership of online newspapers in north-eastern Nigeria and questioned whether the introduction of the Internet had brought changes in the way people communicated around the world. They were prompted to undertake the study by the growing migration from traditional to online publishing among many Nigerian newspapers, in line with the global trend. At the time there were 25 online newspapers in

³⁰ www.slideshare.net/Laisekhadir/reach-frequency-impact, accessed 10 August 2017

Nigeria. Almost eight in 10 respondents said they read online newspapers, most of them daily.

Further afield, in a 2014 study by Greenslade 41% of British audiences said they accessed news online, up from 32% a year earlier. The study noted a fall in audiences of traditional media, though television still remained the main source of news for 78% of audiences in 2013 and 75% in 2014 (Greenslade, 2014). Readership of online newspapers inched ahead of newsprint newspapers (stagnant at 40% over the two-year period) and radio, which was favoured by 36% listeners (it was 35% in 2013). A similar pattern of rapidly rising online news consumption was repeatedly observed in the U.S. The Pew Research Center (2015) reported that by 2015, one in every three Americans (about 30%) were getting their news online. The study noted that a decade before, 'just one in fifty Americans got the news with some regularity from what was then a brand-new source – the Internet.'³¹ Online news had evolved primarily into a supplementary news source for traditional media, the study observed.

Demographics of readers

The demographics³² of the audiences of a media genre or news media organisation has been a significant branch of research in the history of the mass media. The question of who is actually reached and reads the stand-alone online newspapers is an important aspect of contextualising and understanding these new media in contemporary society. It is an area of growing interest not only to scholars but also to publishers and advertisers. Despite the interest, few empirical studies have gone as far as analysing the demographics of readers of online newspapers, especially in Africa. This gap was the major motivation for the interest in the topic in the present study. The initial focus of the studies in this area was comparing news preferences between readers of traditional print newspapers and

³¹ www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/state-of-the-news-media-2016/, accessed 23 September 2016.

³² 'Demographics' is defined as the 'socioeconomic characteristics of a population expressed statistically, such as age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of a family, average age at marriage ...' (www.businessdictionary.com/definition/demographic-factors.html), accessed 24 August 2018).

their online versions. Over the years, interest in this area has shifted to stand-alone newspapers.

Available data from the maiden studies found differences between readers and reader preferences of online and print newspapers (Skogerbo and Winsvold 2011; de Waal and Schoenbach, 2010; van der Wurff et al, 2008). “Recent research has established that online and printed newspapers have different characteristics in terms of accessibility, price, digital competence and media habits, and attract audience groups divided by age, gender, education and income” (Skogerbo and Winsvold 2011:216 quoting de Waal and Schoenbach, 2010). In their 1999 study, Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) analysed the factors affecting preferences between online and print newspapers. They concluded that age and frequency of Web use were relevant to the analysis. However, education and gender were not among the factors. The study found that younger people (aged 18-29) and frequent Web users were more likely to read online formats. These results were in conformity with a 1997 study by Chyi and Lasorsa of six major American newspapers. They observed that among the overlap readers (those who read both versions of the six newspapers), an overwhelming majority (ranging from 61% to 77%) preferred the print version, ‘regardless of the brand, accessibility, price and content’ (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002:102). They also concluded that disparities in access to information and communication technologies (ICT) among different groups of readers were a major factor in determining who reads online newspapers.

Most studies concluded that readers of stand-alone online newspapers are mainly young, educated, well-to-do, politically active and male. Mings (1997 quoting Dalglish, 1992; Erlindson 1995; and Katz, 1994) posits that young readers, those with high incomes and males were more likely to be attracted to online newspapers. Similarly, a nationwide study in the United Kingdom (Greenslade, 2014), concluded that younger readers (aged 16-24) were the majority of readers of online newspapers. Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011) concluded that, on average, the most frequent online readers were younger, richer, more educated, more politically active and more often male. Dual readership was also associated with socio-economic status. ‘The higher the person’s socio-economic status, the higher was the probability that they read both the online and printed newspaper’ Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011:222). Consensus among scholars that the young are the main readers of

online newspapers validates the predictions of earlier researchers that moving newspapers online was seen as a strategic move to both retain and expand a base audience of print newspaper readers (Mings, 1997). The earlier assumptions about the audience are summarised as follows:

First, moving newspapers online might recapture young readers who have fallen away from the habit of reading hard-copy papers (Bogart, 1989; Denton 1993; Katz 1994; Thurlow and Milo 1993), and yet may be attracted to online services. Dalglish (1992) notes that younger readers 'have grown up with computers and video games' (p. 34); perhaps they'll grow into the newspaper habit, online. Erlindson (1995) observes that 'Online newspapers are the newspapers [sic] way of reaching at a younger audience (Mings (1997:4)

Evidence of interest in online newspapers by politically active individuals is overwhelming as summarised by Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011:222):

Both the 2005 and 2009 interviews with politicians confirmed the impression that the politically active practised double readership: they preferred the printed newspaper but they were frequent online readers, too. Several politicians commented that the online newspaper was a complementary source of information.

Johnson and Kaye (2000) observed that frequent Internet users were highly knowledgeable about politics and that Web users were politically interested and active, reported high levels of political efficacy and were likely to vote and more likely to seek information from the media than the general public. The politically motivated, they stated, were more likely to turn to the Internet and online newspapers specifically for 'more in-depth information than television can provide' Johnson and Kaye (2000:867). An exploratory study, which found that governance actors in Zambia were frequent readers of the four main online newspapers (Mbozi, 2014) bears out their findings. The governance actors in the study included political party representatives, permanent secretaries, members of parliament, editors of main local newspapers and NGO representatives. Some African researchers concluded that online newspapers were mainly read by Africans in the diaspora (Chari, 2009; Uwosomah, 2010). Their conclusions were, however, not supported by empirical data.

Motivations for reading online newspapers

³³ Motivations for reading online newspapers are a matter of keen interest to researchers. Of particular relevance to this study are 'intrinsic motivation' and 'push motivation'. The first involves the 'desire to seek out new things and new challenges, to analyse one's capacity, to observe and to gain knowledge. It is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on external pressures or a desire for reward'.³⁴ Push motivation, on the other hand, is that whereby 'people push themselves towards their goals or to achieve something, such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure, and social interaction'.³⁵ The analysis of motivations for reading online newspapers involves a search for the intrinsic or internal needs that drive the readers to seek these media or their contents, or a search for the extrinsic factors that make them to want to expose themselves to these media, for instance their functional features or general attractiveness.

The focus of this chapter is the social motivations, which encompass a range of opportunities for forming and deepening social ties (Mings, 1997). Social motivation is one of the three types of motivations for turning to the mass media (the focus of chapter 3). It resulted from the re-categorisation of the gratifications sought from the mass media after the emergence of the Internet. The other two are 'content' and 'process' motivations (the focus of chapters 7 and 8 respectively). This study has adopted the eight 'social' motivations or gratifications sought from the mass media and examines whether these apply to Zambian online newspaper consumers. The eight motivations are fully explained in chapter 3 and summarised in Table 6.1 below.

³³ 'Motivation is 'a theoretical construct used to explain behaviour. It represents the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behaviour, or what causes a person to want to repeat a behaviour and vice versa' (www.basicknowledge101.com/pdf/control/Motivation.pdf).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Table 6.1 : Summary of social motivations.

Source: Composed by the author from literature review

Motivation	Anticipated benefits
Information and news seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To strengthen my information, knowledge and understanding of what is happening in Zambia, around the world and about other people and place.• To strengthen my contacts with family, friends and the world. To 'talk' to other readers and as a way to learn about other people's opinions.
Entertainment	To have fun and to cheer me up
Personal integrative needs (prestige)	To strengthen my personal standing/status in society, credibility, stability and confidence.
Socialisation	To strengthen my contacts with family, friends and the world. To 'talk' to other readers and as a way to learn about other people's opinions.
Tension release/escape	For escape and diversion from routines, work, school and boring moments or things.
Avoidance	To avoid traditional print newspapers and other traditional media because they do not give enough information on issues I am interested in and they include unpleasant information.
Utility	Perceived direct usefulness in matters such as forming opinions and making plans and decisions, for instance on whom to vote for.
Excitement	For personal adverts and exploring exciting news and features and stimulating information.

Past studies on social motivations

Studies in the 1990s focused on analysing and comparing what readers sought between online and print newspapers. Mings (1997) found that while readers generally sought to fulfil different needs, some said they sought and gained utility gratifications from both print and online newspapers.

Some audience members' gratifications sought and obtained from print newspapers do seem to carry over into audience expectations (as reflected in survey measures of gratifications sought) and uses (as reflected in a time-per-subject breakdown of the online viewing activity) of online newspapers (Mings, 1997:14).

Mings (1997) further concluded that the expressed expectations or gratifications sought did affect the online activity of the readers: 'gratifications sought by the online newspaper audience are factors in their online viewing activity'. In their survey of college students, Mueller and Kamerer (1995 in Chyi and Sylvie 2009:3) concluded that 'users preferred electronic newspapers for global news and traditional newspapers for local news'. On the other hand, Mings (1997) found a similarity in the content sought by audiences in online and mainstream media. However, this seems to have changed over time, especially with the invention of new social media apps such as Facebook and Twitter that have since converged with online news sites.

More recent studies, including in Africa, suggest a wide range of motivations for accessing and reading online newspapers. According to available data, the motivations for reading range from a need for a certain type of information to attractions from functional features of online newspapers and the Internet generally (albeit with limited focus on this aspect). The data also hint at altering needs and motivations over the years. In terms of social motivations, surveillance (information seeking) has been observed as the main motivation (Mings 1997; Hassan et al., 2015). In their survey of college students, Mueller and Kamerer (1995 in Chyi and Sylvie, 2009:3) concluded that 'users preferred electronic newspapers for global news and traditional newspapers for local news'. Dissatisfaction with traditional mainstream media ('avoidance' motivation) was observed to be a 'push' factor from traditional to online newspapers (Gunter et al 2009; Mbozi 2014). Gunter et al (2009:192) concluded: "It has been argued that more people are turning not just to the Internet, but to blogs because they are losing faith in mainstream news media."

The value of news – the quest for more timely news updates, 'quicker' news and 'to follow the news better' – has also been a subject of research, especially among African audiences (Hassan, et al 2015; Okonofua 2012). In a 2013 study by Mathew et al, 53% of the respondents said they read online newspapers because they were more current. Okonofua

(2012) found that majority of the respondents were motivated to read online newspapers because they were up to date. Hassan et al (2015) found that 77% of the readers agreed that they read the online version of a newspaper because it offered more timely news updates.

The attractions of functional features of online newspapers and the Internet generally were widely noted (Mueller and Kamerer 1995 in Chyi and Sylvie 2009; Hassan et al 2015; Abdurraheem et al 2012). The last-named found that majority of readers of online newspapers said they were motivated by Internet access. In a survey in north-western Nigeria by Hassan et al (2015), 71% of readers in a sample of 330 said that access to the Internet motivated them to read online versions of newspapers; 64% said they read an online version of newspapers because it allowed them to follow the news better. In contrast, Okonofua (2012) found that only 17% of the readers were motivated to read online newspapers because it was easy to read and quick to use.

The cost of print newspapers was cited as a factor by readers in eastern Nigeria (Mathew et al, 2013). Other researchers have observed that motivations for accessing the Internet were social or cultural and mental or psychological (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2013). An early social explanation was that 'the Internet does not have appeal for low-income and low-educated people' (Katz and Rice, 2002:93). A combination of qualitative and survey studies among local communities and cultural groups in the U.S. found that accessing the Internet was initially associated with traditional masculine culture (rejecting computer work as something that is not 'cool' and 'something girls do') and with minority and working-class lifestyles (Stanley, 2003; Rojas et al, 2004). By 2010 the picture had changed. 'The low-educated people have caught up to the other groups and sometimes even spend more time on the Internet overall than highly educated people' (van Deursen and van Dijk 2013). The second hypothesis for the present study thus reads, *The majority of Zambian readers turn to online newspapers to gratify their need for up-to-date, detailed and uncensored news and information (surveillance motivation).*

To summarise, available data thus far suggest that the main readers of online newspapers are generally younger, educated, well-to-do and politically active. Most readership studies

point to increasing readership of online newspapers over the years and a limited range of motivations for turning to them. However, the studies reveal the following inadequacies:

- Limited sample sizes and sample populations, which inhibited the generalizability of the results.
- Limited scope of needs or motivations investigated, especially around the technology itself (or process gratification); none of the studies undertook assessment of intensity of reading online newspapers.
- The lack of data on the topic about Zambia and southern Africa

Results

Access to media and online newspapers: comparative analysis

One of the areas of interest for the study is the extent of access to stand-alone online newspapers compared to other mass media types and the intensity of exposure. Data were elicited in answer to RQ1: *What is the reach and readership of online newspapers among Zambian readers?* Facebook commanded the greatest reach (88%) among respondents, followed by television (81%), stand-alone online newspapers (63%), radio (61%) and online versions of print newspapers (43%). Print newspapers were accessed by 39% of respondents. Twitter had the least access (9%). Stand-alone online newspapers were accessed by 335 respondents.³⁶

³⁶ This was the number of respondents who reported that they read online newspapers and therefore progressed to the second part of the interview, which focused on their experience with and assessment of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers.

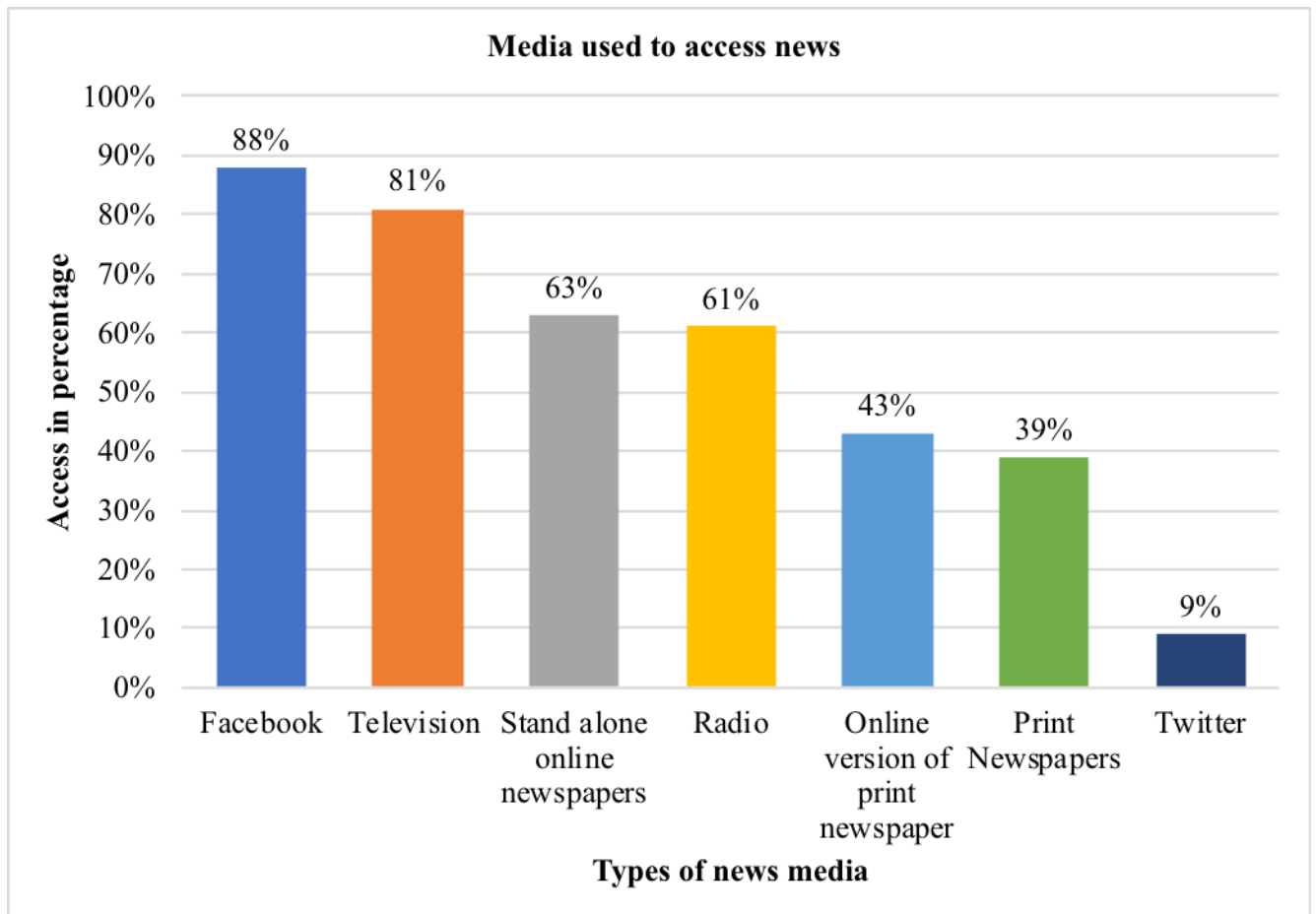


Figure 6.1 : Comparison of access between online newspapers and other mass media.
Source: Author's field data

The study investigated probable relationships between respondents' profiles and access to online newspapers in answering the first part of Research Question (RQ) 2: *Who accesses and reads online newspapers and with what level of intensity?* As seen in Table 6.2 below, there is no relationship between sex and access to stand-alone online newspapers ($P=0.215$). However, age and education both had significant markers ($p=0.031$ and $p=0.001$ respectively). Respondents aged 18 to 35 who accessed and read stand-alone online newspapers were clearly in the majority – 83.6% compared with 9.3% aged 36-45 and the 4.5% who were older. There were fewer respondents who accessed stand-alone newspapers among those who had a primary and secondary school education than those who did not. Respondents with a tertiary education who read online newspapers far exceeded those who had not. For instance, there were three times as many readers of online newspapers among holders of degrees than non-readers.

Table 6.2 : Sex, age and education and access to online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

Status	Accessed online stand-alone				Statistics
	No		Yes		p
	n	%	n	%	
Sex					0.215
Male	98	49.0%	184	55%	
Female	102	51.0%	151	45%	
Age					0.031
18-35	155	77.5%	289	86.3%	
36-45	32	16.0%	31	9.3%	
>45	13	6.5%	15	4.5%	
Education					0.001
Primary	15	7.5%	2	0.6%	
Secondary	139	69.5%	176	52.5%	
College certificate	14	7.0%	29	8.7%	
College diploma	20	10.0%	67	20.0%	
Degree	12	6.0%	61	18.2%	

Table 6.3 shows that income status and location both had a bearing on access to stand-alone online newspapers ($p=0.01$ and $p=0.015$ respectively). There were more urban than rural respondents who were readers. Among respondents earning less than K50,000 (\$4,500), there were fewer readers than non-readers and among those earning more than K50,000, readers were in the majority. Where the respondents lived – whether in high-, middle-, low-density areas – did not have a significant bearing on access to online newspapers ($p=0.181$).

Table 6.3 : Socio-economic status and access to online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

Status	Accessed online newspapers				Statistics
	No		Yes		p
	n	%	n	%	
Income					0.001
Below K50,000	169	84.5%	235	70.1%	
50,000 -	19	9.5%	74	22.1%	
100,000 -	10	5.0%	21	6.3%	
Above 250,000	2	1.0%	5	1.5%	
Location					0.015
Urban	140	70.0%	267	79.7%	
Rural	60	30.0%	68	20.3%	
Residence					0.181
Low density	28	14.0%	63	18.8%	
High density	60	30.0%	115	34.3%	
Rural	52	26.0%	67	20.0%	
Middle density	60	30.0%	90	26.9%	

The results also show a strong inverse strong relationship between political participation and readership of online newspapers ($P=0.000^{***}$ for both registered voters and those who voted in the 2016 general elections). There were fewer readers of stand-alone online newspapers than non-readers among both registered voters and those who voted during

the 2016 general elections. The devices used to access the Internet have a bearing on access to and readership of online newspapers, as seen in Table 6.4. Use of office computer, home computer and mobile phone all have a positive relationship ($p < 0.001$, $p = 0.001$ and $p = 0.017$ respectively). Respondents who used office and home computers to access the Internet were significantly less likely to read online newspapers. Among respondents who used mobile phones to surf the Internet, those who accessed and read online newspapers numbered far in excess of non-readers. The use of cyber cafes was found to bear no relationship with accessing stand-alone online newspapers ($p = 0.338$).

Table 6.4 : Devices used to access Internet and access online newspapers

Source: Author's field data

	Accessed stand-alone online				Statistics	
	No		Yes			
	n	%	n	%		
Office computer					<0.001	
No	191	95.5	283	84.5		
Yes	9	4.5%	52	15.5		
Home computer					0.001	
No	185	92.5	272	81.2		
Yes	15	7.5%	63	18.8		
Mobile phone					0.017	
No	10	5.0%	4	1.2%		
Yes	190	95.0	331	98.8		
Internet café					0.338	
No	187	93.5	304	90.7		
Yes	13	6.5%	31	9.3%		

Frequent use of Internet weekly and daily were found to have a positive bearing on readership of online newspapers ($p = 0.000^{***}$ and $p = 0.004^{***}$ respectively). Most of the respondents who went on the Net once a day were readers of online newspapers. For readers who accessed the Net less frequently, readers were in the minority. Most 'higher surfers' (those who went online between five and seven days a week) and 'medium surfers' (three to four days a week) accessed and read online newspapers. Years of experience on the Net bore no relationship to access and readership of online newspapers ($p = 0.248$).

Table 6.5 : Frequency of exposure to the Internet and access to online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

Independent variable	Category	Yes	No	p-value
Use per day	Once	166 (50%)	71 (36%)	0.004***
	Twice	29 (9%)	34 (17%)	
	Three times	53 (16%)	32 (16%)	
	More than 4 times	84 (25%)	59 (30%)	
Use per week	Low	5 (2%)	67 (34%)	0.000***
	Medium	57 (17%)	24 (12%)	
	High	271 (81%)	105 (54%)	
No. of years using	< 2 years	55 (16%)	62 (31%)	0.248
	2-5 years	153 (46%)	101 (51%)	
	6-10 years	100 (30%)	28 (14%)	
	> 10 years	27 (8%)	9 (4%)	

In terms of mode of accessing the Internet, a relationship is observed with access via dongle or modem ($p=0.044$) and via WiFi ($p=0.000^{***}$). Among respondents using a dongle or modem, readers of online newspapers were about four times more than non-readers. The relationships with WiFi is converse: non-readers are in the majority. A very strong relationship is also observed between perceived Internet skills and access to and readership of online newspapers; readers who rated their skills as 'good' and 'very good' appeared to be by far higher visitors and presumably readers of online newspapers. On the contrary, among the respondents who perceive their skills as 'moderate' "poor" or "very poor", the majority are non-readers of online newspapers.

Table 6.6 : Internet access and skills and access to online newspapers

Author's field data

Independent variable	Category	Yes	No	p-value
Internet access via	Data bundles	327 (63%)	192 (37%)	0.117
	Dongle/modem	31 (78%)	9 (22%)	0.044***
	Router	18 (75%)	6 (25%)	0.203
	Wi-Fi	25 (13%)	114 (34%)	0.000***
	Other	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	0.025***
Internet skills	Very good	98 (30%)	14 (7%)	0.000***
	Good	150 (46%)	62 (31%)	
	Moderate	75 (23%)	87 (44%)	
	Poor	5 (2%)	32 (16%)	
	Very poor	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	

Intensity of exposure to mass media and online newspapers: comparative analysis

The intensity of exposure or attention was calculated as the number of days in a week that the respondents spent on each media type and the frequency of exposure to the medium for breaking news. Respondents were asked to record the number days (between one and seven) that they accessed and spent time on each medium. The days were computed to derive mean scores. For weekly exposure, it was found that television was the most intensely accessed in a week, with a mean score of 5.90 (just under six days a week) with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.70. Facebook was second with a mean score of 5.59 (SD 1.83), followed by stand-alone online newspapers with a mean score of 5.01 (SD 1.84) and radio with a mean score of 4.92 (SD 2.09). Access to Twitter was ranked fifth (4.44, SD 2.242), followed by online versions of print newspapers (4.35, SD 1.842), and the least accessed mass media type was print newspapers (3.02, SD 1.86).

Table 6.7 : Weekly exposure to online newspapers and other mass media (mean number of days). Source: Author's field data

	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Number of days accessed television in a week	5.90	1.70	1	7
Number of days accessed Facebook in a week	5.59	1.83	1	7
Number of days accessed stand-alone online newspapers in a	5.01	1.84	1	7
Number of days accessed radio in a week	4.92	2.08	1	7
Number of days accessed Twitter in a week	4.44	2.24	1	7
Number of days accessed online version of print newspapers in a	4.35	1.84	1	7
Number of days accessed print newspaper in a week	3.02	1.85	1	7

The intensity of exposure to the various media types was also measured for the frequency with which the respondents turned to each media type for breaking news.³⁷ As seen in Figure 2, 23% of respondents tuned to radio 'all the time' and 32% only 'sometimes'. Twenty-six per cent 'rarely' turned to radio for breaking news. For television, 53% watched it 'all the time' for breaking news, 29% 'sometimes' and 12% 'rarely'. Only 11% referred to print newspapers for breaking news 'all the time', 30% 'sometimes' and 40% 'rarely'. A slightly higher percentage of readers (22%) read online versions of print newspapers for breaking news 'all the time'; 29% did so 'sometimes' and 14% 'rarely'.

Forty percent of the respondents read stand-alone online newspapers for breaking news 'all the time', 30% 'sometimes' and 7% 'rarely'. Among Facebook users, 66% turned to the platform 'all the time' for breaking news, 23% 'sometimes' and 5% 'rarely'. Only 4% of the Twitter users said they visited it 'all the time' for breaking news, 7% 'sometimes' and 8% 'rarely'. Eight in 10 respondents never used the platform at all. Four percent of respondents referred to 'other people' as sources of breaking news 'all the time', 62% 'sometimes' and 21% 'rarely'. Four per cent (4%) said they turned to 'other sources' (not provided for among the options) 'all the time' and 32% 'sometimes'.

³⁷The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines breaking news as 'newly received information about an event that is currently occurring or developing'.

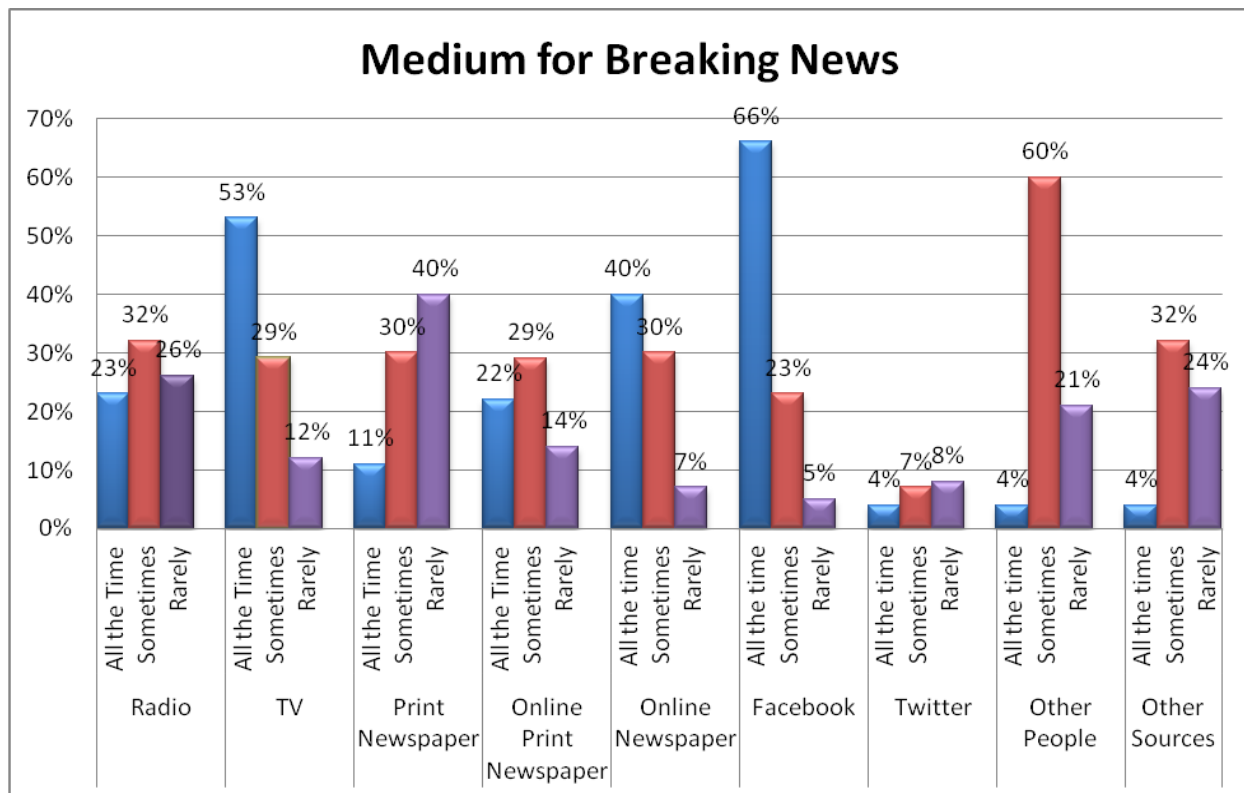


Figure 6.2 : Frequency with which respondents turned to online newspapers and other news media for breaking news. Source, Author's field data

Favourite stand-alone online newspaper

There were 335 respondents who declared themselves readers of stand-alone online newspapers and they progressed to the second part of the interview. They were asked about their favourite online newspaper through an open-ended question. *Zambian Watchdog* came out as the favourite, chosen by 32% of the respondents. It was followed by *Mwebantu* (30%), *Lusaka Times* (13%) and *Tumfweko* (10%). *Zambian Intelligence* was the least popular. Eighty-four percent had come to know about the stand-alone online newspaper through friends, 73% through Facebook links to the site, 54% through searching the Internet, 6% through its Twitter page and 1% through other means.

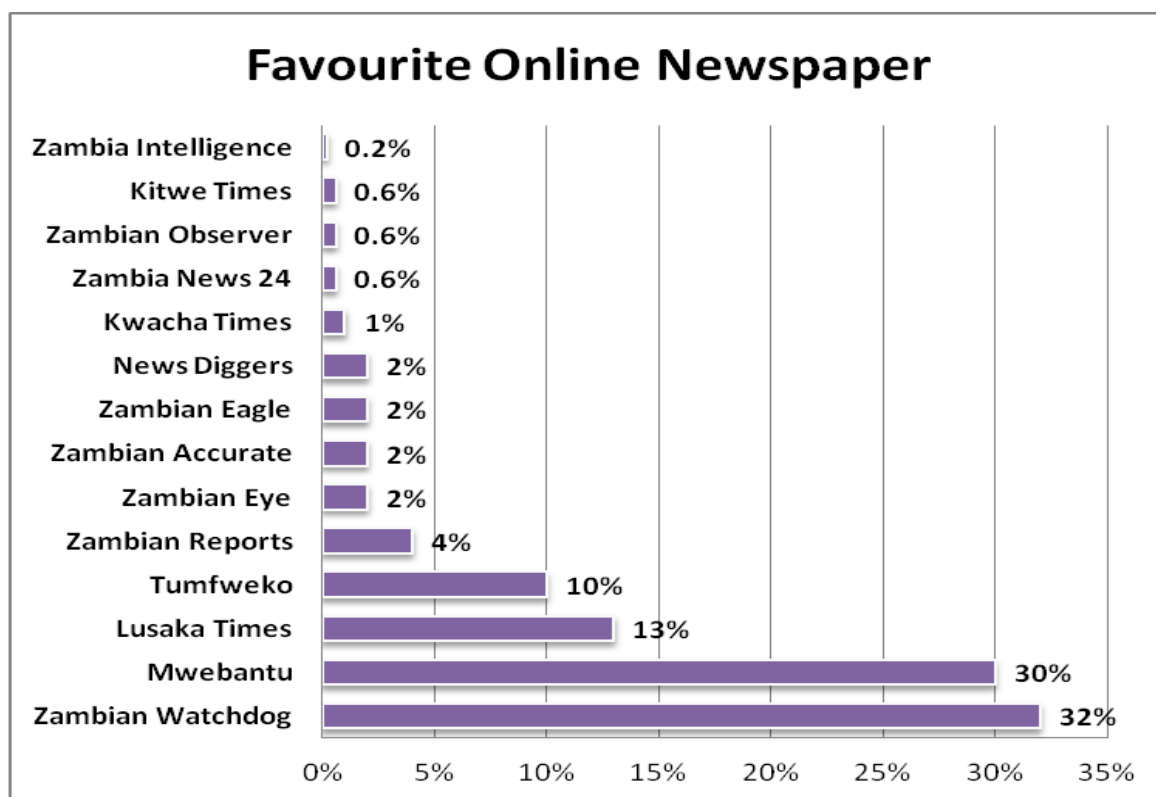


Figure 6.3 : Favourite Zambian stand-alone online newspaper. Source: Author's field data

Asked why a particular online newspaper was their favourite, 46% cited the variety of views, 42% 'truthfulness and accuracy', 26% 'more choices for news', 19% for '24/7 updates', 4% 'in-depth background information' and another 4% 'easy access'. Sixty-two percent of respondents accessed their favourite online newspaper through its Facebook page, 33% through its website, 4% through the Twitter links and less than 1% through other platforms.

Readers' experience with online newspapers and intensity of reading

Seventy-one percent of the respondents had been reading their favourite online newspaper for between two and five years and 26% for up to two years. Only 12 (4%) of the 335 cited between six and 10 years. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were high-intensity readers (5-7 days a week), followed by 29% moderate readers (3-4 days a week) and 8% least intense readers (1-2 days a week).

As table 6.8 shows, respondents who spent the most time on average reading online newspapers in their demographic categories were: women (4.75 days a week compared to 4.4 days for men); respondents aged 26 to 35 compared to those younger and older; those with tertiary education compared to school leavers (5.25 days on average for holders of degrees and 4.90 for college graduates); and top income earners (3.5 days); urban-based readers (4,77 days) compared to rural respondents (4,02 days); those who voted in the 2016 general elections (4.79 days) compared to registered voters (4.73 days).

The mean number of days spent reading online newspapers increased in tandem with number of years that respondents had been using the Internet: 5.48 days a week for those with more than 10 years compared to 4.22 days for those with less than two years. Respondents who accessed the Internet via a router spent an average of six days reading online newspapers compared to users of data bundles, modems and Wi-Fi. Those who rated their Internet skills as 'very good' spent an average of 5.3 days a week compared to respondents who cited 'good' skills (4.54 days) 'moderate' (3.93 days) and 'poor'(2.8 days).

Table 6.8 : Mean number of days per week reading favourite stand-alone online

Source: Author's field data

Independent variable	Category	Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency
Sex	Female	4.75	1.93	151
	Male	4.43	1.76	126
Age category	18-25	4.54	1.88	238
	26-35	5.07	1.54	28
	36-45	4.73	1.95	11
Education	Primary	4	0	1
	Secondary	4.18	1.88	141
	Certificate/diploma	4.90	1.85	78
	University degree	5.25	1.57	57
Income (in kwacha)	<50,000	3.17	9.87	195
	50,000-100,000	2.38	1.37	61
	100,000-250, 000	1.84	1.12	78
	>250,000	3.5	2.12	57
Location	Urban	4.77	1.85	216
	Rural	4.02	1.76	61
Voted in 2016	Yes	4.79	1.80	189
	No	4.19	1.92	88
Registered voter	Yes	4.73	1.79	189
	No	4	2.06	49
Use per day	Once	5.22	1.69	136
	Twice	3.85	1.62	26
	Three times	3.61	1.44	46
	More than 4 times	4.38	2.1	66
Use per week	Low	2.5	0.7	2
	Medium	4.17	1.58	48
	High	4.73	1.89	225
No of years using Internet	< 2 years	4.22	1.67	46
	2-5 years	4.26	1.81	126
	6-10 years	5.16	1.89	82
	>10 years	5.48	1.66	21
Internet access via	Data bundles	4.62	1.85	274
	Dongle/modem	5.39	1.99	28
	Router	6.06	1.88	16
	Wi-Fi	5.35	1.82	103
Internet skills	Very good	5.33	1.65	84

	Good	4.54	1.88	124
	Moderate	3.93	1.63	59
	Poor	2.8	3.11	5

Social motivations for reading online newspapers

On a scale of 1 to 5, information and news-seeking (or surveillance) was the reason that most respondents cited for reading online newspapers, with a mean score of 3.901, followed by para-social or socialisation interaction (mean 3.271) and avoidance (mean 2.352) (table 10). Personal integrative needs (prestige) and utility were the least cited reasons (mean 1.557 and 1.416 respectively). With regard to gratification obtained, a similar pattern was observed for gratification sought: information and news seeking scored the highest with a mean score of 3.901, followed socialisation interaction (3.27) and avoidance (2.35). Utility was the least gratifying with a mean score of 1.42.

Table 6.9 : Readers' motivations for and gratification from online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

Anticipated benefit	Reason for use (mean score)	Level of satisfaction (mean score)
Information and news seeking	3.901	3.901
Socialisation/para-social interaction	3.271	3.27
Avoidance	2.352	2.35
Entertainment/relaxation	1.997	2.0
Excitement	1.828	1.83
Tension release/escape	1.804	1.8
Personal integrative needs (prestige)	1.557	1.56
Utility	1.416	1.42

As for news value and experience with Internet, most respondents (64%) said they turned to online newspapers for 'breaking and up-to-date news', 62% for adverts, 55% for 'more independent news', 46% for 'detailed news', 38% 'due to Internet access' and another 38% for the interactive features offered by the online newspapers. Thirty-five percent cited 'credibility of the news', 34% 'uncensored news', 30% 'because they are cheaper than print' and 11% 'posting personalised comments'.

Social motivations and demographics of the readers

The stepwise regression analysis showed that neither of the two most popular motivations – ‘information news seeking’/cognitive or ‘surveillance’ and ‘interaction’ or ‘socialisation’ – was unique to any particular group of respondents. The analysis did not pick up any relationship between these two dependent variables and the 10 independent variables. However, a relationship was found between ‘utility’ motivation and experience with the Internet and education. Respondents who had been accessing the Internet for less than two years were 6.406 odds (Coef = 1.857; $p=0.012$) likely to be reading online newspapers for ‘utility’.³⁸ Those with a secondary schooling as the highest level of education were 0.4 odds (Coef = -0.890; $p=0.042$) less likely to be reading online newspapers specifically for utility. Similarly, college graduates were 0.740 odds (Coef = -0.302; $p=0.050$) less likely to turn to online newspapers for utility.

As for the ‘excitement’ motivation, the results manifested positive relationships with age, voting in the 2016 general elections and number of years reading an online newspaper. Younger respondents (aged 18-25 years) were 6.511 odds (Coef = 1.873; $p=0.013$) more likely to turn to online newspapers specifically for ‘excitement’. Respondents who voted during the 2016 general elections were 2.5 odds (Coef = 0.917; $p=0.017$) likely to turn to online newspapers for entertainment. The results further reveal that for every increase of 0.29 years in reading an online newspaper the respondents’ motivation for ‘entertainment’ went up by 1.3 on a ranking of 1 to 5.

The regression matrix for the ‘entertainment/relaxation’ motivation (Appendix 5) shows the following relationships:

- Respondents aged 18-35 years were 4.795 odds (Coef=1.568; $p=0.047$) and those aged 36-45 years were 8.676 odds (Coef=2.161; $p=0.022$) likely to turn to online newspapers for entertainment/relaxation.

³⁸ “An odds ratio (OR) is a measure of association between an exposure and an outcome. The OR represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the *odds* of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure.” (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2938757, accessed 12 September 2019)

- Urban-based respondents were 2.545 odds (Coef=0.934; p=0.020) likely
- Voters in the 2016 general elections were 2.228 odds (Coef=0.801; p=0.047) likely.
- Newest Internet users – those who have been accessing the Internet for less than two years - were 6.884 odds (Coef =1.929; p=0.011) likely.
- As the years of reading online newspaper go up by one year, the likelihood that the respondent would read online newspapers for relaxation/entertainment went up by 1.315 odds (Coef = 0.274; p=0.026).
- Conversely, college certificates holders were 0.233 odds (Coef= -1.458; p=0.012) less likely to be motivated by relaxation/entertainment.

Who is more likely to turn to online newspapers for ‘diversion from routines, work, school and boring moments or things’ (‘escape’ motivation)? The results in Appendix 6 show that age and location (urban- or rural-based) had a positive relationship with this motivation. Respondents aged 18-35 years were 4.8 odds likely (Coef=1.564; p=0.040) and those aged 36-45 were 11.811 odds (Coef=2.469; p=0.007) likely to turn to online newspapers for escape. Urban-based respondents were 13.697 odds (Coef=2.617; p=0.001) likely to be motivated by escape. Conversely, college graduates were 0.295 odds (Coef= -1.220; p=0.029) were 2.583 odds less likely to turn to online newspapers for ‘diversion from routines, work, school and boring moments or things’, a similar trend for respondents who went online most frequently – 2.58 odds (Coef=0.949; p=0.001).

A positive relation was found between ‘avoidance’ – motivation ‘to avoid traditional print newspapers and other traditional media because they don't give enough information on issues and they include unpleasant information’ – and income and experience with the Internet (Appendix 7). Respondents earning below K50,000 a year were 22.915 odds (Coef =3.132; p=0.049) likely to read online newspapers for avoidance. Those who had been accessing the Internet for less than two years were 6.125 odds (Coef =1.812; p=0.024) and for 2-5 years 4.443 odds likely (Coef =1.491; p=0.016). Surfing the Internet once a day is also a predictor of avoidance – 2.809 odds (Coef =1.033; p=0.010) likelihood.

A respondent who had been to secondary school was 0.333 odds (Coef = -1.099; p=0.019) less likely to be reading online newspapers specifically for avoidance. As years reading online newspapers increased by one year, the likelihood that the respondents would be reading an online newspaper for 'avoidance' declined by 0.728 odds (Coef = -0.318; p=0.010). As for 'personal integrative'/'prestige' motivation (Appendix 8), a respondent holding a college certificate was 0.197 odds (Coef= -1.625; p=0.012) less likely to turn to online newspapers for this reason. On the other hand, a respondent who had been accessing the Internet for less than two years was 7.226 odds (p=0.012) likely to be reading online newspapers for personal integrative motivation.

Table 6.10 : Summary of reader demographics and motivations for turning to online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

Reader demographics	Specific category	Unique motivations
All	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and news seeking • Socialisation/para-social
Age	18-35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement • Tension release/escape • Entertainment/relaxation
	36-45	Entertainment/relaxation
Income	Earning less than K50,000 (\$4,500)	Avoidance
Location	Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape • Entertainment/relaxation
Years accessing the Internet	Less than 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment/relaxation • Avoidance • Personal integrative needs (prestige)
	2-5 years	Avoidance
Political activity	Voted in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment/relaxation • Excitement
Times surfs Internet	Once a day	Avoidance
	Twice	Avoidance
Years reading online newspapers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment/relaxation • Excitement • Avoidance reduces with increase in years reading

Social motivations: gratification obtained and demographics of readers

This section presents the results of the analysis of the extent of satisfaction among groups of readers (the independent variable) who obtained gratification from all or any of the eight social motivations.

For information and news seeking (Table 6.11), there were inverse relations relating to sex, age and frequency of Internet surfing. For males, gratification obtained from the information and news seeking motivation decreased by 0.120 times; with every annual increase in age, gratification obtained decreased by 0.215 times; and for those who surfed the Internet twice daily, it decreased by 0.209 times. In contrast, as the number of days that respondents read their favourite online newspaper per week increased by one day, gratification obtained from information and news seeking increased by 0.139 times.

Table 6.11 : Demographic factors affecting gratification obtained from information and news seeking function of online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

	Coefficients	95%CI		p
		Lower	Upper	
Sex				
Male	-0.120	-0.427	-0.027	0.026
Female (Ref)				
Age	-0.215	-0.035	-0.012	<0.001
Surfed Internet Twice on Typical Day	-0.209	-1.047	-0.342	<0.001
Days read favorite online newspaper per week	0.139	0.019	0.133	0.009

As for entertainment, readers earning K50,000-K100,000 were 1.189 times likely to be satisfied in regard to this motivation. Among respondents with primary education, satisfaction from reading online newspapers for personal integrative need decreased by

2.399 times. For those with a secondary school education, gratification obtained from reading for personal integrative motivation increased by 0.400 times and for college certificate holders it increased by 1.107 times. For readers who surfed the Internet twice daily, satisfaction in regard to this motivation decreased by 0.620 times.

Respondents who voted during the 2016 general elections were 26 times less likely to be satisfied with reading online newspapers for socialising with other readers. Those who had been accessing the Internet for less than two years were 0.47 times more likely to be satisfied in regard to socialising motivation; respondents who had been accessing the Internet for 2-5 years were marginally more likely at 0.50 times.

The regression model shows that readers who voted during the 2016 general elections were 0.50 times likely to be satisfied with reading online newspapers for 'tension release' or to escape from boring or stressful situations. As frequency of reading their favourite online newspaper increased by one day in a week, gratification that this group of readers obtained from this motivation was likely to go down by 0.10 times. Similarly, as the years reading an online newspaper went up by one year, the likelihood that the respondent would be satisfied in respect of this motivation decreased by 0.10 times.

Respondents who had been accessing the Internet for 6-10 years were 0.6 times less likely to be satisfied with reading online newspapers in respect of utility. If a respondent had been educated only up to secondary school level, the likelihood that he or she would obtain gratification from this motivation decreased by 0.44 times. For college graduates, the likelihood that they read online newspapers in order to obtain gratification from excitement increased by 0.38 times. Conversely, readers earning below K50,000 a year were 0.45 times less likely – and those who surfed the Internet once per day 0.45 times less likely – to be satisfied with reading online newspapers for excitement.

Discussion

The advent of the Internet, digital media and specifically online newspapers was regarded as the panacea to the increasing decline in readership of print newspapers since the 1980s. It was envisioned that the communitarian ethos of the Internet, notably its interactivity features, would enhance readers' attraction to newspapers available online, the

time they spent on them and the satisfaction they derived from them. This study seeks to ascertain the efficacy of this assumption by investigating the extent to which the online newspapers have established themselves among Zambian news consumers. It sought to characterise the readership of these media primarily in terms of the following:

1. Reach and readership of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers
2. Demographics of readers
3. How much time the readers spend on online newspapers (intensity of reading)
4. Readers' social motivations for turning to online newspapers (gratification sought)

Reach and readership of Zambian online newspapers

The findings suggest that 63% of the 335 respondents accessed and read stand-alone online newspapers. Forty per cent of the readers in the sample turned to stand-alone online newspapers for breaking or latest news. A similar trend was observed in the United Kingdom and U.S., where studies concluded that the audience reach of online newspapers ranged between moderate and high, with fast-paced upswings. Studies in eastern Nigeria (Mathew et al, 2013) found that 79% of the respondents read online newspapers, in the UK 41% (Greenslade, 2014) and U.S. 30% (Pew, 2015). In fact, online newspapers are the third most visited mass media genre after television and Facebook, according to the present study.

One of the arguments advanced in this study, that readership of online newspapers in Zambia is on the upswing, is supported by the fact that majority of their readers have been reading their favourite newspapers for a short period (five years or less). However, the reported extent of readership of online newspapers has to be understood in the context of generally low Internet penetration and smartphone ownership in Zambia, especially in rural areas. A 2018 national survey by the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority found that Internet penetration nationally was 12.7% (0.79 Internet users per 100 inhabitants), that only 13.5% of the individuals who owned mobile phones had a smartphone and that 71% of Zambians who accessed the Internet were doing so via mobile phones.

Just over half (52%) of the survey population in this study was found to have access to Internet, with an average high of 65% in urban areas and 27% in rural areas, ranging from 71% for the urban districts of Lusaka and Kafue to 10% for Shibuyunji, a rural district. The stated level of access to online newspapers therefore differs from place to place and should be understood as a percentage of the population with Internet access within a given district. Overall, it can be inferred that extent of access to online newspapers is constrained by the reported 'challenges' to Internet challenges. There are variety of challenges: slow Internet speed, connectivity challenges, cost of Internet bundles, cost of smartphones, poor quality of phones, frequent Internet interruptions, poor telecoms infrastructure and inadequate supply of electricity.

According to the present study, Facebook is the number one medium of choice among the residents of Lusaka Province in respect of the number of respondents accessing the medium, the number of respondents who turn to the medium for breaking news and the intensity of access (measured by the number of days in a week the respondents visited the medium and frequency of daily visits).

The convergence of online newspapers with social media apps, particularly Facebook, was noticeable in this study. Most readers of online newspapers in the sample said they accessed the news site of their choice via its Facebook page. It is therefore plausible that when stating the frequency of their access to Facebook, respondents might have referred to the Facebook pages of online newspapers rather than to their practice of visiting this popular social networking website for other reasons. That suggests that the reach of stand-alone online newspapers could be higher than reported. The results also confirm the increasing influence of new media and social media platforms not only as sources of news and information but also for their rapidly growing substitutability effect on the traditional mass media, especially print newspapers.

The popularity of Facebook should also be understood in the context of the arrangement by which Airtel, the leading Internet service provider in Zambia, offers free access to the

social media site;³⁹ 75% of the respondents in the sample for the study were Airtel subscribers compared to only 25% shared among the other three networks.

Demographics of readers and characterisation of readership

The study found that age, location, education, income and political activity all had an influence on readership of online newspapers, as did years of using the Internet, Internet skills, frequency of use of the Internet and means of accessing the Internet. Gender was not found to be a factor. Among the youngest group in the sample (18-25 years), the majority were observed to be readers of online newspapers, a significant finding given that 15-to-34-year-olds make up 65% of the working population in Zambia (International Youth Federation, 2008). Conversely, the proportion of non-readers was consistently greater among all the older respondents (26 years and above). It can therefore be inferred that readership of online newspapers decreases with age, which is consistent with studies by Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011 quoting de Waal and Schoenbach. 2010), Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) and Mings (1997 quoting Dalglish 1992; Erlindson 1995; Katz 1994).

Urban dwellers are more likely to be readers of online newspapers than rural residents; readership was found to be disproportionately higher among urban residents of Lusaka Province. Income is also a clear predictor of access and readership; among respondents earning less than K50,000 a year, an overwhelming majority did not access or read online newspapers and among all those who earned more than K50,000, readers outnumbered non-readers. This finding is in conformity with studies that confirmed a strong correlation between high income and readership of online newspapers (Mings 1997; Dalglish 1992; Erlindson 1995; Katz 1994; Greenslade 2014).

The study found no relationship between readership of online newspapers and type of residence in Zambia, where 'high-density' denotes a low-income status and high-income earners typically live in low-density suburbs. Although the Chi-square p-value ($p=0.181$) for residence falls outside the acceptable threshold of $p=0.05$, scrutiny of the cells for users and non-users of online newspapers under the 'high-density' category shows that

³⁹ Airtel Facebook bundles can be accessed by any device that is data-enabled or data-capable and by all pre-paid and post-paid customers with data-capable handsets (www.ogbongeblong.com/2013.06/codes-to-activate-airtel-unlimited.html, accessed 12 October 2018).

readers of online newspapers were in the majority (115 or 34.3% compared to 60 or 30%). This implies that the majority of online newspaper readers are located in all types of residences in urban areas, including high-density suburbs. The finding could also mean that residence is not an accurate descriptor of income status in Zambia.

In terms of education, the study supports the findings of earlier researchers that the more educated a respondent, the more likely he or she is to be a reader of stand-alone online newspapers (Mings 1997; Dalglis 1992; Erlindson 1995; Katz 1994). While non-readers were in the majority among respondents with primary and secondary school qualifications, readership increased in tandem with higher levels of tertiary education. On the other hand, a relationship between political participation and readership was not supported by the findings; among registered voters and those who voted in the 2016 elections in the sample, non-readers were in the majority. This differs from findings in other parts of the world that established a positive correlation between active political participation and readership of online newspapers (for instance, Skogerbo and Winsvold 2011). It could also be indicative of the fact that politically active Zambians generally avoid online media because of their political partisanship (as reported in chapter 2). The study confirms that readers of online newspapers in Zambia are partisan. Two popular online newspapers – *Zambian Watchdog* and *Mwebantu* –are favoured by opposition and ruling party supporters respectively. The results of the study with respect to demographics of readers largely support Hypothesis 1 of the present study, *Zambian readers with high incomes and of low ages, educated and highly politically engaged are proportionately more likely to be the main readers of online newspapers.*

The rural-urban digital divide over access to online newspapers is also confirmed. Urban respondents were four times more likely to access and read online newspapers than their rural counterparts. There are a number of plausible explanations for low access and readership among rural dwellers. While more than six in 10 of Zambia's 15.9 million people live in rural areas (CSO, 2015), this study and the 2018 ZICTA survey both reported poor mobile phone signals in a number of rural areas, especially where the ZICTA towers have not been erected. Besides, literacy levels are low amid the widespread poverty in rural areas and few people can afford smartphones and Internet data for reading online newspapers. A living conditions monitoring survey in 2015 reported that 54.4% of the

population lived below the poverty line and that monthly household income was K1,801.30 or \$18 (CSO, 2015). It estimated average rural income to be K185.90 (\$15.4) compared to K716.40 (\$65.88) in urban areas. In the same year, youth literacy was reported to be 65.76% and 33.4% of the population above five years was found never to have attended school (CSO, 2015).

The devices respondents used to access the Internet were found to have a strong bearing on access to and readership of stand-alone online newspapers. The results of the study show that the huge majority who accessed the Internet via mobile phones were far more likely to read online newspapers than readers who used desktop computers at home, in the office or in an Internet cafe. Besides, desktop computers are not widely used in Zambia (ZICTA 2018). The results also confirm the growing influence of mobile phones on communication and Internet use and their increasing potential as tools for developmental projects: e-commerce, e-governance, e-agriculture and e-education among other uses. They also strengthen the theory that mobile phones are the main gateway to the information superhighway in Africa and the rest of the developing world.

The number of years that respondents had been surfing the Net had no statistical influence on their readership of online newspapers, but there was a positive correlation between high frequency of surfing weekly or daily and readership, a trend also observed by Chyi and Lasorsa (2002). The study found that the more Internet savvy the individual, the more likely he or she was to read of online newspapers, a new finding altogether. These results advance the theory that individuals who spend more time on the Net and those who regard their skills as good or very good are more likely to be readers of stand-alone online newspapers. However, no relationship was found between all the indicators of socio-economic status used in the study and the type of medium the readers turned to for breaking news. Online newspapers were the third most preferred media type for breaking news, after Facebook and TV, across the demographic divides adopted in the present study

Intensity of reading and demographics of high intensity readers

The study set out to investigate the intensity of reading online newspapers, measured by the number of days in a week that readers went online specifically to access them. Intensity

is defined in this study as the frequency of a practice across one or more days. It also denotes the amount of attention that readers dedicate to a medium and its content, which signifies the interest they have in the medium and its content. The study reports that most readers were in the category of high-intensity category, spending an average of five to seven days a week accessing online newspapers. In the context of 'active audience' theory and specifically Klapper's (1960) theory of selectivity⁴⁰, this degree of intensity or attention is a significant advantage for online newspapers as it implies that the readers are not only perusing their contents but actually paying attention to them.

As for who spent the most time on online newspapers, the study found this to be readers using routers, followed by respondents who had spent the most years using the Internet, those who were middle-income earners and those who regarded their Internet skills as 'very good'. Then followed holders of degrees and those who were 26 to 35 years old. It is plausible that these top six groups of high-intensity readers have the following motivations in common: considerations of cost; experience with the Internet and the skills to search for information on it; searching for career opportunities; and seeking information and news. Surfing the online newspapers using a router is the cheapest way to access the Internet and would give users more time to read online newspapers.

More skilled and more educated readers and those who have been using the Internet for longer are likely to be more adept in searching the Internet for varied news and information about a wider range of issues. Middle-income earners, readers who are more educated and those in mid-career (aged 26-35) can likely afford to spend more time on the Net seeking more up-to-date news and information about events in their country and the world and to explore career opportunities. The last two motivations are among the foremost reasons that respondents cite for turning to online newspapers, as reported in other sections of this chapter. Whether addiction can be imputed to readers who have used the Internet for more than 10 years is a topic that needs to be explored.

⁴⁰ Selective exposure theory is a theory of communication, positing that individuals prefer exposure to arguments supporting their position over those supporting other positions. As media consumers have more choices to expose themselves to selected medium and media contents with which they agree, they tend to select content that confirms their own ideas and avoid information that argues against their opinion. People don't want to be told that they are wrong and they do not want their ideas to be challenged either. Source: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/>. Accessed on 20 November 2019.

Social motivations for turning to online newspapers

The study established that an overwhelming majority of online newspapers readers in Zambia are motivated by the following needs, ranked in order of importance:

- To learn about what is new around the country, the world and about people and places far away (surveillance or cognitive motivation);
- To connect and network with other people (socialisation or para-social motivation); and,
- To avoid frustration and dissatisfaction with traditional media (avoidance motivation).

The finding with respect to surveillance supports the results of previous studies which found this to be the most consistent motivation among most readers of the mass media, particularly online newspapers (Mings, 1997; Suhaimi, 2015). Substantial numbers of readers in the sample attested to seeking breaking news, up-to-date and more independent and uncensored news, a finding in harmony with the communitarian benefits offered by online newspapers and other digital media. The finding supports the observations of earlier researchers (Okonofua, 2012; Mathew et al, 2013; Hassan et al, 2015) and upholds Hypothesis 2 of this study: *The majority of Zambian readers turn to online newspapers to gratify their need for up-to-date, detailed and uncensored news and information (surveillance motivation).*

Socialisation establishes that the online newspaper has come to live up to the ethos of a network society as its facilitator, as Manuel Castells (1996) and van Dijk (1991) had foreseen. Castells (1996) argues that technological development is the most important individual precondition for the resurgence of networks. That avoidance is among the top three motivations could be a predictor of growing resentment by Zambians of traditional mass media, particularly print newspapers. The results confirm the growing substitutability and cannibalisation effects of stand-alone online newspapers over traditional media in Zambia (as discussed in chapter 10). Circulation numbers of major national dailies and weeklies have declined drastically over the years (Hamusokwe, 2016). This has been happening amid growing dissatisfaction with the traditional media in Zambia for a number of reasons, notably polarization along political lines, unbalanced and unfair coverage of the opposition

by government media and inadequacy of content. As Gunter et al (2009: 192) conclude, 'more people are turning not just to the Internet, but to blogs because they are losing faith in mainstream news media'.

Social motivations and demographics of readers

Who seeks what from online newspapers? The stepwise regression analysis suggests that the two leading motivations – surveillance and socialisation – cut across all the socio-demographic factors or independent variables adopted for the study. In other words, readers in all demographic categories sought to strengthen information, knowledge and understanding of what is happening in Zambia, around the world and about other people and places and to strengthen contacts with family, friends and the world.

A further analysis of the relationships observed from the regression models leads to the following general conclusions:

- Middle-aged readers (36 to 45 years old) read online newspapers mainly for entertainment;
- Lowest-income earners turn to online newspapers in order to avoid mainstream media, especially print newspapers, for cost and other reasons;
- Urban-based readers are motivated by the need to escape from loneliness and as a diversion from routine or stress and for entertainment and relaxation;
- Readers with the fewest years of experience with the Internet access online newspapers for the following reasons: prestige; entertainment or relaxation; avoidance of print newspapers; and, for information about what to buy, how to plan their evenings or weekends and what position to take about political events in the country;
- Readers who have surfed the Net for between two and five years turn to online newspapers in order to avoid print newspapers,
- Politically active individuals seek entertainment from online newspapers,
- 'Low surfers' read online newspapers to avoid reading print newspapers, and,

- As individuals spend more years reading online newspapers, their desire for entertainment, relaxation and excitement from their reading increases in tandem and their need for avoidance declines.

From this it can be inferred that over time, readers see online newspapers less as mere substitutes for print newspapers and more as a medium in its own right. The recurrence of avoidance motivation across most groups of readers signifies that readers are indeed taking online newspapers seriously as substitutes for print newspapers and entrenches online newspapers as an independent mass media genre. This contention supports the findings of earlier studies (Gunter et al 2009; Mbozi 2014, unpublished). Gunter et al (2009:192) concluded that 'more people are turning not just to the Internet, but to blogs because they are losing faith in mainstream news media'.

Social motivations and gratification obtained: readers' demographics

The study sought to characterise the gratification obtained from the eight social motivations in relation to the demographics of the readers. They seemed most gratified by avoidance motivation, or rather they turn to online newspapers because traditional print newspapers do not give enough information about issues that interest them and include unpleasant information. Entertainment ranked second as a motivation. The results of the study show that gratification from avoidance occurs across all the demographic factors in the study. As for the other seven motivations, the following generalisations emerged:

Information and news seeking: It can be inferred from the results that satisfaction of this need goes up in tandem with numbers of years of reading a favourite online newspaper, suggesting that the familiarity principle or mere-exposure effect⁴¹ is at work. On the other hand, there is evidence that satisfaction declines with age, implying that the older the reader the more critical he or she becomes of the content of online newspapers.

⁴¹ The mere exposure effect is a psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things or people that are more familiar to them than others. Repeated exposure increases familiarity. This effect is therefore also known as the familiarity effect. Source: <https://www.wiwi.europa.uni.de/MereExposure.pdf>. Accessed 20 November 2019.

Entertainment: The results of the regression analysis suggest that the lowest-paid readers find online newspapers to be sources of entertainment and fun.

Personal integrative needs: Gratification was more likely for readers with middle-level education and less likely for those who were educated to primary school level and those whose Internet surfing was of moderate frequency.

Socialisation/para-social interaction: Politically active readers were less likely to be gratified by socialisation. Conversely, newcomers to the Internet who read online newspapers were more likely to find gratification in socialisation. This implies that individuals who use the Internet for the first time might prefer networking through online newspapers because they have not established ways of interacting directly with other people.

Tension release/escape: Politically active readers of online newspapers are generally less satisfied with this motivation, while the converse seems to hold for more frequent readers and those who have been reading online newspapers longest. Again, the familiarity effect could be at play.

Utility motivation: The analysis found that the least educated readers and those with many years of surfing the Internet were less likely to be gratified by reading online newspapers to help them to decide what to buy, to plan their evenings or weekends and to guide them in how to react to political events. One explanation for dissatisfaction among respondents who have read online newspapers for many years could be that they are more adept at sourcing such useful information from other sources on the Net.

Excitement motivation: Low-income earners and 'low surfers' were less likely to be satisfied with online newspapers' offerings of excitement.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the study in response to the first two research questions. The aim was to establish the extent of exposure and attention to online newspapers, the motivations for reading them, characterisation of the demographics of the people who read them and their patterns of reading. The results reveal moderate and growing reach and visitation and high intensity of reading (attention) among respondents

in the sample. It can be concluded that at least six in 10 people with Internet access in Lusaka Province also access and read online newspapers and depend on this new medium for breaking news and other information.

Online newspapers are ranked third as sources of news, after Facebook and television. They have overtaken print newspapers and radio, the former being most affected by the cannibalization effect of this new mass medium. It is fair to conclude that online newspapers would be read more widely without the bottlenecks of slow Internet speed, connectivity problems, cost of Internet bundles and smartphones, frequent Internet interruptions and other challenges reported by the respondents. On the other hand, access to the Internet – and therefore to online newspapers – might be significantly abetted by free Facebook access via the Airtel mobile network.

The findings confirm that the majority of readers of online newspapers are young individuals (18 to 35 years old) and those who are urban-based, more educated and Internet savvy, ‘higher surfers’ and who have more years of using the Internet. Also in this majority are individuals who access the Internet via mobile phones and routers. Contrary to earlier research findings, the present study observed an inverse relationship between political participation and readership of online newspapers. Registered voters and those who voted in the 2016 general elections were less likely to be regular and intense readers of online newspapers.

The results are also conclusive that readership increases in tandem with income: while readers in the lowest income bracket were less likely to access online newspapers, the proportion of readers to non-readers was higher for higher-income earners. The rural-urban digital divide over access to online newspapers is clearly evident: urban respondents were four times more likely to access and read online newspapers than their rural counterparts, a tendency also seen in the national disparity in income. This validates the assertion that socio-economic status is a major determinant of reading online newspapers.

The study found that majority of readers spent a significant amount of time on online newspapers and were influenced mainly in their reading by considerations of cost, experience with and in surfing the Internet and a search for career opportunities. The results are conclusive with respect to the readers’ motivations. An overwhelming majority

turned to online newspapers to find out what was going on around the country and the world (surveillance), to connect and network with other people (socialisation) and to avoid the frustration and dissatisfaction experienced with traditional media, in particular print newspapers. The readers mostly sought breaking, up-to-date and more independent and uncensored news. To the extent that the readers continue to visit the new media, as observed in the study, it can be deduced that the gratification sought from this kind of information is being met.

In respect of motivation and demographics, it is evident that different groups of readers seek to satisfy different needs. The surveillance and socialisation motivations applied among all the sub-groups (or independent variables) adopted in the study. A majority of readers also cited avoidance as a reason for turning to online newspapers – and derived gratification from this motivation – confirming that the new medium has become established as an alternative to traditional mass media. As for gratification obtained from socialisation, the influence of the familiarity effect is apparent: the greater the number of years that readers visit online newspapers and the greater the weekly frequency of their reading, the more they are gratified by the offerings of online newspapers. From the perspective of uses and gratification theory, the results support the conclusion that readers of Zambian online newspapers in Lusaka Province know exactly what they seek (gratification sought) and what satisfies them (gratification obtained) from the content of this new medium, a conclusion which is substantially in accordance with the ethos of the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENT OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS: READER MOTIVATIONS, PREFERENCES AND GRATIFICATION

Abstract

This thesis reports that online newspapers in Zambia are 20 years old this year. It also reports that Zambian online newspapers are 'more of everything' in terms of content diversity and news presentation. However, research and scholarship on gratification sought and obtained by the readers from content of online newspapers is non-existent. Within the context of the uses and gratification theory, this aspect of the study investigates and characterises patterns of audience preferences and use of the content of online newspapers (also known as content motivation). The probable relationship between gratification obtained from content and its impact on overall reader gratification from online newspapers is also examined. Overall readers are only moderately making use of content of online newspapers. Most readers seek and are spending more time on content of a general or less 'serious' nature in preference to developmental content. The majority seek politics, current affairs and governance content. Interest in and the need for general content increases in tandem with the number of years of reading online newspapers. Developmental content attracts only a moderate number of readers. The study establishes that readers' perceived credibility of the online newspapers affects gratification obtained only moderately.

Key words: Zambian Online Newspapers. Content Diversity. Gratification. Credibility.

Introduction

The last three decades have witnessed monumental social and technological advances in the media industry. As reported in other chapters, the Internet and associated innovations have led to the rise of online media, and online newspapers have rapidly emerged as the main challenge to traditional news channels. They have rapidly become one of the preferred sources of news and information for many readers in Zambia (see chapter 6).

In the light of these new developments, a re-evaluation of what journalism should look like now and in future is inevitable (Carpenter, 2010; Project for Excellence of Journalism, 2007). A critical focus of the re-evaluation should be the diversity and quality of the content published by online newspapers, which are essential considerations when individuals have to make decisions for the betterment of their livelihoods and that of their communities. As Carpenter (2010:1065) argues, 'the consumption of a diversity of content can promote a greater awareness of self because it exposes people to differing ideas'.

Rather than analysing the content itself, this study examines what content the readers seek, and spend time on reading, through the lens of uses and gratification theory, in order to assess the relevance of online newspapers to their audiences. The focus of the study is on gratification sought and obtained from content, which is defined as "use of the messages carried by the medium" (Stafford and Stafford, 2001:71). The study specifically explores the extent to which online newspapers have exploited the comparative advantage they have achieved by their unique socio-technological potential.

Thus, although the unfolding second stage prompts hope for many innovative online news services to come, this can only materialise if the practitioners take to heart a very crucial lesson – for online news to serve the public well in the new era, it ought to be done with firmer knowledge and deeper understanding of what users want from it and do with what it can offer (Nguyen, 2010:224).

Content diversity in online newspapers should be analysed not only for readers' access and use but also for the acclaimed features that make it easier for the readers to access it (Nguyen, 2010). These include the ease or convenience of use, immediacy, ubiquitous choice, depth, interactivity, multi-mediality, customisation and hyperlinks (Nguyen, 2010; Carpenter, 2010). The assumption is that these features make it more attractive for the

producers to source and distribute more diverse content and for the readers to access it. However, almost three decades since the advent of online newspapers, empirical data are lacking about the outcome of the use the socio-technological features of online newspapers – readers’ uptake and use of and gratification from their content. To what extent do readers perceive content of online to be diverse? Which of the different types of content do they prefer to read the most? Does the content of the online newspapers meet their needs? These questions remained un-researched and are therefore the focus of this study.

The scant scholarship available in this area is mostly from Western countries, most of it focused on content diversity and the impact of the socio-technological features on content uptake, and some of it on the impact of use and uptake of content from online news on the traditional mass media (discussed in chapter 10). The study uses a combination of uses and gratification theory and diffusion of innovation theory, drawing lessons from the work of Nguyen (2010) and others. The primary interest is to characterise the extent of uptake of developmental content (Melkote, 1991) as against general content.

Developmental content vs general content

Literature that defines and distinguishes developmental content from the other types of content seems to be non-existent. While successful attempts have been made to define or characterise developmental content since the advent of development journalism after the World War 2 (Melkote, 1991), no definition or categorisation has been assigned to content falling outside its domain. For the purpose of this study, general content is defined as any content other than developmental, and includes, but is not limited to, politics and current affairs, sport, business and finance, lifestyle, adverts, arts, entertainment, shopping and ‘other information’. These have been the traditional narratives of the mass media for centuries.

Developmental content is synonymous with and emanates from development communication or journalism, which is a tool for facilitating the participation of people in developmental activities (Choudhury, 2011; Rogers, 1995). It is a deliberate undertaking on the part of the media to support the long-term and sustainable improvement of the quality of life of the masses, the majority of whom reside in rural areas (Melkote, 1991;

Quebral, 2012). Development communication has been labelled the 'fifth theory of the Press' (Quebral, 2012), with social transformation and development and the fulfilment of basic needs as its primary purposes. Quebral expanded the definition by calling it

the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential (2012:4).

Melkote and Steeves (2001) saw it as communication for emancipation, aimed at combating injustice and oppression. Development communication has two primary roles: transformation and socialisation (seeking to maintain some of the established values of the society) (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). Media play an important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forums for discussion of issues, teaching ideas, imparting skills for a better life and creating a base of consensus for stability of the state (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Mody, 1991; Choudhury, 2011). Inadequate resources for interpersonal forms of communication have been used to justify use of mass media to support development. Referring to extension workers, McAnany observed:

In most Third World [countries], these agents are in [such] short supply that they can reach only a fraction of the farmers, yet there may be other ways such as the mass media of diffusing the same information to a much larger portion of the target population (McAnany, 1980:4).

Over the years the media in developing countries have actualised this function by covering topics such as reproductive health, climate change, gender, nutrition, agriculture and education. Some media houses have introduced specialised desks in their newsrooms and developed in-house policies on reporting these subjects. The Internet and the new media offer a variety of opportunities for imparting information of a development nature (Akpomuvie, 2010). This is critical given that the majority of users of the Internet are young people who have an interest in development information, for instance about sexual reproductive health and HIV and AIDS. Scholars observe that mobile phones, websites and the Internet are interactive and that these features enhance the effectiveness of these media for development communication.

The majority of the populations of countries in Africa live in the rural areas and the most effective way to keep them abreast [of] the programmes of governments is to popularize them at the grassroots through ICTs and the traditional media. It was further observed that ICTs and particularly the traditional media [have] to play this role of influencing development by providing the people with necessary information and required skills to overcome the present economic imbroglio in Africa (Akpomuvie, 2010:165).

The question for this study is to what extent online newspapers in Zambia are committed to covering development in their content, as is expected of mass media in the developing world. Do the readers perceive the content of these media to be relevant to their daily development information needs? This question is at the core of the study. It is described as content gratification in chapter 3 of the thesis. The investigation and comparative analysis of content diversity in Zambian online newspapers, especially the type of content readers seek, spend most time on and are satisfied with, are premised on the need to characterise the role of this medium as an agent of development. As the tools of present and future communication, the new media are expected to take up the challenge of supporting development agendas.

Perspectives of media content analysis

Croteau and Hoynes (2002) identify ways researchers can use to assess the significance of media content. They involve linking media content to producers, audience interests, society in general, audience effects and examining content independent of context. This study is premised on analysing the significance of media content in online newspapers in Zambia from an audience perspective, especially in the context of a uses and gratification theory. The premise of this type of analysis is that the media are simply 'giving the people what they want' (Croteau and Hoynes, 2002:199), which implies that the people want what they get (Croteau and Hoynes, 2002). Therefore, rather than focusing on media narratives or representation of public interest or 'pictures in the head' (McCombs, et al, 1997) in analysing the content of online newspapers, this study takes critical look at what the interests of the readers are and whether this new medium meets them.

Literature review

Effects of attributes of online content on its adoption and use

The potential contribution of online news presentation attributes to news uptake and use has been a subject of a number of studies (Salven et al, 2005; Chan and Laung, 2005; Nguyen, 2010). Within the diffusion of innovation framework, the adoption of socio-technological news presentation attributes is 'essentially an information-processing activity in which an individual is motivated to reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation' (Rogers, 2003:172). The adoption progresses through Rogers's five-stage process: knowledge, persuasion, adoption decision, implementation and confirmation. At each stage the adopter evaluates the usefulness and applicability of each attribute (Nguyen, 2010). The problems associated with the model, when applied to news innovation attributes (Nguyen, 2008a) notwithstanding, are that the model implies that audience appreciation of the attributes depends on whether an individual will decide to adopt and implement an innovation and confirm it after adoption. Post-adoption, it also helps the individual assess the usefulness of the innovation and whether to integrate it into daily life (Nguyen, 2010).

Past research on diffusion of online news has confirmed the usefulness of the model; relative socio-technological advantages of online news 'seem to have contributed to its adoption and use' (Nguyen, 2010:225). Research has established that the ease and convenience of accessing news and the features that facilitate this process (such as 24/7 access or the ability to combine news with other online purposes) seem to be the most significant (Conway, 2001; Nguyen, 2010). A study by Conway (2001) found the following to be the main reasons for accessing news online: 'convenient/easier', 'availability when you need it', 'timeliness and immediacy' and 'speed of the news'. A study for Washingtonpost.com (2005, quoted by Nguyen, 2010) found that the Internet was selected over traditional news channels for the following convenience-related reasons: 24/7 availability (83% of users), ability to multitask (70% of users), 'easy ways to get information' (63%) and 'convenience of use' (61%).

A study by Salven et al (2005) noted the following reasons given by readers for getting online news: being able to get it any time (95%); ability to go directly to the news of

interest (91%); being able to keep up with the news any time (88%); being convenient to receive (84%); being able to learn more about breaking news stories (82%); being easier to get than conventional news (71%); having interests reflected on news sites (68%); exposure to interesting news while doing other things online (68%); and, being able to get different viewpoints (65%). Other reasons cited as part of the attraction of online news sources were: finding unusual stories; getting news not available elsewhere; being able to get more news than from conventional sources; and, getting information in greater depth. From factor analysis, the researchers ended up with four advantages: convenience of use, quantity and quality of news, difference of online news from traditional news and serendipity.

Chan and Laung (2005) found three reasons for seeking online news: convenience, interactivity and multi-mediality (presentation of news in different formats. These findings were echoed by Johnson and Kaye (2002), who concluded that perceived credibility was a strong predictor acquisition of online news. Although none of the above studies focused on analysis of use and uptake of specific types of content (the primary interest of the present study), they have helped to contextualise circumstances or confounding factors in the uptake of content from online newspapers. Their results give a clear indication that there are enough compelling reasons for readers of online newspapers in Zambia to be motivated consumers of content. The socio-technological features and news presentation attributes of online newspapers that were analysed in studies from other parts of the world are also present in the Zambian online newspapers. The question is, to what extent are these attributes deterministic of access to and use and adoption of content of online newspapers among Zambian readers. Does uptake of content ultimately lead to gratification? The study asks of the following research questions:

1. What are the readers' content motivations?
2. What type of content were they seeking and getting from online newspapers?
3. To what extent are the readers making use of the content of online newspapers?
4. To what extent are the readers of online newspapers satisfied with the content from online newspapers and what type of content are they most gratified with?

Results

This section presents results of research into the motivations for the use of the content of online newspapers, the extent or frequency of use and the level of satisfaction or gratification obtained from the use of the different types of content, also referred to as content motivation (as discussed in chapter 3). The first part of the section represents a departure from previous studies in comparing general content and developmental content in terms of readers' expressed motivations or preferences and frequency of use and gratification. Developmental content was defined for the respondents as *information that will help improve my livelihood and that of my family, such as that on HIV/AIDS, agriculture, environment, climate change, nutrition, poverty reduction and gender*. General content was defined as *information of a general nature, such as politics, gossip, scandals, sports, business, art, fashion and entertainment*.

Complementing readers' stated motivations, frequency of use and gratification obtained in regard to the content of Zambian online newspapers, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed with seven statements measured on a Likert scale of: agreed/strongly agreed, neutral, and disagreed/strongly disagreed. Mean or average scores were computed from a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest score.

Motivations for use of online newspaper content

An overwhelming majority (91% of the 335 readers of online newspapers) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, *I turn to online newspapers for information of a general nature, such as politics, gossip, scandals, sports, business, art, fashion and entertainment*. The logistic regression model (Table 7.1), indicates that only the number of years of reading online newspapers was a determinant of whether a reader would turn to online newspapers for content of a general nature. As the number of years reading online newspapers went up by one year, the motivation to read online newspapers for content of a general nature increased by 1.36 times.

Table 7.1 : Factors determining whether one reads Zambian stand-alone online newspapers for general content. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	1.16	1.19	0.73	0.35	3.99
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1	1	-	-	-
	36-45 years	1	1	-	-	-
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.42	0.25	0.27	0.03	2.01
	University degree	0.19	0.19	0.25	0.01	2.56
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.75	2.20	2.12	0.33	14.59
	K101-250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Residence [High density]	Rural	3.15***	7.59	11.99	0.34	167.54
	Low density	2.02	0.97	0.91	0.15	6.11
	Rural	3.33	0.86	1.54	0.03	28.86
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.47	2.03	1.63	0.42	9.83
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.30***	0.40	0.31	0.09	1.80
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	3.25***	3.43	2.97	0.63	18.70
	Thrice	0.62	0.35	0.37	0.04	2.77
	Four times and more	0.40	0.39	0.38	0.06	2.62
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.26	0.10	0.13	0.01	1.32
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.84	3.04	2.98	0.44	20.84
	6-10 years	1.35	2.02	2.74	0.14	28.90
	>10 years	2.56	18.64	29.38	0.85	408.61
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	4.96	11.69	16.64	0.72	109.33
	Moderate	1.68	3.12	2.48	0.66	14.83
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	1.7	1.73	1.51	0.31	0.86
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.18	1.36***	0.32	0.48	2.16
p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.69	0.68	0.12		0.98

As for developmental content, 55% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, *I turn to online newspapers for information that will help improve my livelihood and that of my family, such as about HIV/AIDS, agriculture, environment, climate change, nutrition, poverty reduction and gender*. Forty-two percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, implying that development information is not a preference or reason for turning to online newspapers.

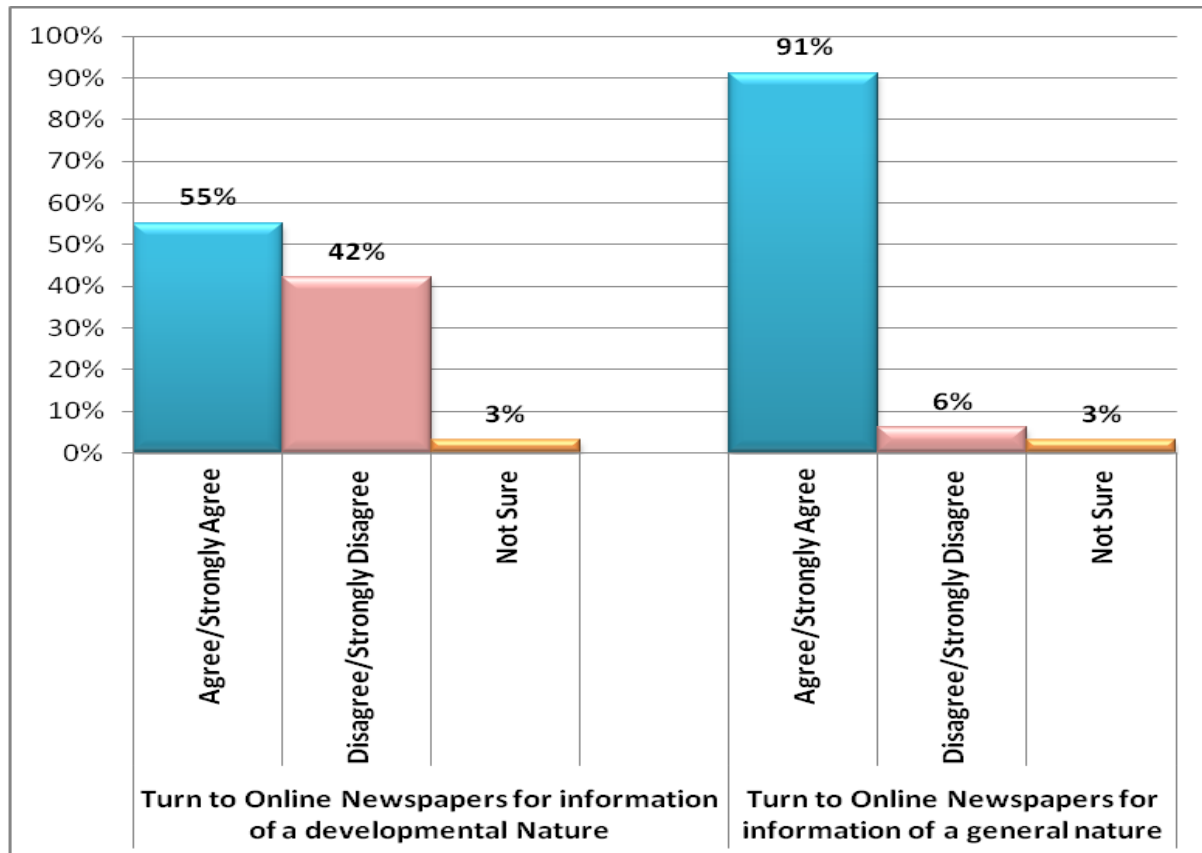


Figure 7.1: Readers' expressed motivations for general and developmental content.

Source: Author's field data

In relation to predictors of whether or not a respondent would be turning to online newspapers specifically for information of a developmental nature, the multiple regression model (Table 7.2) reveals that education qualification, income, type of residence and experience with the Internet (number of years of using it) are all predictors of readership of developmental content. Specifically, a reader holding a certificate or diploma (medium educated) and those earning between K101,000 (\$8,400) and K250,000 (\$23,300)

annually (low income earners) is likely to turn to online newspapers specifically for developmental content by 2.60 and 29.07 times respectively. Conversely, respondents residing in low density areas are likely not to turn to online newspapers for developmental content by 67 times. In terms of experience with the Internet, a respondent who has been using it (the Internet) for six – 10 years and another who has been using for more than 10 years are 0.20 times and 0.13 times likely not to turn to online newspapers specifically for developmental content.

Table 7.2 : Factors influencing whether reader turns to Zambian online newspapers for developmental content

Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.88	0.86	0.25	0.48	1.54
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.49	1.06	0.59	0.36	3.13
	36-45 years	1.91	1.54	1.24	0.32	7.45
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	1.83***	2.60***	1.01	1.21	5.58
	University degree	2.91***	2.19	1.09	0.83	5.81
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	2.26***	1.87	0.71	0.89	3.95
	K101-250, 000	26.27***	29.07***	33.42	3.05	276.77
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	0.39	0.49	0.70	0.03	7.74
Residence [High density]	Rural	1.42	0.83	1.17	0.05	13.10
	Low density	0.27***	0.33***	0.16	0.12	0.87
	Rural	1.32	1.39	1.98	0.08	22.66
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	1.76	1.52	0.75	0.58	3.97
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	1.22	0.59	0.25	0.25	1.35
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	0.85	0.98	0.50	0.36	2.66
	Thrice	0.63	0.95	0.43	0.39	2.31
	Four times and more	0.67	0.77	0.29	0.37	1.61
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	0.78	0.27	0.33	0.02	3.04
	Moderate	1.42	1.32	0.55	0.59	2.99
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.54	0.46	0.20	0.19	1.07
	6-10 years	0.34***	0.20***	0.11	0.07	0.57
	>10 years	0.17***	0.13***	0.10	0.03	0.63
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	0.27	0.37	0.44	0.04	3.88
	Moderate	0.47***	0.45	0.19	0.20	1.02
Years reading favourite newspaper	Very poor	1.56	1.95	0.77	0.90	4.25
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.81***	0.81	0.11	0.63	1.05
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.99	0.95	0.08	0.80	1.13

Comparisons of use between specific types of general and developmental content

In regard to the *reason for use* or motivation for reading specific general content, sports and gossip had the highest mean score at 3.44, followed by politics and current affairs with a mean score of 3.32. Shopping and adverts were the least with mean scores of 2.92 and 2.96 respectively. In regard to developmental content, education and health had the highest mean scores of 3.44 and 3.34 respectively, followed by HIV/AIDS (3.24), governance (3.32) and nutrition (3.19). Gender and climate change had the lowest mean scores at 2.96 and 2.92 respectively.

Table 7.3 : Comparisons of motivations for use between specific general and developmental content. Source: Author's field data

Type of General Information		Type of Developmental Information	
Politics and Current Affairs	3.32	Governance	3.32
Gossip	3.34	Health	3.34
Sport	3.44	Education	3.44
Business and Finance	3.24	HIV/AIDS	3.24
Lifestyle	3.06	Reproductive Health	3.06
Adverts	2.96	Gender	2.96
Arts/Entertainment	3.17	Agriculture	3.17
Shopping	2.92	Climate Change	2.92
Culture	3.19	Nutrition	3.19
Hobbies	3.02	Environment	3.02
Average Score	3.18	Average Score	3.18

N=335

Comparison of extent of use between general content and developmental content

In regard to extent of use of general content, as shown in Table 7.3, 311 or 94% of respondents said they read online newspapers for politics and current affairs, followed by gossip about public figures (165 or 50%) and sport 139 or 42%). Shopping (11%), 'other information' (11%) and hobbies (10%) were the least read. In regard to developmental content, topics about governance were read by the highest number of respondents (296 or 86%), followed distantly by general health, education and HIV/AIDS. Climate change, nutrition and environment were the least utilised.

Table 7.4 : Comparisons of extent of use between general and developmental content.

Source: Author's field data

Type of General Information		Type of Developmental Information	
Politics and Current Affairs	94% (311)	Governance	89% (296)
Gossip	50%(165)	Health	54% (180)
Sport	42% (139)	Education	39% (130)
Business and Finance	30% (101)	HIV/AIDS	32% (107)
Lifestyle	23% (75)	Reproductive Health	28% (93)
Adverts	19% (63)	Gender	22% (71)
Arts/Entertainment	14% (45)	Agriculture	18% (60)
Shopping	11% (36)	Climate Change	18% (60)
Culture	11% (37)	Nutrition	14%(47)
Hobbies	10% (33)	Environment	11% (57)
Average Score	30% (100)	Average Score	31% (110)

N=335

Readers' experiences and satisfaction with online newspaper content

Complementing readers' stated motivations, frequency of use and gratification obtained in regard to the content of Zambian online newspapers, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed with seven statements measured on a Likert scale of: agreed/strongly agreed, neutral, and disagreed/strongly disagreed. To the statement, *Overall, I am satisfied with the information or content of the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers*, 72% agreed/strongly agreed, 8% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 19% were not sure. The logistic regression model indicates that overall satisfaction with the content of online newspapers is influenced by where a reader resides and experience of using the Internet. A

rural-based reader is 24.62 times more likely to be satisfied with the content of online newspapers overall than an urban reader. A reader who has been using the Internet for more than 10 years is six times more likely to be satisfied with the overall content of online newspapers than one who has been using the Internet for 2-5 years.

In terms of gratification expressed through repeat visits, 79% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, *Overall, the content in the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers is one of the reasons for me to continue reading them*. Six percent disagreed/strongly disagreed while 15% were not sure. To the statement, *Overall, reading the content of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers has made me like them*, 89% of the respondents agreed (4% strongly), 4% disagreed and 6% were neutral.

The multiple regression model shows that daily frequency of surfing the Internet, Internet skills and weekly frequency of reading were influential factors in content gratification expressed through likeability of the Zambian online newspapers. A reader who surfed the Internet three times a day (a moderate surfer) was 5.68 times more likely to express gratification from content through likeability of online newspapers. Conversely, a reader with moderate Internet skills was 0.08 times unlikely to adore online newspapers due to satisfaction with their content. As for weekly frequency of reading, the model shows that as the frequency of reading increased by one day, continued visits to online newspapers as a result of content gratification declined by 0.73 times.

Table 7.5 : Multiple-logistic regression models for perception that Zambian online newspapers command continued readership because of their content. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.42	0.37	0.24	0.10 1..31
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.58	0.71	0.90	0.06 8.34
	36-45 years	2.42	2.20	2.65	0.21 23.30
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	- -
	Certificate/Diploma	1.38	1.62	1.15	0.40 6.55
	University degree	1.77	2.95	2.59	0.53 16.47
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.44	0.26	0.25	0.04 1.69
	K101-250, 000	4.14***	2.88	2.82	0.42 19.67
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	1	1	-	- -
Residence [High density]	Rural	0.20	0.35	0.66	0.01 14.85
	Low density	1.94	2.87	2.16	0.66 12.51
	Rural	0.24	0.33	0.67	0.01 17.22
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.83	0.61	0.64	0.07 4.86
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	1.84	2.20	2.20	0.31 15.57
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.22	3.48	3.50	0.50 24.93
	Thrice	1.35	5.68***	5.09	0.98 32.95
	Four times and more	0.87	1.34	1.07	0.28 6.37
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	- -
	Moderate	1.30	1.33	0.87	0.25 5.11
Number of years using internet: [2-5 yrs]	< 2 years	1.07	0.44	0.44	0.06 3.08
	6-10 years	2.39	1.16	1.21	0.15 8.90
	>10 years	3.20	0.82	1.07	0.06 10.77
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	- -
	Moderate	0.16	0.08***	0.10	0.01 0.96
Years reading favourite newspaper	Very poor	0.81	0.45	0.31	0.120.6 1.71
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.10	1.01	0.22	5 1.55
p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.94	0.73	0.12	0.54 1.00

Satisfaction with overall general and developmental content

In regard to gratification obtained from general content, 87% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed, 9% disagreed/strongly disagreed while 4% were not sure with the statement, *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers provide enough information of the general type as listed above (politics, gossip, scandals, sport, business, art, fashion, entertainment etc.)*. The multiple regression model reveals that experience with the Internet and with reading online newspapers influences perceptions about whether a reader is satisfied with the adequacy of the general content provided in online newspapers. A reader who read online newspapers three times a day (a high-frequency user) was 5.26 times more likely to be satisfied with the adequacy of general news and information in online newspapers than one who surfed the Internet only once a day. For every year that readers' experience in reading online newspapers increased by one year, satisfaction with the adequacy of the general information provided went up by 1.68 times.

In regard to the statement, *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers provide enough information of the type that can improve my livelihood and that of my family (or development content)*, 49% disagreed/strongly disagreed, 40% agreed/strongly agreed and 11% were not sure. As for factors that predict whether or not a respondent finds developmental content in online newspapers adequate, the logistical regression model reveals the relevance of income and type of residence. A reader who earned between K101,000 (\$8,400) and K250,000 (\$23,300) annually (low-to-medium-income earner) was 4.46 times more likely to be satisfied with the adequacy of developmental content in online newspapers than one who earned below K50,000 (or \$4200) annually. Conversely, a reader who resided in a low-density area (and who is likely to be a higher-income earner) was 0.34 times less likely to be satisfied with the adequacy of developmental content in online newspapers.

Table 7.6: Factors determining perception that Zambian stand-alone online newspapers provide enough general news, a multiple logistic regression model. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.97	0.74	0.40	0.26	2.11
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.36	0.61	0.71	0.06	6.10
	36-45 years	1.45	0.50	0.51	0.07	3.75
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.54	0.38	0.29	0.10	1.62
	University degree	1.06	0.87	0.68	0.19	4.02
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.14	1.49	1.01	0.40	5.56
	K101-250, 000	1.18	1.33	1.54	1.14	12.85
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Residence [High density]	Rural Low density	1.31	0.68	0.81	0.06	7.22
	Rural	2.89***	3.25	2.38	0.78	13.65
		1.48	3.89	5.65	0.23	67.01
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.54	1.10	0.75	0.29	4.21
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.45***	0.39	0.24	0.11	1.33
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	2.57	5.26***	3.90	1.24	22.49
	Thrice	0.41	0.49	0.47	0.07	3.20
	Four times and more	0.76	0.91	0.63	0.23	3.56
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.80	0.86	0.61	0.22	3.41
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.40	0.76	0.71	0.12	4.78
	6-10 years	4.63***	2.39	2.47	0.32	18.05
	>10 years	5.22***	3.23	4.05	0.28	37.64
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	3.03	6.54	8.55	0.51	84.78
	Moderate	1.82	2.27	1.44	0.65	7.89
Years reading favourite newspaper	Very poor	1.14	0.40	0.30	0.100.1	1.55
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.52***	1.68***	0.32	6	2.44
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	1.05	0.98	0.12	0.76	1.26

What specific general content were readers of online newspapers most gratified by? The readers were most satisfied with sport and hobbies (with a mean of 3.75 each) followed by shopping and gossip about public figures at 3.70 each and politics and current affairs with a mean score of 3.66. Business and finance and art/entertainment were the least gratifying to the readers, with mean scores of 3.18 and 3.16 respectively. For developmental content, governance content was most satisfying, with a mean score of 3.68, followed by education with a mean score of 3.55, then health at 3.44 and environment and climate change with mean scores of 2.97 and 2.69 respectively.

Table 7.7 : Comparison of frequency of satisfaction from use among specific general and developmental content. Source: Author's field data

Type of general information		Type of developmental information	
Politics and current affairs	3.66	Governance	3.68
Sports	3.75	Education	3.55
Gossip	3.70	General Health	3.44
Business and Finance	3.18	HIV/AIDS	3.25
Lifestyle	3.20	Reproductive Health	3.08
Adverts	3.44	Gender	3.01
Arts/Entertainment	3.16	Agriculture	3.05
Shopping	3.70	Climate Change	2.69
Culture	3.28	Nutrition	3.30
Hobbies	3.75	Environment	2.97
Average score	3.45	Average score	3.20

N=335

Sixty-four percent of respondents agreed/agreed strongly, 24% were not sure and 13% disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement, *Overall, credibility (trust, truthfulness, believability, objectivity etc.) of Zambian online newspapers does not affect the satisfaction I get from the information or content in them.* The logistical regression model shows the relevance of type of residence and Internet skills to satisfaction with content of Zambian newspapers despite credibility concerns. A reader living in a low-density area was 4.44 times more likely to be gratified by content of online newspapers despite credibility concerns than one in a high-density area. On the other hand, readers with moderate and very poor Internet skills were 0.16 times and

0.21 times respectively less likely to satisfied with the content of online newspapers if there are credibility concerns.

Discussion

The first research question asked whether content of online newspapers was one of the readers' motivations for turning to these new media. This was found to be true for the majority of respondents. Nine in 10 readers sought content of a general or less 'serious' nature, while content of a developmental nature was attractive to only five in 10 readers. The results from the logistic regression analysis suggest that the more years readers spent reading online newspapers, the more they sought general content, especially politics and current affairs. This finding could be related to the established observation that repeated use of a medium leads to increased trust and credibility (as discussed in Chapter 9). The high level of motivation among readers of general content could also be explained by the corresponding level of motivation regarding up-to-date news, the need for socialisation and lighter news (as discussed in Chapter 6). It might also result from improved coverage by online newspapers of non-specialised subjects over time, resulting in increase in interest and repeated use of this type of content over time.

An advanced analysis finds that the main seekers of developmental information were less educated and lower-income readers, in contrast with those living in low-density areas and those who had been using the Net for many years. A likely explanation is that the former, being less privileged, see developmental information as a means of emancipation and improved livelihoods for themselves and their families. In a broader context, development communication was introduced for poor and developing countries which were felt to be in need of such content for poverty alleviation (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Mody, 1991; Choudhury, 2011). However, there are no data or theories to explain why readers who have accessed the Net for many years are less motivated to read developmental content.

Comparison between general and developmental content sought by readers

The study found that readers had measured expectations regarding most of the content of online newspapers. Readers were observed to spend most time visiting political and current affairs content, followed by lifestyle, sport and art topics in that order. With developmental content, governance, health and education (in that order) emerged as

the main topics that readers spent the most time visiting. The least sought developmental content topics were climate change, gender and environment in that order. Readers therefore seemed to be most engaged in finding out how the country was being run and on issues such as corruption, elections and other activities around democratic processes, followed by the need to know more about education opportunities. That readers were spending much time on these areas is perhaps not surprising; a snap content analysis during the present study found that most online newspapers in Zambia are awash with information about politics and governance, and they increasingly run education adverts, as seen in figure 7.2 (below). Readers are least attracted by and spending less time on climate change, gender and HIV and AIDS content in that order, confirming the general lack of interest in developmental content by Zambian readers. These three topics are among the top priorities of the government and stakeholders involved in development programmes in Zambia. Why such content is not popularly sought in online newspapers was not explored in this study but it could be considered a rewarding topic of research in future.

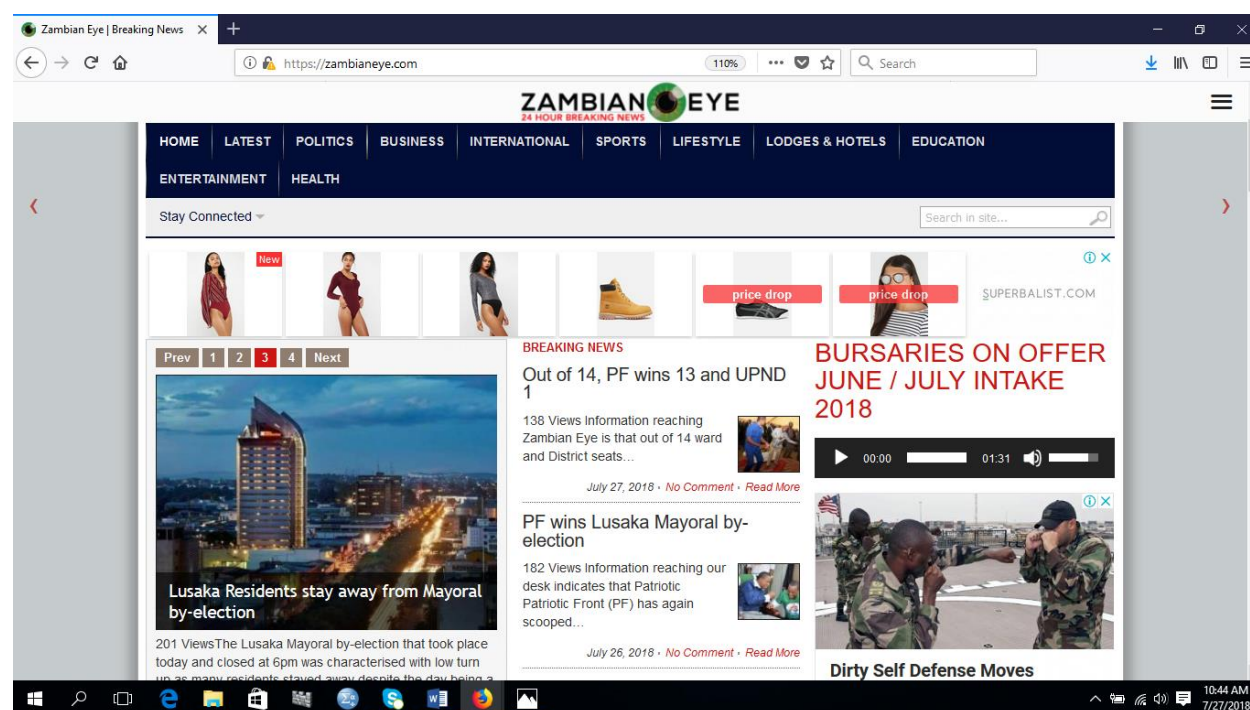


Figure 7.2 : Educational bursaries advert on the Zambian Eye news site Source: <https://zambianeye.com/>. Accessed 20 July 2018

Extent of use: what content are readers accessing the most?

Only three in 10 readers on average accessed both general and developmental content. For general content, politics and current affairs commanded by far the highest reach or

numbers of visitors (nine in 10), followed in distant second by gossip (five in 10 readers) and sport (four in 10 readers). Hobbies, 'other information' and shopping were the least accessed among the general content readers. The dominance of politics and current affairs, sport and lighter content reflects the prioritisation of these topics in the media. Biswas (2007) notes that 'as politics, social failures, crimes, and executives dominate mainstream news, the media have 'no positive thinking and make no efforts to give the society a new direction'. In terms of developmental content, the majority of readers accessed governance information, followed by health and education. Worth of note, however, is the overall low numbers of readers accessing developmental information.

Satisfaction, or gratification obtained

There was a disparity between gratification sought and gratification obtained in respect of both types – 4% for general content and 11% for developmental content. For the former, readers were most satisfied with sport, gossip and politics and current affairs topics (in that order) and least satisfied with art, lifestyle and shopping. The majority of readers who favoured developmental content obtained most gratification from governance information, education and health and the least from climate change, environment and gender issues.

As seen in Table 7.7, there is generally a mismatch between what content the readers sought and what they were satisfied with. For general content, the most sought-after content was politics and current affairs, lifestyle and sport; the content with the most gratification obtained was sport, 'other information' and gossip. For developmental content, the ranking of gratification sought was in the order of governance, health and education, and in gratification obtained, governance, education and health. The gratification that readers seek is therefore not always what gives them greater satisfaction after they engage with the content in online newspapers.

Table 7.8 : Comparison between content gratification sought and gratification

Source: Author's field data

Type of content	Gratification sought	Gratification obtained
General	Politics and current	Sports
	Lifestyle	Other information
	Sport	Gossip
Development	Governance	Governance
	Health	Education
	Education	Health

Credibility and content gratification

Research Question 4 is about the extent to which perceived credibility affects gratification obtained from content of online newspapers. The study found that perceived credibility affected gratification obtained only moderately. Credibility seemed to be a matter of concern regarding gratification obtained for at least six in 10 readers. Proficiency with the Internet affects how a reader perceives the impact of credibility of online newspapers on the gratification obtained from their content. Less Internet-savvy readers were more likely to be dissatisfied with the content of online newspapers if there were credibility concerns. The same applies to readers who are more proficient with the Internet. The present study established a link between residing in a low-density suburb (presumably well-to-do) and being unaffected by perceived credibility on gratification from content of online newspapers. Earlier scholarship referenced in this study did not find such a relationship and no explanation can be given for it.

Conclusion

The study investigated preferences, uptake and gratification obtained in regard to content of online newspapers. The comparison of access to and use of general and developmental content was primarily motivated by the researcher's need to establish the extent to which online newspapers, being an emerging media genre, are perceived by their readers to provide adequate and relevant content. Of particular interest was the role of online newspapers in response to the call for media in developing countries like Zambia to be agents of development in disseminating diverse and relevant content and the perceptions of readers of their content.

The results of the study are conclusive that:

- Overall readers are only moderately making use of content of online newspapers.
- Most readers seek content of a general or less 'serious' nature in preference to developmental content. The majority seek politics, current affairs and governance content,
- Interest in and the need for general content increases in tandem with the number of years of reading online newspapers.
- Developmental content attracts only a moderate number of readers

The relationship observed in the study between income and level of education on one hand and the need for developmental content on the other suggests that the latter is more attractive to readers who turn to the online newspapers to seek opportunities to improve their livelihood. Readers who favoured general content sought and spent time on politics and current affairs, sport and gossip, while governance, education and health were the topics that attracted readers favouring developmental content. The study found disparities between gratification sought and gratification obtained from both types of content of online newspapers, challenging the long-held assumption of uses and gratification theory that media users know exactly what they seek and want to get. It is apparent from the present study that readers often access the media seeking one kind of gratification only to encounter unexpected and unimagined information, a phenomenon known as 'serendipity principle'⁴².

While expressing overall satisfaction with the content of online newspapers, some readers have misgivings about developmental content, especially its adequacy. This leads to the conclusion that online newspapers in Zambia are selling their readers short as a medium of development communication and that their readers are aware of this. Further research is needed to establish why readers of online newspapers do not value developmental content in these media. The impact of perceived credibility of online newspapers on gratification obtained from their content seems to be only moderate. It particularly affects readers with moderate to poor Internet skills.

⁴² The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.
<https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=zn3PXeGkGYXhkgX1s7GADQ&q=serendipity>. Accessed 20 August 2018.

CHAPTER 8

INTERACTIVITY FEATURES: USE AND EFFECT ON GRATIFICATION

While the newspaper industry continues to lose readers and attract criticism for being out of touch with its readers, the Internet has become a key strategy in regaining readership and circulation (Chung and Yoo, 2008:376 quoting Erlindson, 1995; Fulton, 1996)

Abstract

Interactivity in online newspapers is the focus of this chapter in eliciting readers' evaluation of Zambian online newspapers. This aspect of the study investigates and characterises the motivations (gratification sought) for use of interactivity features ('process motivation') and how widely they are used. It also attempts to ascertain the gratification obtained from their use among readers. The probable relationships between use of the interactivity features ('audience interactivity') and gratification obtained from them ('process gratification') and the impact of the perceived credibility of the online newspapers on gratification are also examined.

Past studies present mixed results on use of interactivity and gratification obtained from it. This study finds that use of interactivity in Zambian online newspapers is at a low level, although among the three broad categorisations of features of online newspapers, interactivity attracts greater use than hypertextuality and multi-mediality. Human interactivity features – 'knowing what others think about an issue', 'chat on the Facebook page of the newspaper', 'ability to navigate on the Facebook page of the newspaper' and 'posting own comments on stories' – are the main motivations for use of online newspapers, the most frequently used, and the most gratifying to the readers. While readers express an interest in interacting with other readers via online newspapers, they seem less interested in posting their own stories as 'citizen journalists' and linking up with the publishers and editors. This finding challenges the notion that all new media are catalysts of participatory and cyclic communication.

Key words: Zambian online newspapers. interactivity features. Internet. Audiences. Gratification

Introduction

Interactivity is the degree to which audiences engage in the communication process by interacting with the medium and/or other people with the aid of interactive features (Yoo, 2011). It is a unique quality of the Internet, of which the mass media have taken full advantage (Deuze, 2001; 2003; Chung, 2009), and the primary characteristic of online newspapers that distinguishes them from traditional print newspapers. Scholars note that interactivity in online newspapers has revolutionised the practice of journalism. It has given a new lease of life to an industry which has been on downward spiral due to loss of readership since the mid-1980s (Erlindson, 1995; Deuze, 2001; Chung and Yoo, 2008). It is presumed that readers – young and Internet-savvy ones in particular – would be attracted to the converge of mass media with ‘click’ technologies that allow them to become active participants by posting content, conversing with other readers and producers and downloading material from the websites of the medium of their choice (Chung, 2009).

Of all the benefits that come with the Internet, interactivity is seen as the main novelty and as being unmatched as a value-addition to the practice of journalism for both producers and consumers of news. Interactivity has revolutionised journalism to levels never anticipated 25 years ago. Many online news sites today are serious publications incorporating various storytelling techniques and methods of audience engagement (Chung, 2009). The benefits of interactivity are summarised by Chung and Yoo (2008: 376 quoting Rich, 2003) as follows:

The implementation of interactivity through the use of interactive features has affected journalism practice in numerous ways and is changing how news is being presented, delivered, and perceived. The use of interactive features allows for immediacy of information, increased communication with and among readers, personalized journalism that is tailored to one's liking, and nonlinearity of information.

Consequently, the interactivity features of the Internet have rapidly been adopted as survival strategies of newspapers (Chung and Yoo, 2008; Erlindson, 1995; Fulton, 1996). The shrinking audiences and loss of credibility of traditional media explain the cut-throat pace at which news organisations have been adopting online versions of

their publications and the exponential growth of online newspapers since the advent of the Internet technology in the mid-1990s (Jones, 2004 in Chung and Yoo, 2008). The back-and-forth communication between the news publication and its readers is one way that publishers envisaged to re-engage their audiences and to re-establish a relationship with them. The Online News Association (2003, quoted by Chung and Yoo, 2008:376) states:

Journalists expect to re-engage their audience through the implementation of various interactive features (e.g. e-mail links, chat features, and message boards), which are the essence of the Internet medium and have the potential to recreate the community.

Interactivity is also regarded as a *sine qua non* for citizen journalism and the enhancement of computer-mediated communication channels as effective contemporary public spheres, with astounding contributions to nourishing democracy (Mitchelstein, 2011). Despite the conflicting empirical data about the role of the Internet as a public sphere, several scholars agree that both face-to-face and mediated discussions among citizens are the cornerstone of democracy (Wyatt, 2000; Page, 1999 in Mitchelstein, 2011). The Internet allows audiences to produce content that transforms the one-way model of traditional mass-mediated communication into a dialogical one among citizens (Deuze, 2003; Boczkowski, 2004). Participation in discussion forums and other platforms is one role of the Internet as a public sphere, understood as the space where people engage in debate over political issues (Habermas, 1989 in Mitchelstein, 2011). Interactivity is the sole facilitator of this envisaged audience participation in public affairs via the Internet. The role of interactivity as a 'fun factor' is also widely acknowledged as a major catalyst for the growing popularity of online newspapers (Beyers, 2004).

Basic scope and dimensions of interactivity

Interactivity is traced to the discipline of sociology, where it is defined as 'the relationship between two or more people, who, in a given situation, mutually adjust their behaviours and actions to each other' (Chung, 2008:660). It is also described as reciprocal awareness between the sender and recipient of a communication (Duncan, 1989 quoted by Chung, 2008). It entered the field of communication following the advent of the Internet and computer-aided journalism (Chung, 2008). Communication

scholars now define interaction online as ‘interactivity’ though acknowledging that it is not the perfect equivalent of face-to-face communication and that it falls short of the ‘ideal conversation mode’ (Chung, 2008). Despite this misgiving, there is general consensus that interactivity is a practical conversation model that should be embraced and fortified in online media (Yoo, 2011).

Interactivity is a general typology consisting of three main dimensions (Deuze, 2001) of which two have been adopted in the present study to guide the structure of the instruments for data collection and the results. All three dimensions focus on classifying interactivity features of online newspapers (Deuze, 2001). The first dimension is what this study simply describes as a classification based on the functions that the features serve or what readers are able to do with them. It has three categories: *interactivity*, *multi-mediality* and *hypertextuality*. The first, *interactivity*, is described as the ‘options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories’ (Deuze 2001:3) and as the hallmark of conversational or dialogical communication of online media (Chung and Yoo, 2008). It enables interaction between readers themselves and between readers and editors or publishers through such links as chat forums, posting views on a subject and commenting on stories. It has two sub-categories, *human/medium* and *human* or *human-to-human* interactivity, which are explained in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Dimensions of interactivity – descriptions and orientations.

Source: Author’s field data

Classification	Description	Sub-categories and orientations
Interactivity	‘Options for the public to respond, interact or even customise certain stories’ (Deuze, 2001:3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human/medium: sending information • human or human-to-human: Information exchange
Multi-mediality	‘Media formats that best tell a certain story’ (Deuze, 2001:3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium: information seeking
Hyper-textuality	‘Ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks’ (Deuze, 2001:3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium/human (Category 1): personalisation. • medium/human (Category 2): information collection by

The second category, *multi-mediality*, is described as ‘media formats that best tell a certain story’ (Deuze 2001:3) other than traditional ink-on-paper or plain text. Examples of such media formats are audio-visual files such as YouTube and live

streaming, (see also Figure 1). *Multi-mediality* is also described as the trademark of convergence of media formats, which is unique to online news presentation. One sub-category, *medium interactivity*, falls under this classification.

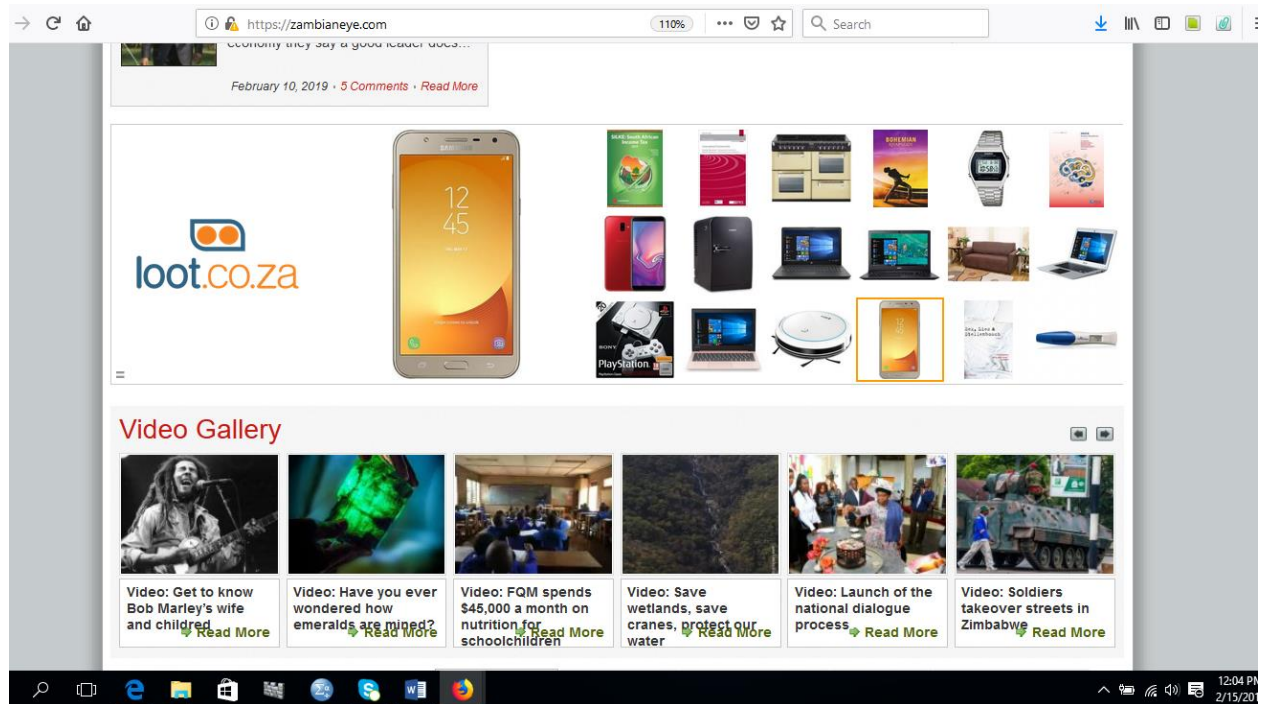


Figure 8.1 : A video gallery link (multi-mediality) in the Zambia Eye online newspaper
Source: Author's field data

The third category is *hypertextuality*, which is defined as 'ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks' (Deuze 2001:3). Through this function the website of a newspaper is enabled to load important national documents. An example of the use of this function was the uploading and leaking of the draft constitution of Zambia in 2016 by an online newspaper, *Watchdog*. *Hypertextuality* features also allow readers to navigate to other websites and social media pages of the site (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Medium/human interactivity, and its two strands of features (*personalisation* and *information collection by publishers*), fall under this category as shown in Table 8.1 (see also examples in Figure 8.2).

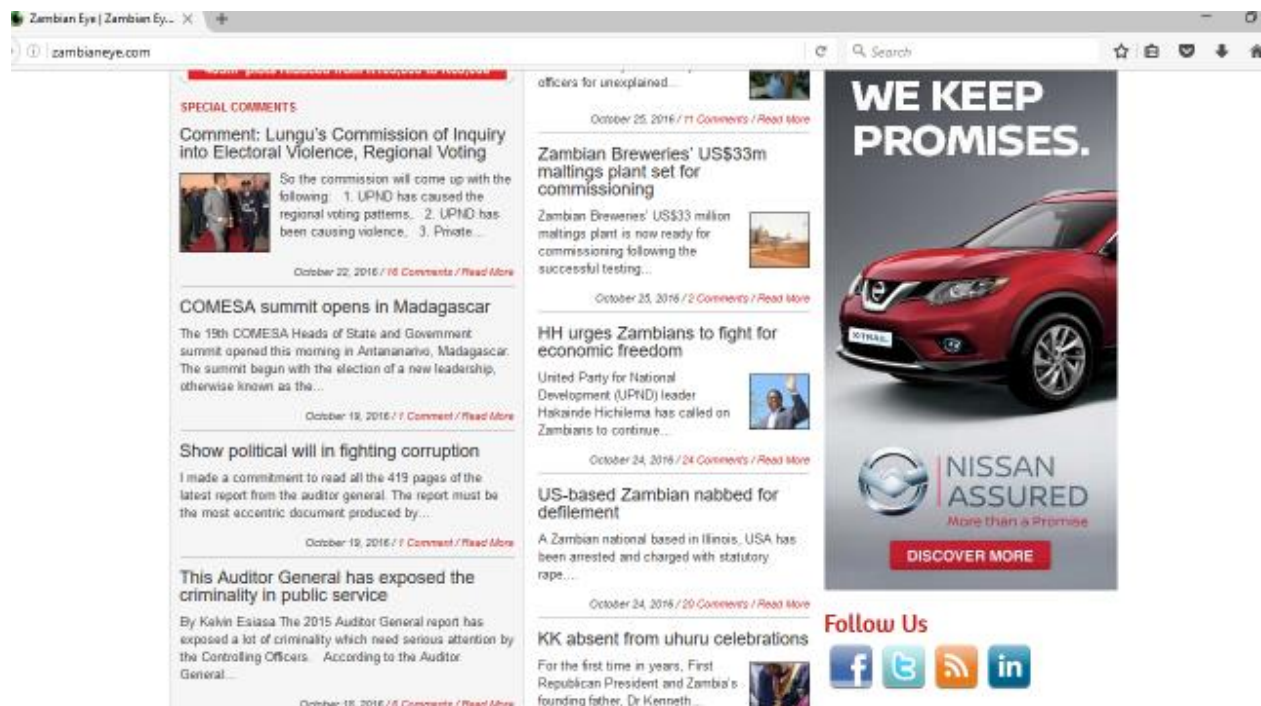


Figure 8.2 : Links to social media pages (hypertextuality) in *Zambian Eye*

Source: Author's field data

The second dimension of interactivity distinguishes between medium interactivity and human interactivity (Chung and Yoo, 2008). *Medium* interactivity, also known as user-to-medium, 'refers to interactive communication through the nature of the medium itself and how users are able to work with the technology to make choices and exert control over the communication process' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:378). In other words, it is interactivity based on the design of the medium itself. Two sub-categories of this classification are *medium* interactivity and *medium/human* interactivity. The former falls under multi-mediality and the latter under hypertextuality (see Table 1). *Human interactivity*, also known as *human-to-human*, refers to 'communication between two or more individuals that takes place through a communication channel' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:378).

In the context of network society theory, this group of features allows readers to talk to one another and/or to others connected to a particular story, being networked through the medium. Two sub-categories fall under *human* interactivity: *human* and *human/medium* interactive functionalities. Both of these sub-categories fall under the *interactivity* genre under the first dimension of classification (see also Table 1 above).

Some scholars propose to define interactivity as a continuum with the highest level of interactivity occurring when there is human-to-human communication (Hashim et al, 2007; Chung, 2008; Chung and Yoo, 2008).

Table 8.2 : Interactivity categories, sub-categories and their purposes

Source: Author's field data

Classification	Sub-category	Purpose (orientation)
Human interactivity	human/medium interactive functions	For posting personalised information or material, such as own news stories, views or photos, letters to the editor, news tips and polls
	human interactive functions	For interaction with other readers, such as sharing views on a topic, exchanging views with publishers, knowing what other readers think about an issue, engaging other readers in debate, posting views on a subject and commenting on the paper's Facebook site or Twitter
Medium interactivity	medium interactivity	Examples are searching for news, information and photos and audio and video files such as YouTube
	medium/human interactive functions	Allows for personalisation, for example: navigating to Facebook and Twitter pages of the online newspaper or other websites; accessing adverts and documents; participating in opinion polls; downloading forms; and receiving weather information or news headlines

The last dimension of interactivity is the distinction between three elements of the design of the website (Levy, 1999 in Chung and Yoo, 2008). These are: *navigational* interactivity, which 'allows users to "navigate" a site through hyperlinks and menu bars' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:380); *functional* interactivity, 'which allows users to communicate with each other' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:380); and *adaptive* interactivity, which 'allows users' experience to have consequences for the content of the site' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:380). This categorisation is not, however, a point of reference in this thesis. The first two distinctions are crucial to the present study, given its focus on understanding to what extent the readers of Zambian online newspapers make use of the different interactivity features and which are the types and the gratification derived from each of them. Research has proved that the functions provided by a particular medium influence how audiences perceive the medium's ability to gratify them. The

extent to which this occurs with interactivity, however, remains largely an unknown (Kate and Johnson, 2002).

Scope and focus of the study

Scholars recognise that knowledge of the different types of interactive features of online newspapers would facilitate the examination of audience use of these features. However, not much research has been devoted to the subject, especially in Africa. Very few studies have illuminated the extent to which audiences engage with the interactive features and identified the characteristics and backgrounds of audiences who engage with particular types of interactive features. "Discussions of online news audiences' uses of interactive features and lifestyle associations are almost completely absent in the literature" (Chung 2008:663).

Empirical data on the demographics of readers who use the different features are not readily available, despite the general agreement that different segments of the population use the Internet differently, especially in a country like Zambia where cost is a major factor in Internet access and use. There is also dearth of data on whether interactivity is one of the motivations for readers to surf online newspapers and, of particular interest from the uses and gratification theory, the extent to which this (process) motivation is actually gratified. Chung and Yoo (2008:382) state that

because of lack of studies, some uncertainties still exist in regard to the relationship between motivations for visiting an online newspaper and use of various interactive features of online newspapers.

The focus of interest in this study is process motivation and its contribution to overall gratification. Process motivation is defined as the gratification users gain 'from the experience of purposeful navigating or random browsing of the Internet in its functional process, of which the predictor is the use of and gratification from interactive and functional features' (Mings 1997:21). Stafford and Stafford (2001:71) also describes it as, "enjoyment of the act of using the medium, as opposed to interest in its content." Through the prism of the uses and gratification theory, the study interrogates earlier findings and assumptions about the use of interactive features of online newspapers and their contribution to reader gratification. It identifies the patterns of use of the different interactive features, background of users and gratification obtained from user engagement in interactivity (process gratification). It assesses the probable impact of

credibility as an intervening variable in gratification obtained from use of interactivity features. It asks the following research questions:

- Does interactivity motivate Zambian readers to turn to online newspapers?
- To what extent are readers utilising the various interactivity features of Zambian online newspapers?
- Which of the features are readers motivated to use, making the most use of and obtaining greater satisfaction from?
- Is use of the interactive features of the online newspapers a predictor of overall reader gratification from Zambian online newspapers?
- What socio-demographic factors influence use of interactivity features on online newspapers?

There is not much literature that addresses the foregoing research questions. This may be because the online newspaper industry is still in its infancy, dating back to the mid-1990s, and most of the studies pre-date the fast-changing field of digital media. Only a handful of the studies under review were undertaken after the advent of social media apps such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. These are developments that have had a germane influence on online newspapers through the convergence of technologies.

Most studies on the subject of interactivity were dedicated to analysing the extent of use of interactive features rather than assessing the relationship between interactivity as a gratification sought and obtained. Pioneering studies – those undertaken between 1997 and 2005 – indicate that users did not make optimum use of the interactivity features provided by online newspapers (Mings, 1997). Later studies acknowledge that some readers were fully aware of the information they were seeking from online newspapers and which features to use to navigate through the sites of their favourite newspapers to satisfy their information needs (Chung and Yoo, 2008; Yoo, 2011, Mitchelstein, 2011). For such studies, it was feasible to establish a correlation between gratification sought and gratification obtained from use of the features. The approaches used in these studies have been adopted for this research.

Motivations for and extent of use of interactive features

Mings (1997) examined how readers were spending their time on online newspapers and attempted to correlate their motivations with the types of human/medium interactive features (adaptive, navigational and functional). From descriptive statistics, she found that many participants spent most of their time online viewing textual rather than audio-visual or graphic material and navigating online newspaper sites as opposed to viewing content on the sites. They spent very little time following links provided by advertisers. Participants who reported obtaining surveillance (information-seeking) gratification from print newspapers spent proportionately more time on navigational features (especially those on the front pages). These surveillance-oriented participants also spent proportionately more time reading system messages and viewing sports-related subjects. Mings' study, however, did not go as far as analysing and characterising the uses of the other types of features categorised in the opening sections of this chapter. Nor did it characterise the use of the features on the basis of the demographics of readers. Moreover, it focused on online versions of print newspapers, which is understandable given that the study was conducted during the early years of online journalism.

Eleven years after Mings' study, Chung and Yoo (2008) went a step further to examine audience uses of the four types of interactivity, as defined under Category 2 of the classifications discussed earlier in this Chapter. They also analysed the user motivations for visiting an online newspaper and the relationship between user motivations and use of the different types of interactive features. Data for their study were obtained through a web-based survey. Participants were recruited via online advertisements on an online newspaper in a medium-sized mid-western city in the United States of America. The survey consisted of a self-administered questionnaire. The final sample size was 542 for which the survey completion rate was 77%.

The study found that readers infrequently used all types of interactive features; medium interactive features were the most frequently used, followed by human and human-medium interactive features. It established that readers visited online newspapers primarily for information/surveillance, entertainment and socialisation, in that order. The results allowed the authors to conclude that 'online newspapers function primarily as tools for information and entertainment rather than as places of socialization' (Chung and Yoo, 2008:390). The results supported earlier findings (Mings, 1997; Caruso,

1997), who concluded that online newspapers were serving the same purposes as traditional newspapers.

What consumers do want from online newspapers is news, preferably of local happenings and fast-breaking events, updated throughout the day (Caruso, 1997 in Chung and Yoo, 2008:391).

The authors concluded that the readers were seeking to gratify the same needs from online newspapers as they were from traditional publications.

It appears that online newspaper audiences are not currently looking for novel opportunities when visiting online newspapers and are instead sticking to traditional media motivations (Chung and Yoo (2008:393).

Another important finding from the study was the correlation between the social gratification sought and the type of interactive features used. Regression analysis was employed to identify relationships between user motivations and use of interactive features. The results showed that all the three main motivations selected by the readers – socialisation, entertainment and information seeking – significantly predicted the use of medium interactive features, such as search features, audio and video downloads and photo galleries. The need for entertainment was most strongly associated with the use of medium interactivity, and socialisation with the use of human and human/medium features (Chung and Yoo, 2008).

Their findings suggested that online newspaper audiences had a good understanding of what could be achieved through the use of certain interactive features. Clearly, the medium interactive features, which allow users to exert control over the communication process to actively search for and select information (Deuze, 2001; Chung, 2008), were used to find information, pass the time and socialise with others. The study also noted that although online newspaper audiences were not taking full advantage of the features that facilitated personal expression and interpersonal communication, those who made use of them were regarded as 'early adopters of a new function and concept of news' (Chung and Yoo 2008:392). The authors concluded that audiences were not utilising the full potential of interactivity partly due to the lack of motivation for socialisation (Chung and Yoo, 2008). Their study found that males and the Internet adept were more likely to use interactive features. They suggested that producers

needed to understand their audiences and their motivations for visiting their newspapers and to educate their readers about the features that would best facilitate the search for their needs. That, they opined, would accentuate the paybacks the readers gained from online newspapers and potentially boost (re)visitation.

The more interactivity people exercise on an online site, the more likely they are to have favourable attitudes toward the site and greater attention to visit the site on a later occasion (Chung and Yoo, 2008:393).

Their findings are relevant to the present study in that they inform the methodology and the research questions and some of the hypotheses. Chung and Yoo acknowledge that the use of self-administered web-based questionnaire was a shortcoming given the complexity of the subject. Furthermore, the study did not assess the frequency of use and satisfaction obtained from the interactivity features under each of the four sub-categories (*human, medium, human/medium* and *medium/human*).

In a separate paper, Chung (2008) analysed the following: categories of interactivity which are promoted through different types of interactive features; patterns of online newspaper readers' uses of interactive features; and factors that predict the use of different types of interactive features. In line with other studies (Chung and Yoo, 2008; Yoo, 2011), the analysis found that interactive features were generally used infrequently, especially those that facilitate human-to-human communication and that allow audiences to express their views. Chung stated that

human interactive features are what make online news truly different from news delivered through traditional media channels, but it appears that they are generally used infrequently (2008: 674).

Certain features were used significantly more or less than others; human and human/medium features were used least often. This led the author to conclude:

It appears that the news audience does not actively engage in use of interactive features on news websites, especially the features that facilitate communication and the expression of ideas – features that require more effort to be utilised (Chung, 2008:673).

The analysis attempted to fill the gaps in earlier studies (Mings, 1997; Chung and Yoo, 2008) in terms of segmentation of the audience demographics and backgrounds and

use of interactive features of online newspapers. Table 8.3 matches interactive features and reader demographics.

Table 8.3 : Segmentation of type of features, key purpose and audience demographics
Source: Author's field data

Interactive feature	Key purposes	Demographics of most frequent users
Medium	Search and download news stories, features, audio and video files	Skilled users, males and individuals who perceived online news to be credible.
Medium/human	Customise news headlines, topics, and weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politically engaged users (strongest) • Users with Internet skills
Human/medium	Sending information – posts and expressions of views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young users – “Young individuals are less shy in expressing their views online and in making use of the human/medium interactive features that facilitate social expression” (Chung, 2008:661). • Individuals who perceived online news to be credible • Politically engaged users (by far the strongest) because the human/medium interactive features allow for audiences to express their views; hence socially and politically active natural users. • Users involved with communities
Human	User-to-user, two-way, interpersonal engagement; ‘key distinction between traditional forms of news delivery and online news’ (Chung, 2008:661)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politically engaged users (strongest) because the human/medium interactive features allow for audiences to express their views; hence socially and politically active natural users. • Individuals who perceived online news to be credible • Males

Chung found that politically engaged individuals and those who perceived online news to be credible were most likely to use all forms of interactive features and were therefore making the most of online news. “While most news audiences are not using interactive features extensively, those who are taking advantage of the human/medium interactive features are individuals who are movers and shakers of their communities” (Chung, 2008:673). The study suggested that news organisations need not worry about applying all types of interactive features to engage their readers as the features serve distinct functions. Instead, they should focus on building credibility, identifying their online news audiences and then providing interactive features (Chung, 2008).

Blogs and online newspapers have some interactive features in common and both thrive on interactivity. To that end, Mitchelstein (2011) examined political talk in online newspapers and blogs using a mixed-methods approach on a sample of respondents who participated in interactive spaces provided by blogs and online newspapers. While blogs were mostly linked with discussions and socialisation – wishing to discuss issues with others, meeting others online and having fun – posting comments in online newspapers was usually associated with motives associated with self-expression, such as making opinions public and blowing off steam. The motivations for bloggers in online newspapers were distributed as follows: 72% to express opinions; 21% to discuss ideas and political views; 16% to curb media bias; and 14% to blow off steam. Only two respondents said they posted their comments for fun (Mitchelstein, 2011). Of the participants in blogs on the other hand, 44% mentioned the need to express their opinion; 32% said that they blogged because they enjoyed debating, 17% said they took account of the feelings of the community as a motivation for blogging and 6% said that they blogged for entertainment. Only two respondents mentioned catharsis (letting off steam) as a motivation to post comments in blogs.

About half the respondents who participated in both spaces cited different motivations for posting comments in online newspapers and blogs (Mitchelstein, 2011). He concluded that online discussion was shaped by participants' and moderators' motivations and practices rather than by the technological advances of the Internet. As for audience characterisation, he found that Argentinians who posted comments in online newspapers and blogs were better educated and more likely to be male. The findings added a new dimension to online engagement: expressing opinions and linking up with other people generally were major motivations among Argentinian readers for visiting both blogs and online newspapers. However, the study was too narrow and not helpful methodologically because it had failed to analyse and characterise the use of features and to link the motivations.

In the only two relevant African studies, Mathew et al (2013), in their study of motivations for reading online newspapers, found that 62% of the readers of online versions of a newspaper read them because it allowed them to make comments. Similarly, Hassan, Latiff and Suhaimi (2015) found that many readers (mean=3.62) were motivated to read online newspapers because of their interactive features. Weber (2013) explored the ways in which news factors affected participation and interactivity.

He found that posting comments on the news was one of the most popular forms of user participation in online newspapers and concluded that there was great potential for public discourse associated with this form of user communication.

Interactivity and gratification obtained

A few studies have analysed the contribution of interactivity to user satisfaction (process gratification). Some found a positive relationship between use of interactive features and reader gratification (Rafael and Ariel, 2007; Chung, 2009; Yoo, 2011); others found a negative or boomerang effect on advertising (Bucy, 2004); and yet others found no relationship at all (Shankar et al, 2003). Yoo (2011) undertook a detailed analytical examination of the cause-and-effect relationships between the motives, audience interactivity, gratification obtained, attitude toward the online newspaper and repeat visit intention. She devised a model that examined four major relationships: influences of gratification sought; influences of audience interactivity as an intervening variable; outcomes of gratification obtained; and relationships among the outcomes. The study was one of the few that attempted to establish the role of audience interactivity within a gratification-seeking process model for online newspapers, as illustrated in Figure 8.3 (below).

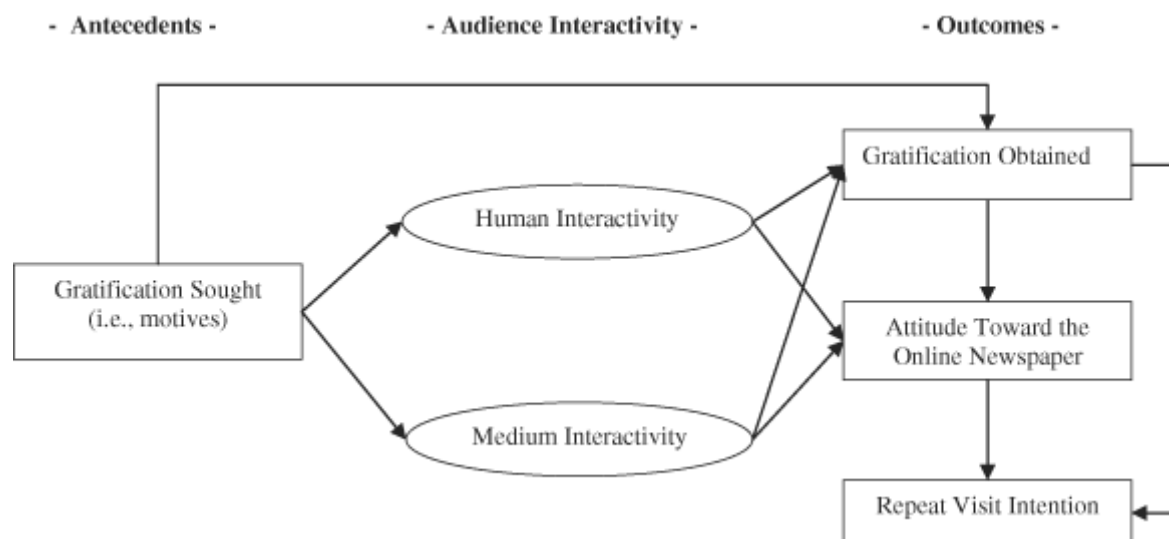


Figure 8.3 : Hypothesised model of audience interactivity in online newspapers

Yoo's study established four primary motives for visiting online newspapers, of which three had direct effects on audience interactivity: information-seeking (correlated with

medium interactivity); entertainment (correlated with human and medium interactivity) and socialisation (correlated with human interactivity). 'Pastime' did not correlate with any specific feature, implying that 'pastimers' could use any of the interactive features to gratify their desires for being online.

Three out of the four GS [gratification sought] factors (socialization, entertainment, and information seeking) had significantly positive effects on audience interactivity. More specifically, socialization motive had a positive effect on human interactivity ($\beta = 0.80$, $p < .01$), whereas information-seeking motive had a positive effect on medium interactivity ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < .01$). Entertainment motive had positive effects on both human ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < .01$) and medium interactivity ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < .01$) (Yoo, 2011:16).

The author concluded that the positive relationships between each gratification-seeking motive and corresponding gratification obtained suggested that survey respondents had a good understanding of what could be achieved from online newspapers. The findings supported the hypothesis that audience interactivity was a plausible intervening factor in the process of pursuing gratification in online newspapers. In essence, audience interactivity was both a significant effect for gratification-seeking motives and an important cause of gratification obtained. Yoo (2011) concluded that readers with a greater level of goal-directed motives engaged in the communication process by using various interactive features (i.e. human and medium interactivity). Consequently, greater use of interactivity features was a predictor of greater gratification levels, which in turn affected readers' attitudes toward the online newspaper and repeat visit intention. "The more goal-oriented purposes such as information seeking, entertainment, and socialization motives provide the driving force behind audience interactivity" Yoo (2011:17).

Yoo noted that attitudes were a mediating factor in forming individuals' intention to visit the online newspaper in the future. This is a crucial finding in the context of the present study, one of whose objects is to examine the role of interactivity in reader gratification. The study contributed to the body of communication theories in four areas. First, it distinguished and unified interactivity with respect to the medium and other people. Second, it revived the uses and gratification approach, with respect to linking to interactive features of online newspapers. Third, it made a distinction

between gratification sought and gratification obtained after media use. Finally, it connected the outcome of the comparison of this distinction to attitudes and repeat visit intention of online newspaper readers. More broadly, it connected motive gratification to media acceptance and continued use to audience interactivity.

Rafael and Ariel (2007) build on Rafael's 1988 study and concluded that there was a preponderance of field evidence which pointed to positive outcomes of interactivity. In the earlier study, though dated, Rafael (1988) concluded that the outcome of interactivity was satisfaction, motivation, fun, cognition and learning from the news medium. In a follow-up study, Chung (2009:866) concluded that 'there is a robust relationship between the use of interactive features and perceived satisfaction'. Lowry et al (2009) devised a computer-mediated communication (CMC) interactivity model to explain and predict how interactivity enhances communication quality which results in increased process satisfaction in CMC-supported workgroups. They found that perceived interactivity led to an increase in perceived community quality. Likewise, perceived communication quality was a significant positive predictor of process satisfaction, defined as 'the degree to which group members are happy with the way (e.g. procedures, deliberations) they arrived at an outcome' (Lowry et al, 2009:163).

Interactivity has also been tested in the field of marketing (Zhang and Gisela, 2000; Zviran et al, 2006 quoted by Chung, 2009), with particular interest in investigating how design characteristics affect customer evaluation of online service quality and risk, which ultimately lead to channel use or shunning (Chung, 2009). Literature in this field shows that web design affects customer evaluations and web quality affects use and repeat visitation, including recommending the site to others. Interactivity was also found to affect user attitudes and ultimately positive effects in advertising (Wu, 2005; Cho and Leckenby, 1999).

The present study adopted the uses and gratification theory in analysing motivations, use and gratification in regard to the interactive features of Zambian online newspapers. Analysis of causality between gratification sought and gratification obtained in Yoo's study had a profound influence on some of the relationships being investigated. However, whereas Yoo investigated interactivity as both an independent and intervening variable, this study assesses it only as an independent variable for gratification, with credibility as a probable intervening variable.

Literature in summary

The studies referenced in this chapter suggest that the interactive features of online newspapers are less frequently used than the publishers probably anticipated. Ironically, the human interactive features – which are considered the hallmark of online media and the key difference with traditional news presentation – are among the least utilised. Human interactive features were premised on the need for socialisation and making the surfing of online newspapers a pleasurable experience, but the opportunities to use these features to enhance reader gratification and encourage repeat visitation are not fully exploited. The studies also point to a positive relationship between socialisation and repeat visitation – the outcome of gratification that readers obtain from online newspapers (Yoo, 2008). It is therefore plausible to conclude that less frequent use of human interactive features has an ultimate effect on the popularity and regularity of use of online newspapers.

Yoo (2011), Chung and Yoo (2008) and Chung (2008) report a correlation between social motivations for visiting online newspapers and the type of interactive features the readers use. The authors are unanimous in their conclusion that most readers know exactly what they want and how to get what they want. Moreover, more engaged and goal-oriented readers tend to be more active and feature-specific surfers of the online newspapers. The findings by Yoo (2011) that use of interactive features is both a potential facilitator and intervening variable between gratification sought and gratification obtained add a new dimension to the study of attitude formations about online newspapers and consequently its long-term acceptability among readers, manifested through repeat visitations. Another noteworthy finding is that perceived credibility of newspapers has an effect on the use of interactive features, which is one of the relationships that the present study investigates.

The studies present the use of interactivity features of online newspapers as an empowering undertaking as well as a platform for participatory and citizen journalism. Interactivity is therefore seen as catalyst for attainment of the ideals of a network society as espoused by Manuel Castells (1991), one of the theories addressed in the present study. As for the characteristics of users of the four types of interactive features, the studies overwhelmingly suggest that males, the young and users who are Internet adept, politically active and who perceive online newspapers as credible are generally the main users of most of the features. Differences abound, though, in terms

the features used among these audience groups. The findings of the previous studies referenced in this report thus lead to the following predictions:

Hypothesis 1: Readers of the Zambian online newspapers do not use the interactive features frequently.

Hypothesis 2: Medium interactivity features are the most frequently used and human interactive features the least.

Hypothesis 3: Negatively perceived credibility of online newspapers affects both the use of and gratification from Zambian online newspapers.

Gaps in previous studies

The referenced studies have the following limitations:

- Geographically, they were all conducted in environments different from Zambia's; their relevance is therefore negligible
- They are all fairly dated – the latest being more than four years old – for a technology evolving as fast as the Internet
- None involved samples from the general population; the sample sizes are too small and there is no evidence that they were selected scientifically
- None purposefully set out to investigate the effect of credibility of online newspapers on gratification obtained, though Yoo's (2011) study examined it in regression analyses of audience characteristics
- With the exception of Yoo's (2011) study, none examined the contribution of the interactive features to overall reader gratification from online newspapers
- None of the studies undertook a further diagnostic analysis of the use of the functions of each of the four types of interactive features. This means that not much, if anything, is known to date about the most common uses of each of the categories

The present study confronts these shortcomings by addressing the research questions raised earlier in the chapter with the aim of contributing new knowledge of the subject.

Results

The following section presents the findings associated with the research questions. It is organised as follows:

1. Extent of use of interactivity features
2. Interactivity, multi-mediality and hypertextuality: comparison of reader use
3. Human versus media interactivity: comparison of motivations (reasons) for use, frequency of use and satisfaction from use
4. Comparison of frequency of use among the specific interactivity functions
5. Interactivity and reader gratification

Extent of use of interactivity features

One section of the questionnaire asked respondents to state all the reasons why they turned to Zambian online newspapers. The lure of interactivity features emerged as one of the 10 motivations on the list. However, only 38% of the 335 readers cited the attraction of interactivity features. Most said they turned to online newspapers for 'breaking and up-to-date news', 62% for adverts, 55% for 'more independent news', 46% for 'detailed news', 38% 'due to Internet access' and another 38% due to the interactive features offered by the online newspapers. Thirty-five percent cited 'credibility of the news', 34% 'uncensored news', 30% 'because they are cheaper than print' and 11% 'posting personalised comments'.

Sixty-six percent of respondents also agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Overall, the interactive features of Zambian standalone online newspapers make them more attractive to me than print newspapers." As for which readers were most attracted by the interactive features of online newspapers, the logistic regression model (not attached) shows that a reader living in a low-density suburb is 10.96 times more likely to have been attracted by the interactivity features than one in a high-density area.⁴³ On the other hand, a reader with a tertiary education qualification is 0.92 times less

⁴³ In Zambia, low-density areas are predominantly occupied by higher-income earners; high-density areas are typically home to low-income earners and include shanty compounds.

likely to be attracted by interactivity features compared to a secondary school level reader. Likewise, a registered voter is 0.05 times less likely to be attracted by interactivity features than a non-registered voter.

Table 8.4: Factor affecting preference of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers due to interactivity features, Multiple logistic regression. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.36	0.34	0.32	0.06	2.10
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.64	10.40	12.17	1.05	103.21
	36-45 years	1	1	-	-	-
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	1.26	0.92***	0.84	0.15	5.46
	University degree	0.38	1.71	2.45	0.10	28.54
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.25	0.11	0.15	0.01	1.78
	K101-250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
	>K250, 000	4.55	19.11	35.90	0.48	758.98
Location [Urban]	Rural	1	1	-	-	-
Residence [High density]	Low density	3.75***	10.96***	12.30	1.21	98.93
	Rural	1	1	-	-	-
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.18***	0.05***	0.08	0.01	1.14
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.55	2.82	4.40	1.13	59.82
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1	1	-	-	-
	Thrice	1.42	2.79	3.42	0.25	30.85
	Four times and more	1.24	0.99	0.94	0.15	6.42
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.50	7.23	9.31	0.58	90.10
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.45	0.56	0.78	0.04	8.83
	6-10 years	3.53	0.97	1.39	0.06	16.29
	>10 years	4.76	0.73	1.26	0.02	21.62
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.62	0.11	0.15	0.01	1.48
	Very poor	1	0.67	0.72	0.08	5.55
Years reading favorite newspaper	-	1.25	1.34	0.41	0.74	2.45
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.94	0.73	0.17	0.47	1.15
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket						

Interactivity, multi-mediality and hypertextuality: reader use compared

A computation of the mean scores of the first dimension of classifications of the functional features was undertaken to establish and compare the extent of use. As shown in Table 8.4, the *interactivity* group of features were the main motivation and the most frequently used features (an average of 75 or 22% of users), followed by the *multi-mediality* features. *Hypertextuality* features were the least used (48 or 14% of users). The results confirm a very low level of use of the interactivity features of online newspapers and support Hypothesis 1: *Readers of Zambian online newspapers do not frequently use interactive features.*

Table 8.5 : Comparison of use.

Source: Author's field data

Feature type	Average users	Average score
Interactivity	75	22%
Multi-mediality	67	20%
Hypertextuality	48	14%

Human versus medium interactivity: comparison of motivations (reasons) for use, frequency of use and satisfaction from use

This section compares results relating to the motivations or reasons for use of each the four sub-categories of interactivity features, the extent or *frequency of use* and the *level of satisfaction* or gratification obtained from the use of the four types of interactivity features falling under *human* and *medium interactivity* typologies (as explained earlier in the chapter). Readers were asked to rank each of the three measures on a score of one to five, from which mean scores were computed as the basis of comparisons.

As shown in Table 8.5, *human* or *human-to-human interactivity* features were the greatest drawcard for online newspaper readers with a mean score of 2.64 (SD 1.86). These features give readers the opportunity to find out the views of other readers, share their opinions, engage them in debate and exchange views with publishers. The second most frequently used were *medium/human* interactivity features with a mean score of 2.34 (SD 1.78). These features allow readers to personalise an online newspaper site by navigating

to its Facebook and Twitter pages or other websites and accessing adverts and documents, among other possibilities. The *medium interactivity features*, which allow readers to search for news, information, features, audio and video files, YouTube, or photos, for instance, ranked third with a mean score of 2.0 (SD 1.71). The *human/medium* features, which provide for posting personalised information, news stories or views, letters to the editors, news tips, photos etc., scored the least with a mean score of 0.88 (SD 1.59). The results suggest that interactivity in its general sense is not a major reason or motivation for readers to visit online newspapers.

The findings in regard to *frequency of use* revealed a similar pattern as those for motivation for use. The *human interactivity* features were the most frequently used among the respondents with a mean score of 3.65 (SD 1.07). The *medium/human* interactive features were next with a mean score of 3.41 (SD 1.36). The *medium* features emerged as the third most frequently used with a mean score of 3.11 (SD 1.07) and the *human/medium* features were ranked fourth with a mean score of 2.86 (SD 1.08). Again, the results confirm barely average frequency of use, although higher than the motivations for use (or reason for which readers turned to the Zambian online newspapers in the first place).

As for the *level of satisfaction* or gratification obtained from use of each of the four sub-groups of features, most respondents were satisfied with the *human/medium* interactivity features and *human* interactivity features, having a mean score of 3.69 (SD 0.92 and SD 1.08 respectively). The next most satisfying or gratifying groups of features were *medium interactivity* with a mean score of 3.53 (SD 1.42) and *medium/human* features with a mean score of 3.42 (SD 1.48). This leads to rejection of Hypothesis 2: *Medium interactivity features are the most frequently used; human interactive features the least used.*

Table 8.6 : Reason for use, frequency of use and level of satisfaction among the broad interactive features Source: Author's field data

Sub-category	Reason (mean)	SD	N	Frequency (mean)	SD	N	Satisfaction (mean)	SD	N
Human/medium	0.88	1.593	236	2.86	1.084	37	3.69	0.925	45
Human	2.64	1.86	236	3.65	1.086	37	3.69	1.083	45
Medium	2	1.712	236	3.11	1.075	37	3.53	1.424	45
Medium/human	2.34	1.778	236	3.41	1.363	37	3.42	1.485	45

N=335

Use of specific interactivity features

This section presents the results of the extent of use of the functional interactivity features of online newspapers. The features fall under the four sub-categories, which are located in the three classifications as defined by Deuze (2001): interactivity; multi-mediality; and hypertextuality.

Use of Interactivity features

This group consists of *human/medium* interactivity and *human* interactivity features. Table 8.6 shows that 'posting stories' was the *human/medium* feature most used (by 64 or 19% of the 335 readers in the sample), followed by 'submitting photos' (by 37 or 18% of the readers), 'submitting news tips' (9%), 'sending letters to the editor' (8%) and 'sending emails to the editor' (7%). They were followed by 'email link to the writer' of the article, 'link to the publishers' and 'other sending information features' (all at 3%). The *human/medium* sub-category of features was used by an average of only 26 people (8%) of the 335 readers in the sample.

Table 8.7 : Number of users and percentage of use of human/medium interactivity features of online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

Human/medium interactive feature – sending information	N	%
Posting stories	64	19
Submitting photos	37	11
Submitting news tips	29	9
Sending letter to editor	26	8
Sending email to editor	22	7
Emailing link to writer	11	3
Link to publishers	9	3
Other information- sending feature	10	3
Average score	26	8

N=335

As for the motivations for use of the features under the *human* interactivity sub-category, the second under the *interactivity* classification, the results in Table 8.8 (below) show that 'knowing what others think about an issue' was cited by most readers (278 or 83%), followed by 'chat on Facebook of website' at 75% (252 readers), 'post own comments on stories' at 54% (184 readers), 'post my views on a subject' (47% or 158 of the readers) and 'chat with other users' at 36% (120 readers). 'Share my political views' and 'engage others in a debate' were ranked sixth and seventh respectively (at 27% and 26%), while 'chat on Twitter' page of the newspaper and 'other exchange features' were cited least at 8% and 3% respectively. The *human* or *human-to-human* interactivity features came out as the main motivation for use of the functional features offered by Zambian online newspapers among an average of 125 (37%) of the 335 readers.

Table 8.8 : Number of users and percentage of use of the human interactivity features of online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

Human interactive feature/exchange	N	%
Knowing what others think about an issue	278	83
Chatting on Facebook	252	75
Posting own comments on stories	182	54
Posting own views on a subject	158	47
Chatting with other users	120	36
Engaging other readers in debate	88	26
Sharing political views	90	27
Question-and-answer links	50	15
Chatting on Twitter	26	8
Other exchange features	10	3
Average score	125	37

N=335

Use of multi-mediality interactivity features

As explained in earlier sections, this category has only one group of features, *medium* interactivity. Seeking information is the main orientation of the features under this category. As shown in Table 8.8, 'accessing video files' was cited for using these features by 45% (or 152 readers), followed by 'information adverts' (42%), YouTube (23%) and 'audio recorded files' (19%) and 'live television streaming' (16%). 'Radio streaming' and 'other uses' were cited by 8% and 4% of readers respectively. Overall the *medium* interactivity group of features scored an average of 20% (67 readers).

Table 8.9 : Number of users and percentage of use for medium interactive features – information seeking orientation. Source: Author's field data

Feature	N	%
Video files	152	45
Informational adverts	81	24
YouTube	76	23
Audio files	64	19
Live television streaming	52	16
Other information-seeking files	28	8
Radio streaming	15	4
Average score	67	20

N=335

Use of hypertextuality functional interactivity features

Hypertextuality consists of one group of features, *medium/human* interactivity, which is further divided into two clusters characterised by the functions they serve: Category 1, *personalisation orientation* and Category 2, *information collection by publishers*. For the first, Table 8.9 shows that 'ability to navigate to Facebook page of online newspaper' was cited the most (71% or 239 readers), followed by 'ability to access other documents' (37%), 'ability to navigate to other websites via the websites of the online newspaper' (29% or 98 of readers), 'ability to avail statistics' (8%) and 'greetings by site' (5%). The *personalisation orientation* functions were used by an average of only 68 (20%) of readers.

Table 8.10 : Number of users and percentage of use for medium/human interactive features – personalisation orientation. Source: Author's field data

Feature	N	%
Ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper	239	71
Ability to access other documents	123	37
Ability to navigate other websites	98	29
Community information	92	27
Search feature	65	19
Ability to access adverts	60	18
Weather information	50	15
Calendar events information	48	14
Customised topics	37	11
Emailing updates	37	11
Ability to navigate Twitter	33	10
Other personalisation orientation	33	10
Ability to avail statistics	27	8
Greetings by site	16	5
Average score	68	20

N=335

As shown in Table 8.11, dealing with the *information collection by publishers* functions, 'advertising information' and 'participate in opinion polls' were cited as the most frequently used, both at 17% (58 readers). In joint second place were 'contacting publishers' and 'applying for a job from publishers' at 7% (or 23 readers). The least used features were 'licensing information' and 'fill in subscription form' at 4% and 3% respectively. The *medium/human* interactive features were cited by an average of 28 respondents (8%) as the *reason for use*.

Table 8.11 : Number of users and percentage of use for medium/human interactive features – information collection by publishers. Source: Author's field data

Feature	N	%
Advertising information	58	17
Participating in opinion polls	58	17
Contacting the publishers	23	7
Applying for job from publishers	23	7
Logging in information	16	5
Licensing information	10	4
Filling subscription form	9	3
Average score	28	8

N=335

Comparison of use of individual interactivity features

Comparing the individual features across all three classifications, four sub-categories and five clusters of features (Table 8.12), the individual scores for frequency of use of the features were grouped as 'high' (scores of 70-100%), 'medium' (50-69%) and 'low' use (0-49%). Only three functional features fell in the 'high' use category. They were 'knowing what others think about an issue', 'chat on Facebook page of newspaper' and 'ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper'. 'Posting own comments on stories' fell under 'medium' category and the rest of the features (42 in total) under 'low' use. It was noteworthy that two of the top four features in the 'low' category facilitated 'exchange' and were among the human-to-human category of features.

Table 8.12 : Top 10 most used specific interactivity features.

Source: Author's field data

Specific functional feature	N	%
High (70 – 100%)		
Knowing what others think about an issue	278	83
Chat on Facebook page of newspaper	252	75
Ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper	239	71
Average score – medium (50-69%)	256	76
Posting own comments on stories	182	54
Average score – low (0-49%)	182	54
Posting own views on a subject	158	47
Accessing video files	152	45
Ability to access other documents	123	37
Chatting with other users	120	36
Ability to navigate other websites	98	29
Community information	92	27

N=335

As shown in Table 8.13, 'radio streaming' (4%), 'linking with publishers' (3%), 'fill in subscription form' (3%) and 'email link to the writer' (3%) were the least used interactivity features. The full list appears in Appendix 8.1.

Table 8.13 : Ten least used individual specific features

Source: Author's field data

Specific functional feature	N	%
Chatting on Twitter	26	8
Sending email to editor	22	7
Contacting the publishers	23	7
Applying for job from publishers	23	7
Licensing information	10	4
Greetings by site	16	5
Radio streaming	15	4
Emailing link to writer	11	3
Filling subscription form	9	3
Link to publishers	9	3
Average score	68	24

N=335

Interactivity and overall reader gratification

The study sought to measure and approximate the readers' gratification from the use of online newspapers. They were asked to state their agreement with five statements measured on a Likert scale: agreed/strongly agreed, neutral and disagreed/strongly disagreed. The results, summarised in Table 8.14, show that 56% of the readers are satisfied with the interactivity features of online newspapers; 90% said that interactivity features were the reason to continue reading them; and 87% indicated that the features were the main reason for re-visiting the online newspapers. Another 87% indicated that the interactivity features were what they liked in the online newspapers that they read and 76% said that the credibility of the online newspapers did not affect the satisfaction they obtained from the interactivity features. Given this expressed limited impact of credibility on gratification from interactive features, the results reject Hypothesis 3: *Negative perceived credibility of online newspapers affects both the use of and gratification from Zambian online newspapers.*

Table 8.14 : Interactivity and overall reader gratification.

Source: Author's field data

Statement	Agreed/ Strongly agreed	Disagreed /Strongly disagreed	Not sure
Overall, I am satisfied with the interactive features provided by Zambian stand-alone newspapers	56%	34%	10%
Overall, the interactive features of the Zambian stand-alone online newspaper are the reasons for me to continue reading them	90%	6%	4%
The interactive features of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers make me want to revisit them	87%	4%	8%
The interactive features of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have made me like them	87%	4%	8%
Overall, the credibility (trust, truthfulness, believability, objectivity etc.) of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers does not affect the satisfaction I get from their interactive features	76%	11%	12%

Demographic factors affecting satisfaction from features

The multiple logistic regression analysis (Table 8.15) shows that length in years of reading is a positive predictor of whether a reader finds interactive features gratifying and is the reason for continued use of stand-alone online newspapers. Controlling for all factors, as the number of years reading online newspapers go up by 1.23 years, the desire to continue reading them due to satisfaction from the interactivity features increases by 1.54 times. Another multiple logistic regression model (not attached) shows that political activism, frequency of Internet use, Internet skills and years of reading online newspapers all had a bearing on the perception that credibility of online newspapers does not determine satisfaction from interactive features. In fact, a reader who voted in the 2016 election is 0.36 times less likely to find the interactivity features of online newspapers gratifying due to perceived credibility than a reader who did not vote. On the other hand, a moderate weekly Internet user is 2.69 more times likely to find features of online newspapers gratifying irrespective of perceived credibility than one who did not vote; a

reader with good Internet skills is 10.42 times likely to find features of online newspapers gratifying irrespective of perceived credibility than one who rates his or her skills as poor; and as the number of years reading online newspapers go up by 1.36 years, the satisfaction from the interactivity features irrespective of perceived credibility also go up by 1.65 times.

Table 8.15: Interactive features as reason for continued use of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers, a multiple logistic regression model. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	SE	95%	CI
Sex [male]	Female	1.07	0.94	0.55	0.30	2.94
Age category [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.50	1.12	1.48	0.08	14.97
	36-45 years	1	1	-	-	-
Education [secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/diploma	0.53	0.17	0.17	0.02	1.23
	University degree	0.19	0.16	0.20	0.01	1.84
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.01	3.97	3.13	0.84	18.63
	K101-250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Location [urban]	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Residence [high-density]	Rural	1.71	5.35	8.06	0.28	102.16
	Low-density	1.62	0.93	0.78	0.18	4.81
	Rural	1.47	0.37	0.62	0.01	10.23
Registered voter [No]	Yes	0.40***	0.92	0.71	0.20	4.20
Voted in 2016 [No]	Yes	0.34***	0.50	0.38	0.11	2.21
Internet use per day [once]	Twice	2.28	2.45	2.01	0.49	12.19
	Three times	1.24	1.17	1.02	0.21	6.48
	Four times and more	0.40	0.39	0.38	0.06	2.54
Internet use per week [high]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.53	0.40	0.38	0.06	2.56
Number of years using Internet [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.76	2.09	1.95	0.33	13.06
	6-10 years	1.23	0.67	0.87	0.05	8.60
	>10 years	3.97	10.94	15.37	0.69	171.84
Internet skills [Poor]	Good	5.04	8.01	11.52	0.47	132.11
	Moderate	1.92	1.94	1.43	0.46	8.25
Years reading favourite newspaper	Very poor	1.42	1.45	1.18	0.29	7.11
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.23	1.54***	0.35	0.99	2.40

***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.85	0.80	1.13	0.57	1.11
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Discussion

The first research question asks to what extent use of interactivity features motivates Zambian readers to turn to online newspapers. Interactivity (in the general sense) is cited as one of the motivations. However, only four in 10 readers said they were driven by the features of online newspapers to visit them. On their first visit, readers said, they were driven more by the search for latest news and information. A positive correlation was found for interactivity features between residing in a low-density residential area and attraction to online newspapers, implying that the well-do-to Zambians are more likely than residents of high-density areas to be drawn to online newspapers for their interactivity features. This could be explained mainly in terms of their ability to afford Internet data bundles that would enable them to stay longer on the Net and to 'navigate' to the many 'pages' and interactive features offered by the online news sites (for instance, to their Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages). Readers in high density areas are also likely to be more educated and, consequently, more active on the Net in general as reported in other sections of the thesis.

The second research question asked respondents to state their motivations for use and frequency of use of the three dimensions of interactivity features. The results reveal low use among Zambian readers measured by the numbers of users of each of the categories of features. Interactivity features, which give 'options for the public to respond, interact or even customise certain stories' (Deuze, 2001:3), emerged as the most frequently used among the three main (first dimension) categories of the functional features. Following them were hypertextuality features, which provide for ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks (Deuze, 2001). Multi-mediality features, which provide for use of media formats that best tell a certain story (Deuze (2001:3), were the least utilised. The result gives an early indication that Zambian online newspapers readers are more desirous of using features that allow them to socialise with other readers in one way or another.

Motivation and frequency of use: human versus medium interactivity

In terms of motivations for and use of sub-categories of features (human versus medium interactivity), the results are conclusive that the majority of Zambian readers seek and actually more frequently use the features that allow them to interact with other readers (human or human-to-human interactive features). In her typology, Chung (2009:858) describes these as 'presentation of news with interpersonal communication opportunities'. Next, as both reason for use and frequency of use, are medium/human interactivity features. These features allow for personalised searches, such as navigating to the Facebook or Twitter pages of an online newspaper, other websites, for adverts, to access documents posted by their online newspapers etc. The relatively high use of this sub-category of features implies that Zambian readers were somewhat actively involved in the search for informational material on the Net. Chung (2009:258) describes this function as 'presentation of news with features that allow audiences to experience news stories through increased choice options, such as different modalities'.

Though no correlation analyses were undertaken, the results confirm a relationship between choice of features and the motivation for visiting an online newspaper, use of human-to-human features and the desire for socialisation, as reported in chapter 6. The high-level use of human interactivity is consistent with the para-social motivation (the need to connect with other readers), which was ranked second by the respondents as the reason for visiting online newspapers (see also chapter 6). The choice of medium/human interactivity features supports such findings (see also chapter 6) as Facebook was rated the most regularly visited news medium, the most popular source of breaking news and the route through which the majority of the readers accessed their favourite online newspaper.

The human/medium features were the least favoured in terms of both what readers sought and frequency of use. These features allow for posting personalised material, such as news stories or views, letters to the editors, news tips and photos. This result is consistent with the conclusion that readers were not making frequent use of 'features that require more effort to be utilised' (Chung, 2008:673) such as posting own stories, searching for documents or connecting to other websites. However, the present study challenges the

findings of earlier research on the high use of human interactivity features. Some earlier studies concluded that these features were among the least used of the set of features of online newspapers. For instance, as reported earlier, Chung (2008: 674) concluded that the human interactive features, despite being what make online news truly different from news delivered through traditional media channels, appeared to be generally used infrequently.

The high or frequent use of human interactivity features is an affirmation that online newspapers have become appreciable platforms or 'public spheres' for interpersonal communication in the online community in Zambia. It also epitomises the evolving role of online newspapers as facilitators of the network society as envisioned by Van Dijk (1991) and Manuel Castells (2009). The two 'founding fathers' of the theory envisaged that in a network society new media, including online newspapers and other digital media, would contribute to enhancing interactivity and building connections among individuals and nodes in the network.

Use of specific individual features

The study found that many of the 42 interactivity features were infrequently used. 'Knowing what others think about an issue', 'chatting on Facebook page of newspaper', 'ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper' and 'posting own comments on stories' attracted the greatest numbers of users. These four features are in the human-to-human and the medium/human sub-categories, once again confirming their popularity. The combination of these features suggests that the majority of Zambian readers are primarily involved in two main activities in browsing the sites of the online newspapers: deliberation online (as found Stromer-Galley, 2000 in Chung, 2009); and simply connecting and networking with the Internet community. These motivations reflect the need to connect and network with other people in the Internet community, have their voices heard and stay updated with global goings-on. All these activities, if maximised by publishers, have the potential to turn Zambian online newspapers into truly audience-based and citizen-driven platforms.

The high use of features for posting comments is consistent with the findings of other African researchers in Nigeria (Mathew et al, 2013), who found that the majority of readers

of online newspapers turned to this medium for this purpose. Weber (2013) found that posting comments was one of the most popular forms of user participation and discourse associated with this form of user communication. The fact that the readers were also active on the social media platforms of the online newspapers, especially Facebook (reported in chapter 6), confirms that online newspapers serve a socialisation function among Zambian readers.

Posting comments in blogs is also associated with 'meeting other people', 'having fun', 'expressing opinions', and 'the feeling of being part of the community' (Mitchelstein, 2011). However, the idea that readers in Zambia will assume the role of citizen journalists – in line with the comment below – is far-fetched because most of their posts are comments on published stories rather than news reports of activities in their neighbourhoods.

These features allow users to act as citizen journalists. In addition, these features invite users to work together with journalists to make journalism more meaningful and in the process allow news consumers to have more positive and satisfactory news consumption experiences (Chung 2009:867).

The present study finds that 'linking to publishers', 'filling subscription form' and 'emailing link to writer of a story', in that order, were the least used features. This suggests that online newspaper readers in Zambia are less interested in direct communication with the inner workings of online newspapers than in the platforms they provide. This contradicts the assertion that this news medium is a manifestation of cyclic and dialogical communication between readers and publishers. In fact, it confirms that readers are more interested in horizontal communication with fellow readers rather than vertical communication with the editors and publishers. The findings also contradict the assertion that online news community audiences do not consider online newspapers as platforms for interpersonal communication (Chung, 2009). On the contrary, Zambian online newspapers audiences seem to be warming up to the idea that these platforms can in fact be public spheres for socialisation, information and rhetoric. The question, though, is whether these platforms created by online newspaper chat forums meet the description of 'public

spheres' in line with the definition of communication scholar Hauser (2002:). He defines public spheres as 'a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment about them' and as 'a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk ... a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed' Hauser (2002). Nor has the study been able to explore whether Zambian online newspapers as popular medium have – in the words of Jensen (2002:44) – 'signally failed to convert a people into a public fully involved in the process'.

What is evident is that the public forums created and debates conducted in online newspapers in Zambia are not moderated and are not aimed at consensus building. They therefore fail to meet the test of an effective public sphere as defined by Habermas (Papacharissi, 2002), which requires 'specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it'. To some extent, Zambian online newspapers fulfil the ethos of new media in that their readers are not confined to communication channels and protocols determined by the authorities. Rather they are expected to be an alternative to state-controlled traditional media (Moyo, 2007) and therefore able to take control of the processes in ways that limit potential for censorship and internal controls.

Interactivity and reader satisfaction from online newspapers

The use of interactivity in websites was expected to bring about a positive response from users, being designed to overcome the one-way communication paradigm associated with traditional news media. The adoption of interactivity was predicated on the need for news audiences to become more involved with fellow users and publishers and ultimately to find online news consumption a gratifying experience. The fourth research question for the present study thus asks about the contribution of interactivity features to reader gratification from online newspapers in Zambia.

The findings indicate that the interactivity features contribute only moderately contribute to perceived reader gratification. However, an overwhelming majority of readers indicated that they continued to read online newspapers and liked them specifically for these features. Repeat visitation is one of the major indicators of user gratification from a news medium (Chung and Yoo, 2008; Yoo, 2011). The fact that majority of readers continue to

read online newspapers due to the interactivity features seems to suggest that they play a relatively significant part to overall gratification from online newspapers among Zambian readers. This assertion is in line with previous studies that established a causal relationship between interactivity and reader gratification (Rafael, 1988; Teo et al, 2003; Chung, 2009; Yoo, 2011). Rafael (1988) concluded that the outcome of interactivity was satisfaction, motivation, fun, cognition and learning.

An aim of the study was to identify the demographic factors that influence whether or not a reader would be overtly satisfied with an online newspaper because of its interactivity features. Regression analysis shows that three factors play a significant part: length (number of years) of reading online newspapers, frequency of use of the Internet and good Internet skills. These factors are inter-related in that they are all associated with proficiency in use of the Internet and with the interactivity features offered by Zambian online news sites. On the basis of the results, it is plausible to suggest a reciprocal relationship between use of interactivity and reader gratification. The longer users are exposed to a news site and the Internet generally, the more proficient they become in using the functional interactivity features. The more they use the features, the more they appreciate them and the site as whole and continue to visit it. This understanding is in line with the interactivity-gratification model developed by Yoo (2011) as discussed in the literature review section.

The results also indicate that although most readers were not initially lured to online newspapers by their interactivity features, it does appear that their interest in interactivity grew after experiencing them. Subsequently, interactivity turned out to be a factor leading to gratification, expressed through repeat visitation. The scores of readers' satisfaction from the four sub-categories of interactivity features ranged from moderate to low. The human interactive features, which allow for interpersonal interaction among readers, emerged as the most gratifying of all the four groups of features. Interestingly, the human/medium group of features, which was the least motivating to readers and less frequently used, was in joint top position as the most gratifying for the readers who experienced it. This would confirm the assertion that in some cases what users of news media look for is not what they find or what gives them satisfaction – gratification obtained is not always consistent with gratification sought, and vice versa. Earlier studies

presented conflicting findings on reader gratification from among the four sub-groups of features (i.e. human versus medium interactivity). Some studies concluded that use of human interactivity features elicited higher satisfaction from online newspapers (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002; Teo et al, 2003). Others (for instance Chung, 2009) concluded that the medium/human interactive features were both a motivation for going online and the main factor contributing to reported satisfaction, despite the potential of human interactivity features to yield greater satisfaction and consequently appreciation of the medium. Chung (2008: 674) states that

human interactive features are what make online news truly different from news delivered through traditional media channels, but it appears that they are generally used infrequently.

The high level of frequent use of the human interactivity features makes it plausible therefore to assert potential reader appreciation and use of online newspapers in Zambia. This in itself is a *sine qua non* of the continuing growth of the online newspaper industry media in the country.

Conclusion

There is infrequent and low use of interactive features by Zambian online newspaper readers, judging from both the number of users for each type of feature and the expressed frequency of their use. Nor is interactivity one of the major reasons for readers to visit online newspapers for the first time. However, the interest in and use of the features develops as readers are exposed to them in their search for news and information. Most readers were found to use features falling under the interactivity category rather than multi-mediality and hypertextuality features. Among the four sub-groups of features, the human-to-human interactivity features were the most sought after and most frequently used, followed by the medium/human interactive features. The choice of medium/human interactivity features correlates with the finding of the study that Facebook is the most regularly visited news medium, the most popular source of breaking news and the route through which most respondents in the study accessed their favourite online newspaper.

In visiting online newspapers and choosing their navigational features, Zambian readers were specifically seeking and finding satisfaction in the following: keeping up to date with prevailing public opinion on major national issues raised through these new media; interpersonal communication; and socialisation with other readers. The readers were least interested in connecting with the publishers of the newspaper, its editors and writers of stories, which negates the prospect of cyclic communication between the readers and the sources of stories.

A combination of these motivations, uses and gratification obtained from online newspapers leads to the conclusion that Zambian readers view these platforms as a public sphere for engaging with, learning from and sharing thoughts with the cyber community. However, these platforms still fall short of the standard for genuine public spheres of consensus building and political socialisation. The major reason for this shortcoming is lack of moderation of the conversations and debates. On the basis of previous research, it can be concluded that the high use of and gratification from human-to-human features results in repeat visitation among the readers who use these features. This is the hallmark of sustainability of the media. If the use of these features can be maximised, then online newspapers have an assured place in Zambia.

In terms of gratification obtained, the results are conclusive that most Zambian online news readers perceive the interactivity features of these news media as catalysts of gratification from reading them. The human-to-human and human/medium features lead to greatest reader satisfaction. This implies that readers derive greatest satisfaction from interacting with other readers and posting personalised information or material, such as news stories or views. This result is consistent with the para-social motivation, chosen by a majority of readers as shown elsewhere in the study (chapter 6), as the main reason for visiting online newspapers. The results are also conclusive that readers who have been reading online newspapers for many years, those who regularly surf the Internet and those with good Internet skills find the experience of using interactivity features of online newspapers, and subsequently the online news platforms themselves, most gratifying.

Appendices

Table 8.16 : Comparison of use of individual specific interactivity features *Source: Author's field data*

Specific functional feature	N	%
High (70 – 100%)		
Knowing what others think about an issue	278	83
Chatting on Facebook page of newspaper	252	75
Ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper	239	71
Average score – medium (50-69%)	256	76
Posting own comments on stories	182	54
Average score – low (0-49%)	182	54
Posting own views on a subject	158	47
Video files	152	45
Ability to access other documents	123	37
Chatting with other users	120	36
Ability to navigate other websites	98	29
Community information	92	27
Sharing political views	90	27
Engaging other readers in debate	88	26
Informational adverts	81	24
YouTube	76	23
Posting stories	64	19
Search feature	65	19
Audio recorded files	64	19
Ability to access adverts	60	18
Advertising information	58	17
Participating in opinion polls	58	17
Live television streaming	52	16
Weather information	50	15

Question-and-answer links	50	15
Calendar events information	48	14
Customised topics	37	11
Emailing updates	37	11
Submitting photos	37	11
Ability to navigate Twitter	33	10
Other personalisation orientation	33	10
Submitting news tips	29	9
Sending letters to editor	26	8
Ability to avail statistics	27	8
Other information-seeking files	28	8
Chatting on Twitter	26	8
Sending email to editor	22	7
Contacting the publishers	23	7
Applying for job from publishers	23	7
Licensing information	10	4
Greetings by site	16	5
Radio streaming	15	4
Emailing link to writer	11	3
Filling subscription form	9	3
Link to publishers	9	3
Average score	68	24

N=335

CHAPTER 9

PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AND ITS IMPACT ON READER GRATIFICATION FROM ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

Reputation, trust and credibility are assets no organisation can afford to lose and the surest way to lose them is to lie. – Michael Josephson

Abstract

This chapter examines readers' perceptions about the credibility of online newspapers among individuals aged 18 years and above in Lusaka Province of Zambia. It examines the following:

- The extent to which Zambian readers perceive the Zambian online newspapers as credible sources of news and information generally and in the light of specific credibility standards.
- Credibility issues that most concern readers.
- How Zambian readers perceive the credibility of online newspapers compared to traditional mainstream media.
- The extent to which perceived credibility affects gratification obtained from online newspapers.

Empirical data on these areas of inquiry are based on perceptions, attitudes and experiences elicited through self-reports of the 335 respondents. Descriptive data and regression analyses generated the inferences and conclusions. Results indicate that the readers perceived online newspapers to be moderately credible overall. The readers found online newspapers to be generally reliable and trustworthy sources of up-to-date, uncensored and independent news. Regression analyses show that the more time in years that readers spent reading online newspapers, the more they found them to be reliable, trustworthy and ultimately gratifying, confirming the relevance of the 'familiarity' or 'mere-exposure' and 'reliance' theories to credibility. As for overall credibility, online newspapers were rated less favourably than traditional state-owned and privately-owned news media.

The rating was based on average scores of 12 credibility standards. Online newspapers were rated worse than state and private traditional media on plagiarism, use of indecent language and avoidance of apologising for inaccurate reporting. Readers rated state-owned newspapers worse than online newspapers on balance in reporting ('giving the ruling party and opposition voices'), fairness ('giving all sides of the story') and reliability. As for truthfulness and believability, a majority of readers said they could not fully believe what they found in online newspapers without cross-checking the content with traditional media. This seems to show that readers see online and traditional news media as generally complementary. Zambian online newspapers are also top-rated on 'giving a voice to ordinary people', pointing to their evolution as appreciable alternative media and their adherence to the ethos of participatory citizen journalism. The study found that for most readers, perceived credibility did not affect the satisfaction they derived from online newspapers. This indicates that the credibility shortcomings are somewhat outweighed by the benefits the readers derive from this new medium, particularly as a source of independent, uncensored and timely news. The study contends that online newspapers could bolster their credibility and maximise reader satisfaction if they were to adopt and adhere to professional codes of ethical conduct. Some form of regulation (or self-regulation), through an online media council for instance, would seem to be inevitable.

Key words: Online Newspaper. Credibility. Readership. Traditional Media. Regulation. Gratification.

Introduction

The Internet has evolved and is growing rapidly as a major source of news and information world-wide. It provides citizens with information to make informed choices in the belief that they are autonomous agents. The enormous opportunities offered by the Internet and the escalating cost of producing news using traditional news-gathering and publishing methods have forced many publishers to turn to online journalism. The emergence of digital media, and online newspapers in particular, is one of the positive outcomes of the flurry of opportunities created by Internet technology. Online newspapers and other digital media have brought about enormous affordances in the media industry and benefits to their audiences. From a civic perspective, the online media offer alternative platforms to government-controlled mainstream media (Moyo, 2007). They consider themselves

justified to exist given the high-handed control over the public media by some ruling parties, especially in Africa.

However, scholars argue that the supposed freedom envisioned to exist with online news publications is not limitless. These media have to be accountable and responsible for their actions and the claims they make (Abdulla et al, 2004; Chishala, 2015; Chari, 2009). As access to and availability of online news grows, the concern for quality of information found online also increases. Scholars note that while the Internet has brought about a number of opportunities for the media, the same technology has been the root of unethical reporting (Abdulla et al, 2004).

Given the rapid growth and increasing use of these new media by readers, publishers and advertisers, concerns about their conduct are timely and legitimate. Lack of trust of information offered by the Internet-based sources renders them less important and influential (Johnson and Kaye, 1998). As Chung (2017:949) argues, 'if perceived to be of low quality, the news is not worth reading or employing in the course of decision making'. How audiences perceive news quality also affects the effectiveness of the message and the degree to which they reject or accept the information (Chung, 2017; Bucy, 2017). In the context of the model espoused in this study, credibility is conceived as a potential intervening variable to believability and trust in the mass media and ultimately the influence they exert on society.

Scholars contend that with their increasing use and prospects for growth as an independent mass media genre, online newspapers and other digital news sources need to be examined through the same lenses and against the same standards to which their traditional counterparts have been held for centuries (Chishala, 2015). Questions have been raised about their ability to adhere to traditional principles of journalism that have been codified in countries such as South Africa and the United States of America. A major standard by which these media have to be examined is their overall credibility as news sources (Abdulla et al, 2004; Chishala, 2015; Chari, 2009).

There are also fears that the conduct of the new media could further worsen the public's mistrust of the media industry as a whole. Public trust in the mass media have been on the wane since the 1980s (Mings, 1999). Johnson and Kaye (2000: 865) state:

The proliferation of misinformation and pranks pervading the Internet has caused some to call the Internet's credibility into question and to fear whether the growth of the Internet will further drive down credibility ratings of the traditional media.

The present study takes its cue from research that examined the features that affect the quality of online news and why this has happened since the advent of online journalism and publications in the mid-1990s. It examines how audiences evaluate online newspapers on credibility. Its goal is to offer an insight into how Zambian audiences perceive online newspapers as credible sources of information, their specific credibility concerns and how they rate online newspapers against the traditional news sources on a range of credibility standards. The interest in the perceived credibility and ethical conduct of online newspapers is predicated on the fact that this new medium is increasingly becoming the main source of news and information for a number of Zambians (see Chapter 6). These insights should lead to reflection and conversations about mechanisms to introduce standards and some form of regulation or self-regulation in this fast-growing medium.

Defining and measuring credibility

Credibility is a multi-dimensional construct and standard that audiences use to judge the source and media (content) of any communication (Cassidy, 2007; Bucy, 2003). The modern-day definition and conceptualisation of credibility are traced to Hovland and colleagues, who defined it in terms of the speaker's trustworthiness and expertise (Hovland et al. 1969). The term was then conceptualised as having evolved from a static trait of the source into a perception of the audience, embracing an array of traits (Berlo et al, 1969). Gaziano and McGrath (1986) developed a comprehensive news credibility scale which was adopted and modified by Meyer (1988). The scale included items that would measure the extent to which a media source was perceived as fair, unbiased, telling the whole story, accurate and trustworthy (Meyer, 1988). Metzger et al (2003) undertook an in-depth review of the concept and made clear distinctions between source credibility, media credibility and message credibility.

Source credibility focuses on the characteristics of the senders or individual speakers of the messages. It scrutinises variables such as trustworthiness and expertise (Bucy, 2003;

Cassidy, 2007). Media credibility focuses on the channel itself rather than on individual sources, media organisations or content (Bucy, 2003). A number of scholars define media credibility in terms of the extent to which the medium is believable (Bucy, 2003; Chung, 2017). Other scholars offer a broader definition, which includes variables such as bias, fairness, accuracy and completeness of information (Bucy, 2003; Metzger et al, 2003; Cassidy, 2007). Perceived message credibility, referred to as news quality by some, is defined as a cognitive and affective assessment of the news story (Chung, 2017 also citing Slater and Rourner, 1998). The news story quality is measured from two dimensions: content quality and stylistic quality (Chung, 2017).

The present study has adopted a more contemporary definition of credibility, which links the concept to journalism ethics and the extent to which the media practitioners or the media themselves are seen to be adhering to these standards. In addition to the standards defined by earlier scholars (Moore and Rodgers, 2005; Hovland, 1969; Berlo et al, 1969; Gaziano and McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988 and Metzger et al, 2003), media credibility has been operationalised in line with the principles espoused under the social responsibility theory. These principles impel the media to 'accept certain responsibilities towards society, including setting professional standards for the supply of information and the truth, accuracy, objectivity and the balance of their reporting' (Oosthuizen, 2002:42).

The present study settles for a multiple dimension to measuring credibility which includes trust, believability, factual accuracy, balance (completeness), fairness, truthfulness, objectivity, accuracy and reliability. It embraces readers' judgment of online newspapers in terms of news-gathering tactics, notably plagiarism, decency of language, exaggeration, investigative journalism, vendetta journalism and apologising when wrong. All these standards have been found to be relevant and useful to the local context and the unique news-gathering processes associated with online journalism (Mabweazara et al, 2014).

The study of perceived credibility has also been categorised in terms of the perspective from which it is measured and of who measures it. Scholars have undertaken media credibility studies from four taxonomic classifications: output criteria, external criteria, professional criteria and audience criteria (Gunter et al, 2009). Output criteria focus on the content and are measured primarily by means of content and discourse analysis. They

examine biases in relation to factors such as the use of sources, choice of words or phrases and presentation styles to support the news narrative (Gunter et al, 2009:188). External criteria refer to counter-checking of facts for accuracy and truthfulness in news reporting by independent experts. Professional criteria 'refer to the gatekeeping role that journalists and their editors play in selecting stories for coverage' (Gunter et al, 2009; 189). Audience criteria, which are adopted for this study, derive from research conducted among news consumers such as surveys of public opinion about the perceived credibility or impartiality of news channels (Gunter, 1997; Gunter et al, 2009). they also examine news suppliers or 'brands' (Gunter, 2005; Gunter et al, 2009:189).

Some scholars have found weaknesses in measuring credibility through audience surveys (Bucy, 2003) which track broad trends in public opinions. The results are seen to be limited in their ability to explain cause-and-effect relationships and in their reliance on past media use, 'which are prone to distortions and social desirability biasing' (Bucy, 2003:250). These shortcomings notwithstanding, the present study adopted audience criteria in evaluating the credibility of online newspapers because previous studies on the subject in southern Africa have been employed external or expert criteria. This has led to a one-sided perspective. Polling the actual consumers of news and information of online newspapers was considered to be essential.

Literature review

The focus of this section is the assessment of perceived credibility of online newspapers from an audience perspective. External assessment has been incorporated in order to compare, corroborate and triangulate the readers' assessment with that of experts. It is assumed that the approach presents readers with a broader and comprehensive understanding of the perspectives from which the online newspapers and new media generally should be judged.

Online newspaper credibility: external/expert criteria

Studies by Chishala (2015) of two Zambian online news publications and Chari (2009) of Zimbabwean online newspapers in general were found to be relevant to this study. They based their evaluations on all the three dimensions of credibility assessment: media,

source and story quality. They raised fundamental concerns about both the quality of news and news-gathering techniques used in online newspapers and online journalism respectively. Chishala (2015) began with a strong critique of the questionable habits long practised by traditional state media, which the news media are replicating. He argued that online newspapers mostly portrayed the government in a bad light, in a similar way that the government-controlled media had treated the opposition. This negated the argument that only the state-controlled media were unbalanced in their coverage of political players. He catalogued the main ethical concerns about the conduct of the two Zambian online publications as follows:

invasion of privacy; being in possession of classified documents; using derogatory language to refer to subjects in their news stories; maintaining anonymity of its founders, editors and writers; being anti-government and always accusing the government of practicing tribalism and regionalism in its appointment of government (officials) and those with public portfolio; and failing to apologize when what it had earlier claimed turned untrue (Chishala, 2015:33).

Online publications are expected to abide by the same ethical principles to which mainstream media are held – fairness, truthfulness, integrity and credibility, balance, taking responsibility for their stories, disclosure of full identifies and fixed abode, and publishing disclaimers for third-party content. “Further, these media are also expected to avoid derogatory language even as they call a spade a spade where necessary and avoid unverified innuendos, such as calling others tribalist, regionalists or racist” (Chishala, 2015:33).

Chari (2009) has been equally critical of the ethical conduct of the Zimbabwean online newspapers. His review dealt mainly with the press and online publications or websites run by Zimbabweans in the diaspora. He noted that the Internet had brought with it a plethora of ethical minefields in the conduct of journalism in Zimbabwe; both the mainstream press and online media were becoming more prone to factual errors and fabrications than before.

Internet had promoted cut-throat competition in the news-gathering business in the sense that mainstream publications are not just competing amongst themselves but also with Internet-based publications with more scope to publish sensational stories because they fall outside the purview of the new stringent laws. The fear of losing a scoop brings so much pressure that publications find it difficult to wait until all the facts have been verified (Chari, 2009:60).

Plagiarism was another ethical challenge:

The anonymity of the Internet makes it difficult to gauge the magnitude of the problem of plagiarism in Zimbabwe. A close analysis of the newspapers revealed a striking identity of stories in different publications which might suggest the prevalence of plagiarism. Similarity in headlines, phrases, introductions and conclusions of stories are common (Chari, 2009:66).

Chari argued that the Internet in Zimbabwe had exacerbated what Francis Kasoma (1996) referred to as 'vendetta journalism' (Kasoma, 1996, quoted by Chari, 2009:67). He describes 'vendetta journalism' as follows:

This type of journalism is characterized by hatred, revenge and dislike against people in the news. It includes the use of abusive language, not approaching sources for a comment in a story that criminalises them, selective use of facts and use of sarcasm in reporting stories that the journalists hate. Vendetta journalism is described as unethical because it violates the core tenets of the journalism profession such as objectivity, balance, fairness and impartiality (Chari, 2009:68).

Chari concluded that the emergence of online publications and websites had fundamentally transformed journalistic practices in Zimbabwe. The new technology had circumvented stringent media laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2001) and the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), resulting in journalists having free reign. Chari concluded that online publications enjoyed 'unfettered liberty' to publish what they want and how they want.

Audience credibility criteria – empirical studies

Do readers agree with the expert analyses regarding credibility of online newspapers? Yes and no. Findings from audience surveys question whether online newspapers are more credible, less credible or comparably credible with traditional media. Some international studies echo the conclusions of the African scholars referenced above that online newspapers are rated more negatively on credibility than their traditional media counterparts (Abdulla et al, 2004; Debatin, 2014; Pew, 2014 in 2014 in Howe, and Teufel, 2014). A 2014 Pew study concluded that the public were generally apprehensive about news that was presented online, especially in terms of believability and accuracy (Howe, and Teufel, 2014). Its results were consistent with earlier credibility assessments (Flanagin and Metzger, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Pew, 2002., 2005, 2006a, 2006b in Cassidy, 2007). Kiousis (2001) and Flanagin and Metzger (2000) found that their respondents rated print newspapers highest for credibility. Television and online news followed in second and third places respectively.

In Zambia, Dabeljak (2010) analysed how ten policy actors gathered, shared and disseminated policy-relevant information. She concluded that while digital media and communications technologies were rapidly transforming the way the policy actors gathered information, they remained cautious about the trustworthiness and accuracy of the material they gathered on digital media. Most of them cross-checked the information they obtained from the Web with sources they perceived to be reliable, for example, official government sources and colleagues. Furthermore, policy actors still viewed traditional media as a more effective way for disseminating information and obtaining citizen feedback on government policies and programmes. She concluded that the use of the Internet in disseminating and channelling feedback was limited.

The negative audience perceptions during the first decade of the online newspapers (1995-2005) could be attributed to the decline in public trust in the press in general (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006 in Cassidy, 2007). This argument is plausible given the fact that most online newspapers of the first decade were online versions of established print newspapers. Successive studies between the mid-1980s and 1990s recorded a decline in public trust, believability and general perceptions of the press among

American audiences (Pew, 2002, 2005, 2006a in Cassidy, 2007). The picture began to change only after the 2006 elections in the U.S.; since then the percentage of Americans who reported having a favourable view of the press has increased (Cassidy, 2007; Chung, 2017). However, no comprehensive data are available on the efficacy of this claim in respect of audiences outside the United States of America (USA).

A second set of studies found that the public rated credibility of online and traditional media as similar (Cassidy, 2007). They concluded that the mass media were considered only moderately credible (Cassidy, 2007). The Online News Association (2002 in Cassidy, 2007) surveyed a nationwide panel of Internet users who rated online news about as credible as that of traditional media sources, but only 13% of the users believed that online news was their most trusted news source. A study by Consumer Reports WebWatch (2005, cited in Cassidy, 2007:483) reported that the 'credibility of news sites is an important concern for Internet users'. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents said they found the news site they visited most often to be believable most or all of the time. The authors noted, "Interestingly, this was nearly identical to perceptions of the believability of daily newspapers (67%) and national television news (68%)" (Cassidy, 2007:483). The findings support the assertion made earlier in the section that online news sites are affected in a similar way by audience perceptions of the press as a whole.

A third set of studies found that online newspapers and other news sites were rated more believable, trusted and credible than traditional mass media. Abdulla et al (2002), for instance, found that online news achieved the highest credibility rating among news sources; print newspapers ranked lowest in bias and completeness. "Online viewers rated Web-based news highly in terms of being trustworthy, believable and accurate" (Abdulla et al, 2002:3). The same study found that online newspapers and online candidate literature were perceived as significantly more credible than their traditional counterparts. Johnson and Kaye (1998) concluded similarly that 'online newspapers, news magazines and politically oriented websites were judged at least somewhat credible by more than two-thirds of respondents'. Gunter et al (2009) observed a high reliance on online new sources, which in turn tended to influence the credibility rating of the online newspapers and other online sources positively. The researchers concluded that 'concerns that the

Internet may never be judged as a credible source appear to be overblown' (Gunter et al, 2009: 874).

Influences on credibility

Researchers have been interested in analysing the demographic factors that influence audience ratings of the credibility of stand-alone online newspapers and the mass media generally. The findings of previous studies were conclusive in respect of the influence on credibility of the following factors: education, income, gender, age, pre-existing preferences and familiarity with and frequency of use of the medium. Males, high-income earners, better educated individuals and those who used a particular type or brand of media were found to be more critical of the credibility of the media (Johnson and Kaye, 2000; Fico, Richardson and Edwards, 2004; Gunter et al, 2009).

Younger and less educated respondents, especially females, were more likely to judge online media as more believable and credible. A plausible explanation was that these two groups were likely to be more credulous and less equipped to evaluate the role and conduct of the media (Johnson and Kaye, 1998; 2000). On the other hand, 'sophistication, life experience, and knowledge of the press – a type of news literacy – combine to make more seasoned audiences skeptical of the nightly news' (Bucy, 2017:250). This observation is consistent with the finding that older audience members are more likely to be critical of news from both online and traditional mass media (Bucy, 2017; Johnson and Kaye, 1998).

'Deviant' and unexpected associations were observed between positive credibility perceptions and selected demographic factors, notably: i) respondents who were likely to judge the Internet as believable were the least likely to go online; ii) respondents who were found to be avid readers of a newspaper they did not find very credible; iii) and 'respondents who preferred the newspaper over other possibilities even though they did not find it credible' (Wesley and Severin, 1964 in Fico et al, 2004:308). The authors also found that party identification, voting_behaviour, group and church ties, sociability and time spent with the media had a positive influence on the credibility rating of online newspapers.

Frequency of use of a particular medium was found to be a major predictor of positive credibility. Television, being a frequently used medium, was rated favourably for credibility (Gunter et al, 2009). “How credible people judge the medium depends on how often they use it” (Gunter et al, 2009:866). While reliance on the Internet has been associated with positive perceptions about online news generally (Gunter et al, 2009; Stempel et al, 2000), other studies found no relationship between frequency of online news use and perceived credibility (Cassidy, 2007; Gunter et al, 2009).

Gunter et al (2009) added political interest, source preference and pre-existing orientations to the list of factors that influence the credibility rating of online newspapers. They note that ‘the pre-existing orientations of news consumers can represent powerful mediators of judgments about news media performance’ (2009: 191). They also reference studies that show that credibility ratings of different media vary between countries.

A comparison of perceived credibility between news sites of established media entities and stand-alone or Web-only news sites has been the focus of more recent studies. They show greater preference and a higher credibility rating among respondents for the former (Ognianova, 1998 in Cassidy, 2007). In an experimental study, Cassidy (2007) found that news sites associated with a newspaper or television network were perceived as being more credible than independent sites. In another study, respondents rated the online sites of major news organisations more believable than Web-only sites (Pew, 2000a). The readers who sought news about the 2000 elections in the U.S.A were much more likely to visit the websites of major news organisations than Web-only publications and political sites (Pew, 2000a in Cassidy, 2007). This aspect of research is, however, not the focus of the present study.

Gaps in the literature

The current study references a variety of literature on new media and how the readers perceive their credibility and ethical conduct. However, most of the studies, especially the empirical ones, were conducted exclusively in the West. Several focused broadly on online media and not just online newspapers. Their findings in respect of online newspapers are therefore inconclusive. None of the empirical studies were about Zambia or Africa. African

scholars generally acknowledge the need for more Africa-focused studies in this field (Mabweazara et al, 2014).

The two major studies with a Zambian and Zimbabwean focus were different from the present study in methodology and focus. The study by Chishala (2015) compared the credibility rating of only one online Zambian newspaper, the *Zambian Watchdog*, and an online version of only one traditional newspaper, the *Zambia Daily Mail*. The sample size was relatively small, the sampling method was non-probability (convenient sampling) and it focused on only a few credibility variables. The external validity of the results was therefore limited. Chishala acknowledged the lack of data and recommended that expanded studies should be conducted in future, particularly on the legal, policy and regulatory frameworks.

Chari (2009) focused on the ethical conduct of Zimbabwean online news media from his own (expert) perspective. Given the polarisation of the media in Zimbabwe, and by Chari's own admission, however, the question of media credibility requires more than just the individual researcher's own interpretation: views of the readers were needed to balance the analysis. The study by Dabeljak (2010), like the present study, analysed credibility from an audience perspective. However, her study was limited to evaluating the perceived credibility of traditional and online media in regard to the sending and receiving of information by policy makers, and the views of only ten policy makers were sampled.

The present study takes its cue from the gaps in these earlier. It focuses on how the readers themselves perceive of the credibility of the Zambian online newspapers from a wide range of standards in comparison with traditional media, particularly newspapers. It sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Zambian readers perceive online newspapers to be credible sources of news and information overall and as measured against specific credibility standards?
2. What credibility issues are the readers most concerned with?
3. How do Zambian readers perceive the credibility of online newspapers compared to traditional mainstream media?

4. To what extent does perceived credibility of the online newspapers affect the gratification obtained by their readers?
5. What socio-demographic factors influence perceptions about the credibility of online newspapers?

Results

Credibility of online newspapers

Overall credibility

The respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are credible sources of information*. Most respondents (138 or 64%) agreed/strongly agreed, 10% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 24% and 2% respectively were neutral and not sure. From the multivariate logistic regression analysis (table not attached), Internet skills were found to be the only predictor of perception about the overall credibility of online newspapers as sources of information. A reader with moderate Internet skills was 3.72 times more likely to find online newspapers to be credible sources of information than a reader who rated his or her skills as 'very good'. Table 9.1 summarises the views of the respondents, which were expressed verbatim to opened-ended questions and recorded by the researcher.

Table 9.1 : Respondents' views on overall credibility of online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

Online newspapers are credible – respondents' reasons	Online newspapers are not credible – respondents' reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zambian stand-alone</i> online newspapers sometimes expose confidential information which the government public newspapers cover up. For instance, <i>Zambian Watchdog</i> had on several occasions exposed sensitive information that the government media could not expose, such as the illness and travel abroad for treatment of late President Michael Sata in 2014. • Online newspapers like <i>Tumfweko</i> are credible sources of information, because they provide accurate information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility of online newspapers is compromised because the information [sometimes] comes from anonymous sources, who cannot be followed up in case of anything. • Most times their reporting is aligned with political parties they support. • Online newspapers are compromised. This is so because some of the information they carry comes from anonymous sources, who cannot be held accountable for what they report. As such, most publishers are hiding behind the veil of the Internet and pursuing personal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good number of those who agreed to have personal trust could still give the Zambian stand-alone newspapers credibility. • Online newspapers such as <i>Mwebantu</i> are credible sources of information, as they provide accurate details of events, and this news is also featured on other media such as [the state-owned] Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation. 	<p>agendas in the name of reporting news.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online sources are volatile and that facts are changed over time. As such it is difficult to grasp any truth from the information.
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Reliability

Reliability was defined to the readers as the ability of an online newspaper to provide news whenever they needed and in the form they needed or wanted it. Seventy-two percent of the readers agreed/strongly agreed that Zambian online newspapers were reliable, 18% were neutral and 9% disagreed, some strongly. The logistic regression model (Table 9.2) shows that education, political activism, experience with the Internet and experience with reading online newspapers influenced perceptions of whether stand-alone online newspapers in Zambia were reliable sources of information. A reader defined as low weekly Internet user was 12.95 times more likely to regard an online newspaper as reliable than a high Internet user. As experience of reading online newspapers went up by a year, the reader's rating of online newspapers as reliable sources increased by 1.51 times. On the other hand, a reader with a degree or tertiary education qualification regarded online newspapers as less reliable by 0.10 times compared to a reader with a secondary school certificate. A registered voter in the sample found online newspapers less reliable by 0.21times than a non-registered voter.

Table 9.2 : Multivariate logistic regression predicting whether Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are perceived to be reliable sources of information. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	SE	95%	CI
Sex [Male]	Female	0.61	0.55	0.29	0.20	1.53
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.59	1.42	1.10	0.31	6.48
	36-45 years	1.79	0.99	0.97	0.15	6.79
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/diploma	0.74	1.37	0.23	0.11	1.24
	University degree	0.13***	0.10***	0.12	0.01	1.04
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.14	2.08	1.30	0.61	7.05
	K101-250, 000	1.24	1.99	2.54	0.16	24.22
	>K250, 000	3.52	4.50	7.17	0.20	102.01
Location [Urban]	Rural	1.89	0.54	0.64	0.05	5.60
Residence [High density]	Low-density	3.30***	3.54	2.78	0.76	16.48
	Rural	3.43***	6.55	9.01	0.44	96.93
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.29***	0.21***	0.16	0.05	0.94
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.46***	1.24	0.90	0.30	5.14
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.05	1.17	1.12	0.18	7.59
	Three times	2.23	1.33	0.98	0.31	5.63
	Four times and more	1.84	1.55	1.03	0.42	5.69
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	16.80** *	12.95***	17.33	0.94	178.38
	Moderate	1.19	0.92	0.57	0.27	3.07
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	2.94	2.49	2.20	0.44	14.07
	6-10 years	2.45	1.89	1.98	0.24	14.65
	> 10 years	3.50	2.12	2.66	0.18	24.82
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.99	1.36	0.77	0.45	4.13
	Very poor	0.91	1.05	0.76	0.26	4.30
Years reading favourite newspaper	-	1.34***	1.51***	0.27	1.07	2.15
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.82***	0.87	0.12	0.66	1.16

Truthfulness

Truthfulness was defined as the ability of the media to be in accord with fact or reality. Sixty-three percent agreed/strongly agreed that Zambian online newspapers provided truthful coverage of the opposition and the government, 18% were neutral, 17% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 2% were not sure. The logistic regression model (not

attached) depicts three factors that influenced readers' perceptions about truthfulness: political activism, experience with the Internet and experience with reading online newspapers. A reader with moderate skills found online newspapers to be truthful in their coverage by 2.14 times more than a reader with 'very good' skills. A reader who had been surfing the Net for more than ten years was also likely to find online newspapers to be truthful in this regard – by 7.66 times more than one who had been on the Net for 2-5 years. Conversely, a reader who voted during the 2016 general election was 0.33 times less likely to find online newspapers truthful than one who did not vote. As experience of reading online newspapers went up by a year, the reader's perception that online newspapers were truthful declined by 0.09 times.

Believability

The respondents were asked how they felt about the statement, *If there are different versions of the same story on national ZNBC television, ZNBC radio or print newspapers, I would stick with the version of the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers.* Only 25% agreed/strongly agreed, 52% disagreed/strongly disagreed, 16% were neutral and 7% were not sure. Most readers therefore found traditional media more believable than online newspapers. The logistic regression model (not attached) indicates that gender and experience are predictors of whether or not a reader would stick to the 'truth' told by the online newspapers. A female reader was 2.08 times higher to stick to the version of the online newspaper than a male. A reader who surfed the Internet three times a day and one who surfed it four or more times a day (categorised as high daily user) would be 0.28 times and 0.48 times respectively less inclined to believe the online version of a story by compared to one who surfed it once a day. A relative newcomer to the Internet was 0.33 times less likely to believe online newspaper content than one who had been on the Net for between two and five years.

Fairness and balance (impartiality)

Fairness was defined as 'reporting information without favouritism, self-interest and prejudice' (Retier, 2002:85). Balance or impartiality was defined as the ability of the media to present every side of a story. Sixty-five percent of readers agreed/strongly agreed that online newspapers were fair, 14% were neutral, 18% disagreed/strongly disagreed and

3% were not sure. Seventy-four percent agreed/strongly agreed that Zambian online newspapers were balanced in their coverage, against 14% who disagreed/strongly disagreed, 10% were neutral and 2% were not sure.

Most respondents felt that the online newspapers' coverage was balanced, but as one researcher assistant noted from open-ended follow-up questions,

Other respondents, however, disagreed (that online newspapers are balanced), stating that they sometimes tend to show a bias towards either government or the opposition. They highlighted that most publications in Zambia are known as either pro-government or anti-government and added that even the news they publish either concentrates on government or the opposition.

Exaggeration

Exaggeration as it relates to news reporting was defined as being 'to enlarge beyond bounds or the truth'.⁴⁴ Fifty-eight percent of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that *Zambian online newspapers exaggerate the coverage of news*. Twenty-three percent disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement, 19% were either not sure or neutral.

Investigative journalism was defined as 'a form of journalism in which reporters go in-depth to investigate a single story that may uncover corruption, review government policies or of corporate houses, or draw attention to social, economic, political or cultural trends'.⁴⁵ Forty-seven percent agreed/strongly agreed that Zambian online newspapers conducted such journalism, 27% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 26% were either neutral or not sure. One respondent told this researcher that:

Some online newspapers do practice investigative journalism, and this can be seen through the stories they publish, which the public media cannot publish. They are able to avail statistics and documents from public offices

⁴⁴ www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exaggerate.

⁴⁵ www.investigative-manual.org/en/chapters/who-is-that-investigative-journalist/1-how-to-define-investigative-journalism/.

that could otherwise not be obtained from public media. However, other online publications do not investigate, but instead fabricate stories and that is how come they are not able to state who their sources are. Further, online newspapers in Zambia do not investigate, because they are not guided by any professional ethics, and that is how come they just publish facts that are yet to be verified.

Acceptable language

The stand-alone online newspapers were assessed in terms of the language used in their reporting. The findings were that 66% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that *Zambian online newspapers used acceptable language*, 16% disagreed/strongly disagreed, 10% were neutral while 8% were not sure. A research assistant summarised their views:

Some respondents agreed that online publications used acceptable language. They explained that they usually report what their sources are saying ... if the source insults, they will publish it as the source's words. They added that in other cases, online newspapers do not censor their news but instead call 'a spade a spade' in order to give their news more depth. There were some [respondents], however, who said these publishers actually [use] abusive and hateful language in their reporting, especially in cases where they are reporting on people they are not on good terms with.

As to whether online newspapers gave all news sources the opportunity to state their side of the story, 66% agreed/strongly agreed that they did, 16% disagreed/strongly disagreed, 6% were neutral and 21% were not sure.

Trust

Trust was measured by analysing respondents' answers to the statement, *I have personal trust in Zambian stand-alone online newspapers as sources of information*. Sixty-nine percent agreed/agreed strongly, 12% disagreed/strongly disagreed, 17% were neutral and 2% were not sure. The logistic regression model (table 9.3) shows political activism

and experience with reading online newspapers to influence readers' trust in online newspapers. A reader who voted in the 2016 general election (regarded as politically active) was likely to trust online newspapers 4.66 times more than a non-voter. As experience of reading online newspapers went up by a year, the reader's trust in the medium increased by 1.52 times.

Table 9.3 : Multivariate logistic regression predicting perceptions of whether Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are trustworthy sources of information. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95%	CI
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.61	0.55	0.29	0.20	1.53
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.57	1.42	1.10	0.31	6.48
	36-45 years	1.79	0.99	0.97	0.15	6.79
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/diploma	0.74	0.37	0.23	0.11	1.24
	University degree	0.13***	0.10	0.12	0.01	1.04
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.14	2.08	1.30	0.61	7.05
	K101-250, 000	1.24	1.99	2.54	0.16	24.22
	>K250, 000	3.52	4.50	7.17	0.20	102
Location [Urban]	Rural	1.89	0.54	0.64	0.05	5.60
	Low density	3.30	3.54	2.78	0.76	16.48
Residence [High density]	Rural	3.43***	6.55	9.01	0.44	96.93
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	3.40***	4.66***	3.51	1.07	20.43
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	2.29***	0.81	0.59	0.19	3.35
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.05	1.17	1.11	0.18	7.59
	Three times	2.23	1.32	0.98	0.31	5.63
	Four times and more	1.84	1.55	1.03	0.42	5.69
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	16.8***	12.95	17.33	0.94	178.38
	Moderate	0.19	0.92	0.57	0.27	3.07
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.34	0.40	0.36	0.07	2.28
	6-10 years	0.83	0.76	0.50	0.21	2.75
	>10 years	1.19	0.85	0.81	0.13	5.50
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.99	1.36	0.77	0.45	4.13
	Very poor	0.91	1.05	0.76	0.26	4.30
Years reading favourite newspaper	-	1.34***	1.52***	0.27	1.07	2.15
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.26	0.87	0.12	0.66	1.16

In open-ended discussions (Table 9.4) the respondents gave their reasons for either trusting or not trusting the online newspapers.

Table 9.4 : Respondents' reasons for trusting or not trusting online newspapers Source: enumerators' notes

Reasons for trusting online newspapers	Reasons for not trusting online newspapers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zambian stand-alone online newspapers closely follow up their stories. They keep reporting on one story for a week, thereby giving readers an insight of what transpired. • Some said they had personal trust because the newspapers they read report accurately; thus most of the times what they write about is what is really on the ground. • Some respondents said they had personal trust in online newspapers because they are their major source of information. • Online newspapers are easy to access at any time one would feel like getting information. • Some said they trusted the online newspapers because they had nothing to protect as is the case with the [the state-controlled] Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation. The online newspapers put across information as it is, no editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of these sites lack professionalism and as such explore personal agendas with a focus on gossip. • Most of the information published has no credible sources. Most of it is just gossip and rumours. • Their news could not be taken at face value but instead has to be verified with other media. • Most of the times the online newspapers report false information. As a result readers cannot have personal trust in them; they have to counter check with other sources, such as radio and television.

Summary ranking of credibility standards

An additional analysis and comparison were conducted on how the readers ranked the selected credibility factors. To facilitate analysis, mean scores were computed from a Likert scale that measured respondents' extent of approval of each of the ten credibility factors assessed. The highest probable mean score was five and lowest was one. As seen in Table 9.5, readers rated online newspapers highest on reliability with a mean score (M) of 3.66

and standard deviation (SD) of 0.740, followed by impartiality (M=3.65, SD=0.651). Trust in online newspapers as sources of information was ranked third (M=3.65, SD=0.808), followed by balanced coverage of the opposition and the government (M=3.58, SD=0.876) and general credibility (M=3.52, SD=0.714). The other credibility factors ranked in the following order: use of acceptable language (M=3.48, SD=0.822); providing fair coverage of the opposition and government (M=3.45, SD=0.888), truthfulness (M=3.45, SD=0.855); and avoidance of exaggeration (M=3.41, SD=0.992). The ability of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers to carry out investigative journalism was ranked lowest with a mean score of 3.39 (SD=0.982).

Table 9.5 : Readers' ranking of specific credibility standards of online newspapers *Source: Author's field data*

Ranking	Factors	N	Mean score	SD
1	Reliability	326	3.66	0.740
2	Impartiality	329	3.65	0.651
3	Trustworthiness	328	3.59	0.808
4	Balance	322	3.58	0.876
5	Credibility	324	3.52	0.714
6	Acceptable language	330	3.48	0.822
7	Fairness	319	3.45	0.888
8	Truthfulness	316	3.45	0.855
9	Sticking to facts (no exaggeration)	311	3.41	0.992
10	Investigative journalism	271	3.39	0.982

Note: 5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neutral 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

Comparison of credibility between public media, private media and online newspapers

Table 6 compares readers' perceptions of another set of 12 journalism standards and story-telling tactics between online newspapers and state-controlled and privately-owned traditional media. The benchmarks combine assessments of some of the traditional standards shown in Table 9.6 and additional ethical and humanistic ones. Private traditional media were ranked highest in eight of the standards and had the highest average score of 64%. Ranked second were state-controlled mainstream or traditional

media, scoring highest on three standards with an average score of 55%. Stand-alone online newspapers recorded an average score of 45%, and scored highest on only one measure, 'giving a voice to ordinary people'.

Private traditional media were regarded as the most truthful at 77% followed by government-owned media at 62% and online newspapers at 50%. Private traditional media were also rated highest on balance ('giving the ruling party equal space') at 79%, followed by online newspapers at 65%, while state-controlled media were rated at 21%. Private traditional media were ranked highest for being factual in reporting at 72%, state-controlled media second highest at 55% and online newspapers at 48%. As for fairness – 'giving all sides of the story' – private traditional media rated 76%, followed by stand-alone online newspapers at 36% and the state-controlled at 25%.

Again, private traditional media were rated the most accurate in reporting at 70%, followed by state-controlled media at 51% and online newspapers at 48%. Ratings of believability followed a similar trend: private traditional media at 73%, state-controlled media at 61% and online newspapers at 49%. Again, private traditional media were rated highest in reliability at 70%), followed by online newspapers at 55% and state-controlled media at 52%. In use of acceptable language, state-controlled media ranked highest at 85% followed by private traditional media at 52% and online newspapers at 29%. Online newspapers were rated at 38% in apologising when they make a mistake in their reporting.

Respondents cited online newspapers as being the most culpable (86%) in regard to plagiarism. In distant second were private traditional media at 38% followed by state-controlled media at 6%. Private media were rated the most vindictive in their reporting ('vendetta journalism') at 73%, followed by online newspapers at 68% and state-controlled media the least culpable at 24%. Readers rated online newspapers highest in giving voices to ordinary people at 77%, followed private media at 49% and state-controlled media at 23%.

Table 9.6 : Comparison of respondents' ratings of credibility among public media, private media and online newspapers. Source: Author's field data

Credibility standard	Government traditional media	Private traditional media	Stand-alone online newspapers
Truthfulness	62%	77%	50%
Balance (giving the ruling party and opposition equal coverage)	21%	79%	65%
Factual	55%	72%	48%
Fairness (giving all sides of the story)	25%	76%	36%
Accuracy	51%	70%	48%
Reliable	52%	70%	55%
Believable	61%	73%	49%
Use of decent language	85%	52%	29%
Apologising when wrong	62%	64%	38%
No plagiarism	94%	62%	14%
No vendetta journalism	76%	27%	32%
Giving voice to ordinary people	23%	49%	77%
Average score	55%	64%	45%

Credibility and identity of publishers

The study assessed the impact of source identity on credibility. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents disagreed (61% strongly) that they knew who owned their favourite online newspaper; only 2% said they knew. Another 97% disagreed (59% strongly) with the statement, *I know where to find the offices of my favourite online newspapers and I can easily interact with the staff*. Again, only 2% said they knew. Fifty-one percent disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement, *Members of the public injured by these online newspapers can easily take legal action*, 18% agreed/strongly agreed and 31% were not sure.

Most respondents did not support the idea of government control of online newspapers. Only 25% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, *Should the government of Zambia control online newspapers*, as seen in Figure 1. Sixty-four percent (64%) disagreed/strongly disagreed while 6% were not sure.

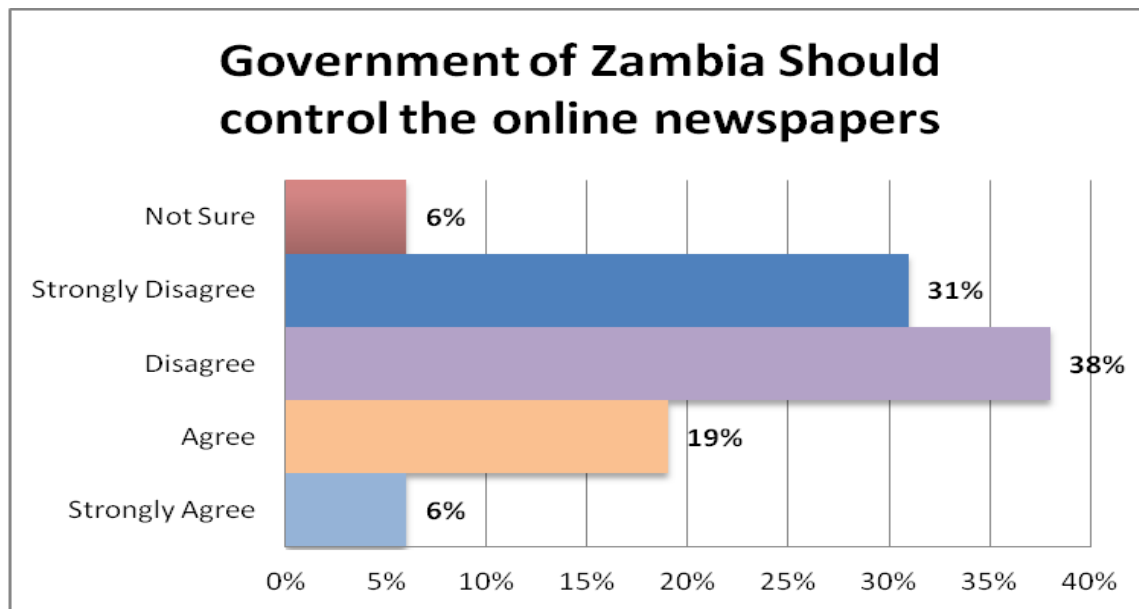


Figure 9.1 : Respondents' views on government control of online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

Effects of perceived credibility on gratification obtained

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the extent to which perceived credibility affected the readers' gratification from online newspapers. To the statement, *I am satisfied with Zambian stand-alone online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility*, 77% of the respondents agreed/strongly, 8% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 15% were either neutral or not sure. Table 9.7 shows that gender and experience of years of reading online newspapers predict satisfaction with online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility. As a reader's experience with reading online newspapers went up by one year, satisfaction (or gratification obtained) from reading them increased by 1.45 times. Conversely, a female was 0.39 times less likely to be satisfied with online newspapers if their credibility was questionable. In other words, a female reader is likely to be more affected by the credibility of an online newspaper than a male.

Table 9.7 : Factors predicting satisfaction with Zambian stand-alone online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	SE	95%	CI
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.62	0.41***	0.21	0.15	1.14
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.20	1.25	0.99	0.26	5.89
	36-45 years	0.86	0.65	0.83	0.05	7.97
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/diploma	1.14	1.04	0.62	0.32	3.37
	University degree	1.39	1.85	1.37	0.43	7.91
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.10	1.05	0.69	0.29	3.78
	K101-250, 000	1.34	1.94	1.81	0.31	12.13
	>K250, 000	3.13	1.02	1.48	0.06	17.35
Location [Urban]	Rural	0.31	0.23	0.44	0.01	9.20
Residence [High density]	Low density	1.94	1.62	1.09	0.43	6.09
	Rural	0.43	1.20	2.33	0.03	53.98
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.37***	0.32	0.22	0.08	1.25
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.44***	0.48	0.30	0.14	1.63
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	0.78	0.71	0.65	0.12	4.31
	Three times	1.10	1.17	0.85	0.28	4.83
	Four times and more	0.87	0.62	0.42	0.17	2.32
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	3.07	1.21	1.85	0.06	24.41
	Moderate	1.50	1.67	1.03	0.50	5.61
Number of years using Internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1	1	-	-	-
	6-10 years	0.79	1.64	1.38	0.31	8.56
	>10 years	1	1	-	-	-
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.17	1.03	0.64	0.30	3.46
	Very poor	0.79	0.55	0.34	0.16	1.83
Years reading favourite newspaper	-	1.32***	1.45***	0.26	1.02	2.06
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.89	0.80	0.11	0.61	1.06

Discussion

This section examines how Zambian online newspaper readers perceive the credibility of online newspapers and recognised credibility standards. Research Question 1 asked to what extent the readers perceive the Zambian online newspapers to be credible sources of news and information. The data show that readers in the sample considered online newspapers to be moderately credible overall. Six in every 10 readers in Lusaka Province founded them to be credible sources of information. The results are within the range observed in similar studies, albeit conducted in other parts of the world (Online News Association, 2002; Cassidy, 2007). Johnson and Kaye (1998) concluded that online newspapers and other online news media were judged somewhat credible by more than two-thirds of respondents.

Only Internet skills were found to influence overall credibility of online newspapers. Readers with moderate Internet skills rated them higher as credible sources of information compared to individuals with very good skills. The plausible explanation is that individuals with moderate Internet skills are less knowledgeable about how to assess online newspapers in terms of ethical conduct and social responsibility (see Johnson and Kaye, 2000; Bucy, 2017:250). Individuals with moderate skills were also less likely to be exposed to comparable but better managed online news sources. As observed by Johnson and Kaye (2000) and Gunter, et al (2009), they are likely to be more contented with options within their grasp.

The present study offers a different picture than earlier studies of relationships between credibility and socio-economic factors such as gender, level of education and income (Johnson and Kaye, 2000; Fico et al, 2004; Gunter et al, 2009). It also contradicts the finding of Johnson and Kaye (1998) of an association between younger and less educated readers and a positive perception of credibility of online media. No such relationship was established in the present study. This suggests that the credibility ratings of online newspapers are not uniquely related to any particular socio-demographic factor analysed in the present study.

Moreover, the present study finds no relationship between familiarity with a given mass medium and how audiences perceive its credibility. As such it challenges the observation

by Gunter et al (2009:866) that ‘how credible people judge the medium depends on how often they use it’, notwithstanding that a correlation has been established between familiarity and certain specific credibility standards, as noted in proceeding sections.

Credibility issues that most concern readers

Readers’ evaluations of ten specific credibility markers (RQ 2) ranged from high to low. Assessed on their own (without comparison with traditional news channels), online newspapers were rated high on reliability, impartiality and trustworthiness (in descending order). Readers were found to be most concerned with inadequate investigative stories, exaggeration and compromised truthfulness. The results suggest that readers find online newspapers to be reliable and trustworthy sources of up-to-date, uncensored and independent news (see also Chapter 6). However, they cited concerns over professional conduct and storytelling tactics. Their perceptions resonate with the professional assessment of online newspapers as reported in the literature review (Chari, 2009; Chishala, 2015). In the light of uses and gratification theory, it is an indication that the Zambian readers know exactly what they expect from this medium in terms of their content and their professional conduct.

The study found that the more time in years readers spent reading online newspapers, the more they found them to be reliable and trustworthy. This correlation could be explained in terms of ‘familiarity’ or ‘mere-exposure’ theory and reliance theory. The first holds that ‘the more exposure we have to a stimulus, the more we will tend to like it’ (Zajonc, 2001: 221). The second is a function of audiences’ dependency on or need (or motivation) of mass media (Kaye and Johnson, 2017). Referencing previous studies, Kaye and Johnson observed that the relationship between media motivation and reliance was reciprocal – the more strongly a medium satisfies gratifications sought, the more heavily it is relied on; the more it is relied on, the more it is used to gratify needs. This supports the notion that over time each mass media genre establishes a niche and captive audience for itself, which is crucial to its long-term survival and sustainability (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Westlund et al, 2018).

The multivariate regression analysis suggests that highly educated readers are more critical of the reliability of online newspapers than those with less education. Again, this finding

can be explained in terms of their analytical ability, as observed by Johnson and Kaye (2000) and other scholars. Political activism presents conflicting results. While registered voters were less likely to find online newspapers reliable, those who voted during the 2016 general elections found them to be more trustworthy. This could be explained by the fact that about half of the respondents said that online newspapers helped them to decide who to vote for in the elections (see chapter 11). In other words, online newspapers met the needs of individuals who voted and gratification obtained therefore influenced the credibility rating, an observation made also by Johnson and Kaye (2004, 2010). They state that 'because credibility is a perceptual measure, sources that are most satisfying are those that are judged high in quality and are deemed in accordance with a user's beliefs' (Johnson and Kaye, 2017).

Comparison: online versus traditional

Research Question 3 asked how Zambian readers perceived the credibility of online newspapers compared to traditional mainstream media. Online newspapers were rated less favourably on credibility than traditional state-owned and privately-owned news media based on average scores of 12 credibility standards. Readers were found to rate privately owned media more favourably than both traditional media and online newspapers. Some earlier studies concluded that online newspapers were judged to be significantly more credible than their traditional counterparts (Johnson and Kaye, 1998). Others asserted that traditional mainstream news sources were rated as more credible (Dabeljak, 2010; Abdulla et al, 2002; Pew, 2014 in Howe, and Teufel, 2014). This suggests that perceived credibility is context specific.

It is noteworthy that the overall rating for online newspapers before and after the comparison with traditional media, which readers consider more authoritative, accountable and identifiable, fell from 63% to 45%. The fall can be attributed to the 'interaction effect' or 'effects of interface cues' which is described as follows:

The current study revealed that the expertise cue (in this study the expertise of the agency) has a significant direct effect on the users' evaluation of the quality of online news. Specifically, in situations in which the news agency is the only available heuristic cue, the expertise heuristic

cue is likely to be triggered. This could either boost the perceived news quality if the news story is attributed to an authoritative source or weaken the perceived news quality if the news story is attributed to a less authoritative agency (Go et al, 2014:362).

Traditional news channels in Zambia were judged by readers to be only moderately credible, albeit slightly more credible than online newspapers. This finding is in line with observations from other parts of the world. Cassidy (2007), for instance, concluded that 'the mass media are only considered moderately credible'. It also supports assertions by other researchers that online news sites were affected in a similar way by the way their audiences generally perceived the press (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006; Cassidy, 2007). The major difference was in how audiences rated the media on specific credibility standards. Recent post-election media analyses in Zambia concluded that online newspapers had been exhibiting the same polarisation and divisions along political party lines as the traditional mass media (Mbozi, 2014; Simutanyi et al, 2015). The perception that Zambian online newspapers are no better or worse than the traditional media is summarised as follows:

The high stakes of competitive electoral politics have been reflected in the practices and regulation of the media. *The Post*, a major private newspaper in Zambia, campaigned strongly against corruption by the MMD government and for the PF (Patriotic Front) Party. Also, since the PF government was elected, equally partisan 'news' websites and new opposition-sponsored tabloid newspapers have emerged. Journalistic standards in these new sources are relatively compromised and the daily news agenda appears to be marked by factionalism, rumours and partisan scandal-mongering (Simutanyi et al, 2015:7).

Online and traditional standards compared

Online newspapers were rated worse than state and private traditional media on plagiarism, use of bad language and avoidance of apologising when in the wrong, in that order. Private traditional media and online newspapers were rated more culpable than state-owned media over 'vendetta journalism', plagiarism and use of bad language, all of

which are considered extreme forms of unethical conduct in the media. Readers perceived traditional private media to be the worst practitioners of vendetta journalism than the other types of media. State-owned media were rated worse than online newspapers in terms of balance, fairness and reliability, in that order. Lack of balance and fairness in covering opposition parties and individuals with views opposed to the government has been reported in successive studies and professional assessments (Mwanza et al, 2014; Simutanyi et al, 2015; Hamusokwe, 2018).

Zambian readers evidently have issues with both traditional and online newspapers. However, on believability, a cornerstone of news reporting, most readers polled in the study said they believed what they read in online newspapers only after they had verified the reports in the traditional media. This complementarity between mainstream news media and online newspapers is noted by scholars such as Stempel et al (2000) and De Waal et al (2005). The present study, in its findings about Zambian respondents, is in line with earlier research in which readers were generally found to be apprehensive about the believability and accuracy of news (Abdulla et al 2002; Debatin, 2014; Pew, 2014). However, Zambian readers seem to regard online newspapers as better sources than mainstream news media of up-to-date, uncensored and independent sources of news. In other words, readers are concerned about but not deterred by the ethical shortcomings of online newspapers.

The responses in the open-ended questions indicate that while readers are prepared to give online newspapers the benefit of the doubt as sources of news and information, they qualify their trust and belief because of the professional lapses among some of them, as discussed earlier in chapter. On a more positive note, online newspapers were rated the best for giving a voice to ordinary people. This suggests that this medium is evolving as a channel of participatory citizen journalism (Mody, 1993; Moyo, 2007).

Credibility and identity

Although the study did not set out to explore credibility as perceived in relation to the identity of sources or publishers of online newspapers, the findings offer an opportunity to test the conclusions of earlier studies that source identity is not a predictor of a positive credibility rating. For some respondents in the sample, source identity was the basis for

judging online newspapers on benchmarks such as trust, reliability and overall credibility. As noted in the Results section, an overwhelming majority of respondents said they could not identify the owners of their favourite online newspapers or locate the staff who work for them, and most disagreed that aggrieved readers could easily obtain redress. This lends support to findings from previous studies that there is a causal relationship between anonymity concerns and poor perceptions of credibility of both traditional and new media. Tsfati and Cappella's (2003) observed that when source credibility was in doubt, readers sought alternative sources to meet their information needs. In their study, Pjesivac and Rui (2014:655) made the following conclusion:

Lacking persuasive value, anonymous sources may be perceived, around the globe as less competent or credible than they would be if they were identified. Receivers may feel that anonymity releases senders from accountability for their contributions. The attitudes towards anonymous sources might then be more fundamental to the human nature and less malleable and likely to emerge in a different form, depending on the ways in which particular individuals are socialised in nations around the world.

Despite their cited misgivings, however, the results suggest that Zambian readers do not support government control of online newspapers.

Overall credibility and gratification

Research question 4 asked whether perceived credibility of online newspapers affected overall gratification obtained from them. The findings suggest that for most readers, perceived credibility does not affect the satisfaction they derive from online newspapers and that the benefits obtained from them – uncensored, independent and up-to-date news – outweigh their perceived shortcomings. It is plausible to conclude that the longer a person spends reading online newspapers, the more he or she is satisfied with them, which validates the relevance of the familiarity theory to credibility rating of online newspapers. That a female reader is more likely to be affected by the credibility of the online newspaper is a new finding altogether.

Conclusion

Readers generally perceive Zambian online newspapers to be moderately credible overall.

This rating cuts across all the socio-economic factors, years of reading them and experience with the Internet. While most readers see online newspapers as reliable, unbiased and trustworthy sources of news about Zambia and the world at large, they are apprehensive about their unethical conduct, especially in regard to plagiarism, exaggeration, lack of truthfulness and story-telling tactics generally. The anonymity of publishers and opaque sources of reports seem to contribute to their mistrust.

Overall online newspapers are rated less credible than traditional mass media. Privately owned traditional mass media are perceived to be the most credible generally and on most of the 12 credibility standards assessed. State-owned traditional media are rated worse than online newspapers and traditional private media in terms of balance, fairness and reliability, in that order. Traditional private media are seen to be more guilty than both state-owned media and online newspapers of practising 'vendetta journalism'. It seems fair to conclude that readers of online newspapers do not generally believe the reports they read unless they are cross-checked with the versions reported in the traditional media, the medium they credit with greater believability. This confirms the complementarity of online and traditional mass media, at least for now. It also lends weight to the notion that online newspapers have a long way to go to build readers' confidence in their truthfulness and believability.

From simple regression analyses it can be concluded that the level of satisfaction increases in tandem with years of reading the newspaper, thus confirming the key theoretical link between familiarity, reliance and trust. It is tempting to believe that online newspapers can enhance their credibility and reader satisfaction if they adopt and adhere to professional codes of ethical conduct. For such an eventuality, some form of regulation or self-regulation, perhaps through an online media council would seem to be inevitable. As Metzger and Flanagin (2013:212) state,

Fears about credibility within the digital media environmental stem from the fact that there are few standards for quality control and evaluation online. There are no universal standards for posting information on the Internet, and digital information may be easily altered, misrepresented, or created anonymously under false pretenses.

CHAPTER 10

DISPLACEMENT AND SUBSTITUTABILITY EFFECTS OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS ON TRADITIONAL MEDIA

“Society doesn’t need newspapers. What we need is journalism”

(Shirky, 2011:19)

Abstract

Online newspapers were introduced to the media ecosystem about two decades ago. They are the latest mass media genre after print newspapers (and other ink-on-paper publications), radio and television. Given the uniqueness of the Internet and hitherto the decline in the readership of print newspapers, generation of knowledge depicting trends in audience shifts as well as determining who has benefitted or lost consequent upon this media reconfiguration is critical. Research on the impact of the audience-ship of online newspapers on the older mass media in Africa is scant, and non-existent in Zambia. The present study sets out to contribute to the existing knowledge on the subject by comparing online newspapers to television, radio and print newspapers on the extent of reach, exposure and the intensity of exposure (attention). All the three are proxy predictors of the displacement and substitutability effects, which are the foci of the broader study. Empirical data on these areas of inquiry were based on the perceptions, attitudes and experiences that were elicited through self-reports proffered by the 535 respondents in a closed-ended questionnaire. Descriptive and analytical data were generated from advanced statistical tests (Chi-square and regression analyses) and these data constitute the bases of the inferences and conclusions made. The results are indicative of the fact that online newspapers have displaced both the radio and print media in terms of use by the audience and as sources of news. Most of the respondents have reportedly reduced their need for, and the time they spend on, all the three traditional media due to the advent of online newspapers. However, the majority of the respondents reported lack of readiness for a complete take-over of online newspapers as the only source of news. Considerations such as cost and the quest for up-to-date daily news are the main reasons for the displacement

effect online newspapers have on print newspapers, rather than the quality of the content or the credibility of the medium. Evidently, the three traditional media are disproportionately affected by both displacement and substitutability effects of online newspapers.

Key words: Zambian Readers; Online Newspaper; Displacement Effect; Substitutability Effect;.

Introduction

The advent of any new medium always arouses interest (scholarly and otherwise) regarding its impact on the existing media 'eco-system'. Of particular interest are the relations that develop between the innovation and the 'old' media and how these relations might impact on their own existence (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002). The subsequent anxiety is premised on the hypothesis that the new medium invariably displaces or complements the old (Perse, 2001; Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). "Sometimes traditional media cease to exist; sometimes they manage to adapt the so-called media logic (Altheide and Snow, 1979) to the changing contours of the media landscape" Westlund and Färdigh, 2011:180).

The invention of the World Wide Web by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 revolutionised the media industry. Printed newspapers, the oldest mass medium, benefited from the flurry of opportunities for gathering, processing and sharing information wrought by the new technology (Deuze, 2002). Digitization gave an impetus to the rise of online newspapers⁴⁶, starting from the mid-1990s, initially as web versions of an existing newspaper and later, as a stand-alone mass media genre. Many newspaper publications have terminated the print version in favour of online distribution (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009; Westlund and Färdigh, 2011).

Empirical data on the impact of online newspapers on the media landscape portray a nebulous picture. One set of data supports the proposition that online newspapers would soon obliterate their print counterparts, a scenario which markedly affects the audience

⁴⁶ Deuze (2001) distinguishes online newspaper conceptually as the type that is produced exclusively for the worldwide web (as a graphic interface of the Internet). They are also known by some scholars as 'online-only' and 'born-digitals'.

dynamics involving other traditional media (Shirky, 2011). A counter argument advances the view that while online newspapers pose a challenge to the existing business models, it does not spell doom for the other mass media (Barrett and Siegel, 2011; Rogers, 2015). 'Symbiotic' relations between old and new media have been identified (Kim and Johnson, 2007). Rogers (2015:45) aptly summed up the argument, thus:

Yes, newspapers are facing tough times, and yes, the Internet can offer many things that papers can't. But pundits and prognosticators have been predicting the death of newspapers for decades. Radio, television and now the Internet were all supposed to kill them off, but they're still here.

The fretfulness that surrounds the impact of online newspapers on the media contours is anchored on the substitutability theory, which postulates that when a new medium emerges, audiences evaluate it against the background of the old media (Kim and Johnson, 2007). From the uses and gratification trajectory, audiences opt for the medium that best satisfies their needs and wants (Kim and Johnson, 2007; Kaye and Johnson, 2016). This analogy depicts online newspapers as posing an unmatched challenge to the existence of 'ink on paper' news media since 1470 when the first and rudimentary newspaper was printed in Italy (Stephens, 2002). Predictions of eventual extinction abound, albeit with contradicting timelines (Salman et al., 2011; Murdoch, 2012). The predictions are in sync with the notion that 'society does not require newspapers. What we need is journalism' (Shirky, 2011: 19).

The principle of 'relative constancy' (discussed in the proceeding sections) contends that when a new medium is introduced, the medium with the most attractive functions and content will ultimately displace the one deemed less attractive (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; McCombs, 1972). Online news sites have a niche among key audiences especially for, among other things, their ability to provide up-to-date news and interactivity features that allow readers to interact with the medium and with one another (Chung and Yoo, 2008; De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010). Their attractiveness increases competition for attention from audiences (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011).

The use of online newspapers should be understood within the context of the growth of online journalism in Zambia and increased access to the Internet. The advent of online journalism dates back to 1996 when *The Post*, the leading independent daily in the country at the time, commenced publishing its online version. Since then, numerous stand-alone online newspapers targeting Zambian audiences have emerged, with more than 15 occupying the digital space to date. The available data, though scanty, indicates that more Zambians are reading online newspapers than the leading print daily newspapers (Chishala, 2015; Willems, 2016). Frustrations with the traditional mass media, the quest for uncensored news and the cost of newspapers are among the factors contributing to the frequent use of social and online media (Mbozi, 2014; Chishala, 2015). On the other hand, a decline in circulation numbers among the major dailies over the years has been reported (Hamusokwe, 2018).

Access to online newspapers in Zambia is abetted by the rapid rise in the accessibility of the Internet and mobile phone ownership by citizens across the country. The latest national survey reported that 63% of households across the country owned a mobile phone and 71% accessed the Internet via the device (Zambia Information Communication and Technology Authority (ZICTA), 2018). Internet penetration has been accelerated by the rolling out of communication towers in most parts of the country under the SMART-Zambia programme. Online newspapers are also freely accessed through their Facebook pages, especially for readers on Airtel mobile network⁴⁷ (Mbozi, 2014).

The population dynamics and mix is another important factor that determines an understanding of audience behaviours and choices. As reported in chapter 2, Zambia's is a young population (with a median age of 16.6 years) and by 2015, the 15 to 34-year-olds constituted 65% of the working population (The IYF, 2015). Reports indicate that youths are the main users of the Internet and consumers of news from the mass media (Chyi and

⁴⁷ The Airtel Facebook bundles have their respective validity periods and data volume. The bundles can be accessed by any device that is data enabled or data capable and all Prepaid & Post-paid customers with data capable handsets are eligible to take up any of the plans. <https://www.ogbongeblog.com/2013/06/codes-to-activate-airtel-unlimited.html> (Accessed 12 October 2018). 75% of readers in the survey subscribed to Airtel network.

Lasorsa, 2002; Skogerbo and Winsvold, 2011). Meanwhile, Zambia's mainstream media face legal and editorial restrictions as well as resource constraints, which inhibit the diversity of the news they offer. All the major print newspapers, radio and television stations with a national appeal are either owned or indirectly controlled by the state (Mwanza, Mwitwa and Mukunto, 2014; Hamusokwe, 2016). The ability by the media to provide independent and uncensored news, which lures the major news audiences, is also hindered by prohibitive laws, such as the Penal Code (1990) and State Security Act (Mwanza, Mwitwa, and Mukunto, 2014). Strict regulations imposed by the amended 'Independent' Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act of 2010 also attenuate free and vibrant reporting by the broadcast media.

The prohibitive conditions highlighted above create a fertile ground for news media audiences, especially the news-seeking demographic groups in the country, to seek the news from alternative channels. Online newspapers belong to the alternative media 'not simply because they are non-mainstream, but because they position themselves in opposition to the mainstream' (Moyo, 2007: 87). However, there is scarcity of empirical data on the extent of audiences' migration from mainstream news media to alternative news channels. Of particular relevance to the present study is the need to determine whether the use of online newspapers complements the displacing effects of online newspapers on the old media in Zambia.

This study offers new insights into the subject, by specifically answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent does reading online newspapers relate with the respondents' use of traditional mass media in terms of:
 - a. using these media channels at all, and b) the time spent on them?
2. Does the reading of online newspapers affect the need for print newspapers, television and radio and the actual cutting down on print newspapers?
3. Do the readers of online newspapers perceive the online newspaper as an adequate substitute for television and print newspapers?

4. Is perceived credibility a predictor of motivations for using online newspapers at the expense of traditional channels?
5. What are the differences in terms of media use among different social groups?

Literature review

Maiden analyses of the impact of online newspapers focused on the two different formats (online and print) of the same newspaper brand. Scholarly focus has since shifted to the readership and market relations between the stand-alone online newspapers and the traditional media, especially print newspapers. The electronic newspaper is now a distinct medium though it is still associated with, or even operated by, its print counterpart (Chyi and Sylvie, 2009). The audience dynamics and choices have also been shifting since the emergence of stand-alone online newspapers on the market. "Media consumers have become selective and active participants in the production and generation of media content" (Winsvold, 2011:21).

The emphasis of analysis in the present study is on the cannibalisation effect resulting from the displacement and substitutability effects emanating from the presence of online newspapers in the media eco-system (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002). Chyi and Lasorsa, (2002:94) defined cannibalisation in economic terms as, "the substitution effect, which is the tendency of people to purchase less expensive goods that serve the same purpose." For cannibalisation to take effect, "product substitutability must be higher, meaning they must be substitute goods (i.e. goods that can be used in the place of the other" (Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002:94). In other words, contemporary studies are more intent on establishing whether online newspapers displace or replace (substitute) radio, television and print newspapers.

Understanding theories of displacement and substitutability effects

The two terms, 'displacement' and 'substitutability,' have been used inter-changeably in some of the reviewed literature when in fact they have different meanings. The present study distinguishes the two phenomena and uses different sets of measurements to

ascertain the effects of each of them on new media consumption by Zambian audiences. The confusion emanating from their usage justifies the need to come up with working definitions that correlate with the present study.

The dictionary definition of the term 'displacement', from a social science typology, is "the act of moving someone or something from one position to another or the measurement of the volume replaced by something else."⁴⁸ From the mass media perspective, it denotes the movement of a particular medium from the position it used to occupy among the audiences in terms of time, or space allocated to it vis-à-vis its competitors or both. In other words, displacement can also mean the concurrent use of the old and the new technology (De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). On the other hand, substitution is defined as "the act, process, or result of *substituting* one thing for another or *replacement* of one mathematical entity by another of equal value".⁴⁹ In other words, displacement presupposes a complementary role between the new and the old media. Substitution entails the total take-over of the spaces and time of the old medium by the new one (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). In this thesis, substitution is used synonymously with 'replacement', which Westlund and Färdigh (2011) also refer to as the "ultimate displacement."

The analysis that determines whether both or either of the two effects are taking root is done from either a medium-centric perspective or user/audience-centric perspective (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). The media-centric approach focuses on the attributes or functionalities of the media and how they serve the interests of different users. The approach presupposes displacement and even replacement (absolute displacement) hypotheses (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). The medium-centric approach has been described as a 'zero-sum' game in which consumers have to make choices on what to use their limited resources on (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Westlund, Lowenstein-Barkai and Azi Lev-On, 2018). The more the consumers spend their resources on the new and

⁴⁸ <http://www.yourdictionary.com/displacement>.

⁴⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substitution>

ostensibly 'novel' medium, the fewer resources that would be left to spend on the older medium (Lowenstein-Barkai and Azi Lev-On, 2018; Cha, 2013).

The 'principle of relative constancy' and the 'principle of niche' help to characterise the manner in which displacement and substitution occur from the medium-centric perspective (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). The two principles are relevant and have been extensively used in the present study to analyse the relations between online newspapers and the traditional mass media in Zambia. The 'principle of relative constancy' contends that when a new medium is introduced, "the media with the most attractive functions (and content) will displace media that are less attractive" (McCombs, 1972; Nguyen and Western, 2006). This analogy is also in line with the argument advanced by other scholars that: "The displacement of one technology by another usually occurs due to the newer technology's ability to provide a superior method of delivering media content" (Lin, 2004:450). The displacement effect is likely to occur when a new medium serves the same function as the older medium, but delivers it in a better way (Lowenstein-Barkai and Azi Lev-On, 2018:1). According to this analogy, when this happens, the audience would most probably spend its resources to the new medium and reduce the consumption of the older on (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011).

On the other hand, a niche is defined from a business typology as "a specific area of marketing which has its own particular requirements, customers, and products".⁵⁰ From a media perspective, proponents of the 'principle of niche' contend that each medium has a niche it established for itself and this serves the needs of particular users (Dimmick et al., 2010). Niches could be in terms of time and space locations, content or functionalities a particular medium offers, which is also referred to as the 'functional equivalence' hypothesis (Dimmick, 2003). For instance, previous research concluded that print newspapers established their niche of being read in the early hours of the morning, from home, while online news media were accessed at workplaces (Dimmick, 2003; Dimmick et

⁵⁰ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/niche>

al., 2010). Users also pursued particular types of content such as sports and politics from the print newspapers (Dimmick et al., 2010).

Antecedent researchers contended that little displacement took place when each medium maintained its niches. However, there is consensus that the users determine whether a medium continues to enjoy a particular niche as they transit to a new medium (Westlund, 2008, 2010). Research shows that the niche of the old media diminishes with the use of new gadgets, such as mobile phones, to access news in different spaces and at any time (Westlund, 2008, 2010). In this instance, the print newspaper suffers disadvantages as it offers the previous day's news but charging money for it (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Dimmick et al., 2010). Within the domain of the print media, research has established that the mobile device is the game changer and the agent of the substitution effect (whether direct or indirect) (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011). This finding is very relevant as it helps in understanding user habits, vis the displacement effects of online newspapers in view of the reported high incidence in the use of mobile phones to access the Internet and online newspapers among the respondents who took part in the present study (see also chapters 5 and 6).

The user-centric analysis is deterministic in approach as it focuses on the needs and wants of the users (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Lowenstein-Barkai and Azi Lev-On, 2018). This approach is based on the uses and gratification theory, which asserts that the audiences are active users of the mass media and they know exactly what they expect from the media (Katz et al, 1974; Mongs, 1997; Lee and Lee, 2015). Essentially, the needs and habits of the users of a medium shape their choices and behaviours. This particularly determines whether or not the use of one medium results in the displacement of another. Research is conclusive that different media serve different needs, resulting in them adopting a multi-platform use (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Lowenstein-Barkai and Azi Lev-On, 2018). This perspective authenticates the argument that despite the new medium competing with the old, the former does not necessarily replace the latter (Lin, 2001). Thus, Westlund and Färdigh (2011:180) concluded that “no medium can replace all the existing media; it is more likely to become a complement, unless the old media fail to meet the changing

expectations users have of particular media". How users apportion their time and spaces to access different media is, therefore, the key factor in the user-centric approach (Westlund and Färdigh, 2011; Lee and Leung, 2008).

In short, the present study adopted aspects of both the medium-centric and the user-centric approaches in analysing the factors that determine displacement and substitution effects of Zambian online newspapers on the use of radio, television and print newspapers. Both approaches are relevant to the characterisation of what the users need and want from online newspapers. The needs and/or wants often manifest themselves in terms of the contents or functionalities presented by the online newspapers. This is cognisant of the fact that the interplay between the niche of the online newspapers and the needs of the users often varies over time and among different groups of audiences. In this regard, the time-based approach adopted in the study is a valuable indicator of how the users spend their media resources, simultaneously depicting the losers and winners in the process.

Past studies

Studies on the impact of the audience's use of online newspapers on traditional media present three sets of variegated results: 1. Limited displacement effects and loyalty to the traditional mass media, especially during the first decade of digital journalism, 1995 – 2005); 2. hybrid or complementary use the media; and, 3. possibility of a disproportional substitution of certain media by other media and projections of total annihilation of the print newspaper by the new media. Earliest studies concluded that the audiences did not spend any less time on traditional media in spite of the interface with the Internet (Bromley and Bowles, 1995; Stempel and Hargrove, 1995). Readers did not perceive of the electronic newspaper as a satisfactory substitute for its traditional version (Mueller and Kameron, 1995; De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Chyi and Sylvie, 2009; Skogerbo and Winsvold, 2011). Studies show that Internet users would still seek news from print newspapers but non-users, on the other hand, would get news from radio and television (Mueller and Kameron, 1995).

Open preference for print to online newspapers was established by several studies, including Pew (1998); Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) and Skogerbo and Winsvold, (2011). Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011:219) summed up the whole scenario by asserting that “the print editions were read more than the online newspapers, thereby confirming the dominance of the print version.” Considerations of ‘visibility’, originality of the content and the perceived higher status weighed heavily in favour of the print newspaper vis-à-vis its online counterpart. Some researchers argued that the presence of the Internet would not replace print newspapers, just in the same way as radio did not replace newspapers and television (Ibrahim et al., 2011). It is argued that Shovelware,⁵¹ and other unethical media practices rendered online newspapers less credible than their predecessor (Chari, 2009; Chishala, 2015). All these features tended to limit the substitutability effect of online newspapers on the readership of the print version. Credibility is perceived as both a factor in motivation for, and satisfaction from use of, a particular type of media (Johnson and Kaye, 2004, 2010, 2016).

A number of studies established ‘hybrid’ or ‘simultaneous’ use of both online newspapers and traditional media (Stempel, Hargrove and Bent, 2000; De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002; Chyi et al., 2010). In these studies, online newspapers were perceived as complements rather than substitutes for print newspapers and other traditional media (Ibrahim et al., 2011). The audiences’ quest for ‘multiplatform’ sources of news and information was observed (Stempel, Hargrove and Bent, 2000). De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005:180) summed up the argument by stating that: “No medium can replace all the existing media; it is more likely to become a complement, unless the old media fail to meet the changing expectations users have of particular media”. This observation is premised on the understanding that media audiences seek different needs and wants from the media and that no single medium can satisfy these needs.

⁵¹ "Shovelware" is a term that is frequently used to describe the first stage of online journalism in which newspaper and magazines simply shovelled their original print content onto a website (<http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring02/Jones/present.html>).

While the majority of the studies support the complementary roles of online newspapers and traditional news sources, some of them, especially the more recent ones, have found selective substitutability effects. For instance, Ha and Fang (2012) found that the Internet had a total displacement (substitution) effect on traditional media, including television and print newspapers in terms of searching for daily news in Japan (Kitamura, 2013). The negative impact of the Internet on television was also found by the Pew Research Centre (1999) and De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, (2005). Researchers who focused on the roles of the different media from the concept of functional alternatives concluded that television was particularly disadvantaged because it was generally perceived as entertainment media by those whose primary motive was to search for news (Flanagin and Metzger, 2001; Kim and Johnson, 2007).

This theory contends that television is the most disadvantaged insofar as the readers are primarily turning to the mass media in search of news information. Kitamura (2013) also found a disproportionate substitution effect of the use of the Internet for news on information acquisition as it regards radio. He concluded that the locations where radio was accessed contributed to the result. From the perspective of the 'principle of niche', the result suggests that radio is disadvantaged and therefore unable to compete with mobile phones in terms of the time and spaces utilised when the news ought to be received.

The substitutability effect of online newspapers on the mainstream media is summarised in the words of De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005:180), thus

Concerning whether the substitute has become the 'real product', as posed by Gustafsson (2008), we conclude that this has taken place, when seen from a user perspective. The online news site has, in other words, become the medium to which most users have turned during these times of convergence.

The present study also investigates the influence of different demographic factors on the displacement and/or substitutability effects of online newspapers on the different mainstream media. This approach is predicated on the theoretical trajectory which assumes

that the use of the media is influenced by demographic, societal and situational factors (McQuail, 2000). Some media users may feel the need to access news from various sources, which entails a complementary rather than a displacing effect in terms of the use of different types of media. The reviewed studies confirm varying use based on sex, age, educational level, income and other demographic factors. De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, (2005) specifically found the complementary use of various media among men, middle-aged people and people of higher educational standing. On the contrary, a strong displacing effect of online newspapers on traditional media was found among the youths, which was explained in terms of the perception of this group of users that online newspapers serve the same purposes and needs as print newspapers (De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010).

From a medium-centric perspective, specifically the 'principle of niche', an analysis of the methodology of news transmission is a crucial imperative to the understanding of the facilitators of displacement and substitutability effects on the conventional news media. In this case, the role of 'hand-held devices', the mobile phone in particular, has been one of the foci of scholarly attention (Mabweazara, 2011; Paterson, 2013; Dimmick et al., 2010; De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010). Of late, mobile phones have become the technology of choice on the African continent (Mabweazara, 2011; Paterson, 2013). Underpinned by the high use of smart phones, online audiences have become accustomed to accessing information from anywhere and at any time. Consequently, this has afforded online news sites the 'broadest niche' over the traditional sources of news (Dimmick et al., 2010). To this end, mobile devices have been perceived as having a direct or indirect substitution effects on traditional media (De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010).

The interest of the present study is on the impact of online media on the traditional ones from the standpoint of audience behaviour and media use. However, limited literature on the economic impact has been reviewed just in order to present a fairly holistic picture of the future of the traditional media, especially print newspapers. The few reviewed studies focusing on the impact of use of online newspapers on circulation of print newspapers and advertising also present ubiquitous results. Earlier predictions were that online and offline advertising would not be competing but rather complementing each other through multi-

tasking and synergies (Ogedebe, Mathew and Adeniji, 2013). Ibrahim et al. (2011) concluded that online newspapers had not substantially affected traditional media in terms of both revenue and circulation. Rather, the two forms of newspapers tended to reinforce each other.

On the contrary, the negative impact of the Internet-based media on the circulation of print newspapers has been observed in other studies. For instance, the adoption of online advertising was reportedly associated with reduced advertising expenditures on the part of newspapers, magazines and television (Berger, 2009; Zentner, 2012; Pew, 2012) though these developments were accompanied by rapid downturns in circulation, leading to predictions of the total annihilation of the print newspaper by the new media (Shirky, 2011; Murdoch, 2012). Murdoch is quoted by *The Guardian* Newspaper as having told the Leveson Commission, which was set up to explore options for media regulation in the United Kingdom (UK) following the phone-hacking scandal by the *News of the World*, that:

Every newspaper has had a very good run ... It's coming to an end as a result of these disruptive technologies. I think we will have both [Internet and print news] for quite a while, certainly ten years, some people say five. I'd be more inclined to say 20, but 20 means very small circulations.⁵²

Zentner (2012) used empirical data to establish the relationships between the adoption of the Internet and the changes in terms of advertising expenditures on the part of traditional offline media types. Following an 11-year panel study conducted in more than 80 countries, Zentner (2012) concluded that an increase in Internet penetration correlated with a decrease in advertising expenditures on newspapers of 32.5% and 12.0%, magazines of 43.5% and 14.5%, and television of 25.1% and 15.5%.

⁵² <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/apr/26/ruport-murdoch-predicts-newspapers-may-die>. Accessed on 20 June 2017).

To wind up, past studies and predictions focusing on the impact of online newspapers on traditional media present a paradoxical outlook. They have also been unable to fill the following gaps: (a) the majority of the studies focused on comparing the impacts between online and print versions of the same newspaper brand; (b) most of them were conducted many years ago (during the inception or start-up years of the Internet); and, (c) all of them were conducted in different geographical settings (almost exclusively in the West). The present study sets out to contribute towards addressing the shortcomings cited above. The study offers more insights into the subject, by specifically answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent does reading online newspapers relate with the respondents' use of traditional mass media in terms of:

(a) using these media channels at all, and (b) the time spent reading them?
2. Does reading online newspapers affect the need for print newspapers, television and radio and the actual cutting down on print newspapers?
3. Do the readers of online newspapers perceive their media choice as an adequate substitute for television and print newspapers?
4. Is the perceived credibility a predictor of motivations for using online newspapers at the expense of traditional channels?
5. What are the differences in terms of media use among different social groups?

To measure displacement and substitutability effects of online newspapers on the traditional media, the respondents were asked to respond to the following statements:

1. *Reading Zambian stand-alone online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) reduces the need for me to read a print newspaper.*
2. *Reading Zambian stand-alone online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) reduces the need for me to watch news on television.*
3. *Over the past five years, I have cut down on reading Zambian print newspapers because I am spending more time reading Zambian stand-alone online newspapers.*

4. *Reading Zambian stand-alone online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) reduces the need for me to listen to news on radio.*
5. *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are an adequate substitute for Zambian print newspapers.*
6. *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are an adequate substitute for the Zambian television for news.*

Results

Use of online newspapers and other news channels

The first research question evaluates the extent to which reading online newspapers relates to respondents' use of traditional mass media. Three indicators were used to measure media use: 1. the extent of reach and use; 2. Expressed need for each medium over the past five years; and, 3.. the intensity of exposure or selective attention (time spent).

The extent of reach and intensity of exposure

The results (refer also to chapter 6) indicate that Facebook (FB) commanded the highest reach, with 88% of the respondents accessing the Internet platform, followed by television (81%), stand-alone online newspapers (63%), radio (61%) and online versions of print newspapers at 43%. Print newspapers were accessed by 39% of the respondents and Twitter had the least level of access which stood at a mere 9%. The study established that stand-alone online newspapers were the third most accessed media type by Zambian audiences, surpassed only by the television, which is one of the traditional news channels. To measure intensity, the respondents were made to write the actual number of days they accessed each media type within a given week. For the weekly exposure, the findings indicate that television was the most intensely accessed in a week registering a mean score of 5.90 (just under six days a week) with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.70 (refer also to chapter 6). Facebook came second with a mean score of 5.59 (SD 1.83), followed by stand-alone online newspapers with a mean score of 5.01 (SD 1.84). Radio was the fourth with a mean score of 4.92 (SD 2.09). Twitter ranked fifth (4.44, SD 2.242) whereas the

online versions of print newspapers ranked sixth (4.35, SD 1.842) and the least accessed mass media type was the print newspaper (3.02, SD 1.86). Again, online newspapers ranked second after the television from among the traditional mass media.

Impact of online newspapers on need for traditional Channels

The second research question interrogates the impact of the reading of online newspapers on audiences' need for print newspapers, television and radio. The question is answered through an assessment of the expressed need for, and time spent on, each media type and the reported reduction in use.

Need for, and time spent on, print newspapers

The results show that 72% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *Reading an online newspaper (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down the need for me to read a print newspaper*. The results from the regression model of analysis (Table 10.1) indicate that income, residence, experience with the Internet and Internet skills determine the reduction in the need for reading print newspapers due to the need to read online newspapers. To be more specific, a respondent residing in a low density area experiences a reduced need for reading print newspapers by 2.34 times compared to one residing in a high density residential area. Also, a reader with 'very poor' Internet skills reduces the need for the print version by 1.96 times compared to a reader with 'poor' Internet skills. On the other hand, the following readers are not likely to experience a reduced need for reading print newspapers due to the need to read online newspapers: a respondent who earns K50,000 – K100,000 (US\$4,500 - 9,000) (by 0.39 times compared to one who earns below K50,000); a reader with 'moderate' Internet skills (by 0.40 times compared to one with 'poor' skills); and, one who has been surfing the Internet for 6 – 10 years (by 0.46 times compared to a reader who has been surfing the Internet for 2 – 5 years).

Table 10.1 : Demographic factors influencing reduction in need for print due to reading online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	1.15	1.20	0.33	0.70	2.07
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.78***	1.91	0.90	0.76	4.81
	36-45 years	1.75	1.94	1.37	0.48	7.79
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.62***	0.1	0.31	0.48	1.79
	University degree	0.41***	0.67	0.30	0.28	1.61
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.39***	0.39***	0.14	0.18	0.82
	K101-250, 000	0.86	0.75	0.45	0.23	2.47
Location [Urban] Residence [High density]	>K250, 000	0.25	1		0.13	13.44
	Rural	1.41	0.54	0.48	0.10	3.02
	Low density	1.51	2.34***	0.95	1.05	5.19
	Rural	1.50	1.90	1.77	0.31	11.77
Registered voter: [Yes]	No	10.35***	0.80	0.38	0.32	2.01
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.16***	0.89	0.35	0.41	1.93
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.48	0.51	0.29	0.17	1.55
	Thrice	1.24	1.74	0.73	0.76	3.97
	Four times and more	1.50	1.72	0.58	0.89	3.33
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	22.04	0.83	0.88	0.10	6.67
	Moderate	0.93	0.91	0.35	0.43	1.94
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.24	0.52	0.22	0.23	1.21
	6-10 years	0.54***	0.46***	0.16	0.23	0.92
	>10 years	0.84	0.53	0.30	0.17	1.62
Internet skills: [Poor]	Very good	1	1	-	-	-
	Good	5.93***	0.40***	0.16	0.19	0.86
	Moderate	1.62***	1.96***	0.66	1.01	3.83
	Very poor	0.83		0.18	0.94	1.41
	-			0.09	0.96	1.31
	-					
Years reading favourite newspaper		1.12	1.15			
Days reading online newspaper per week		1.11	1.12			
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket						

In a related follow-up question, another 72% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement: *Over the past five years, I have cut down on reading Zambian print newspapers because I am spending more time on reading Zambian stand-alone online newspapers.* The regression model (not graphically presented due to space limitation) shows three factors as positive predictors of the cutting down on reading print newspapers due to the need to read online newspapers: political activism, experience with the Internet and experience with reading online newspapers. To be more specific: 1. a respondent who is not a registered voter cuts down on reading print newspapers by 5.25 times compared to a registered voter; 2. a respondent who has been surfing the Internet for 6 - 10 years and for more than 10 years cuts down on the need for print newspapers by 2.18 times and 3.38 times respectively than a reader who has been surfing the Internet for two to five years; and, 3. as the weekly frequency of reading online newspapers goes up, the reader cuts down on reading print newspapers by 1.20 times.

Impact of reading online newspapers on the need for television news

In terms of the need for television, 37% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; *Reading an online newspaper (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down the need for me to watch news on television* and 51% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Six demographic factors were identified as predictors to the reduction in the respondents' need for television news because of spending time reading online newspapers (Table 10.1 below). The factors are as follows: 1. a female reader (cuts by 2.21 times compared to her male counterpart); 2. a reader in the 26 – 35 years age group (cuts 3.57 times compared to one within the 18 – 25 years age-group); 3. a reader holding a degree and above as educational qualification (cuts by 2.28 times compared to a secondary school leaver); 4. a reader who has been using the Internet for less than two years (cuts the need for television by 3.64 times compared to one who has used it for 2 – 5 years); 5. as the experience of reading online newspapers goes up by a year, each reader's need for television goes down by 1.05 times; and, 6 conversely, a reader with 'moderate' skills is 46 times not likely to reduce the need for watching television due to spending time reading news from an online newspaper than one with 'poor' Internet skills.

Table 10.2 : Predictors of reduced need for television due to reading online newspapers.

Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI
Sex: [Male]	Female	1.82***	2.21***	0.58	1.33 3.68
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	3.57***	4.74***	2.48	1.70 13.22
	36-45 years	1.16	1.01	0.65	0.29 3.61
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	- -
	Certificate/Diploma	0.70	1.01	0.31	0.54 1.87
	University degree	1.40	2.28***	0.93	1.02 5.10
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.66	0.78	0.26	0.41 1.52
	K101-250, 000	2.56	2.24	1.53	0.58 8.56
	>K250, 000	0.51	0.32	0.33	0.04 2.47
Location [Urban]	Rural	1.07	1.43	1.17	0.29 7.16
Residence [High density]	Low density	0.78	0.78	0.30	0.36 1.66
	Rural	0.91	0.43	0.37	0.77 2.34
Registered voter: [Yes]	No	5.89***	1.67	0.70	0.73 3.82
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.27***	1.29	0.47	0.63 2.63
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.11	0.94	0.42	0.38 2.30
	Thrice	0.59	0.65	0.25	0.30 1.41
	Four times and more	1.08	1.10	0.35	0.59 2.04
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	15.81***	4.33	4.01	0.71 26.54
	Moderate	0.69	0.87	0.30	0.45 1.72
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	3.06***	3.64***	1.40	1.71 7.75
	6-10 years	1.06	1.25	0.38	0.69 2.62
	>10 years	0.86	1.05	0.52	0.39 2.79
Internet skills: [Poor]	Very good	1	1		
	Good	5.35***	0.50	0.47	0.08 3.15
	Moderate	1.16	0.54***	0.18	0.28 1.02
	Very poor	1.23	1.47	0.49	0.77 2.81
Years reading favorite newspaper	-	1.05***	1.05***	0.01	1.03 1.07
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.02	0.91	0.07	0.79 1.06

***p<0.05 Reference category in bracket

Impact of reading online newspapers on need for radio

In terms of listening to the radio, just over half (54%) agreed or strongly agreed to the statement; *Reading an online newspaper (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down the need for me to listen to news on the radio*. Thirty-eight percent (38%) disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement. The regression model of analyses (Table 10.3) shows that a reader aged 26 – 35 years reduces the need for listening to the radio by 3.32 times compared with one aged 18 - 25 years; a reader who voted in the 2016 general elections reduces the need for listening to the radio by 2.27 in comparison with one who did not; and, as the experience of reading online newspapers increases by a year, each reader's need for listening to the radio goes down by 1.05 times.

Table 10.3 : Demographic factors influencing reduction in need for radio due to reading online newspapers

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	1.15	1.20	0.33	0.70	2.07
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	1.78***	1.91	0.90	0.76	4.81
	36-45 years	1.75	1.94	1.37	0.48	7.79
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.62***	0.1	0.31	0.48	1.79
	University degree	0.41***	0.67	0.30	0.28	1.61
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.39***	0.39***	0.14	0.18	0.82
	K101-250, 000	0.86	0.75	0.45	0.23	2.47
Location [Urban] Residence [High density]	>K250, 000	0.25	1		0.13	13.44
	Rural	1.41	0.54	0.48	0.10	3.02
	Low density	1.51	2.34***	0.95	1.05	5.19
	Rural	1.50	1.90	1.77	0.31	11.77
Registered voter: [Yes]	No	10.35***	0.80	0.38	0.32	2.01
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.16***	0.89	0.35	0.41	1.93
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.48	0.51	0.29	0.17	1.55
	Thrice	1.24	1.74	0.73	0.76	3.97
	Four times and more	1.50	1.72	0.58	0.89	3.33
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	22.04	0.83	0.88	0.10	6.67
	Moderate	0.93	0.91	0.35	0.43	1.94
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.24	0.52	0.22	0.23	1.21
	6-10 years	0.54***	0.46***	0.16	0.23	0.92
	>10 years	0.84	0.53	0.30	0.17	1.62
Internet skills: [Poor]	Very good	1				
	Good	5.93***	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.62***	0.40***	0.16	0.19	0.86
Years reading favorite newspaper Days reading online newspaper per week	Very poor	0.83	1.96***	0.66	1.01	3.83
	-	1.12	1.15	0.18	0.94	1.41
	-	1.11	1.12	0.09	0.96	1.31

***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket

Substitutability effects of online newspapers

The second research question asks the readers whether or not they perceive online newspapers as adequate substitutes or replacements for the television and the print newspapers.

Adequacy of online newspapers as substitute for print newspapers

With respect to the perceived adequacy of online newspapers in replacing print newspapers, 52% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement: *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are an adequate substitute for Zambian print newspapers*. Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The logistic regression model of analysis (not graphically presented due to space limitation) indicates that education, income, years of experience on the Internet and frequency of reading online newspapers influence readers' opinions regarding whether online newspapers are adequate as a total replacement of print newspapers. In specific terms, the findings show that: 1. Respondents earning K50,000 – K100,000 (US\$4,500 - 9,000) and K101,000 - K250,000 find online newspapers adequate by 1.84 and 3.31 times respectively, in comparison with a reader earning below K50,000 (US\$4,500); 2. A reader holding a degree or above finds online newspapers as adequate substitutes for print newspapers by 2.17 times compared with a secondary school certificate holder; and, 3. As experience of reading online newspapers increases by a year, the reader's rating of their perception of the adequacy of online newspapers in terms of replacing print newspapers also increases by 1.15 times. Conversely, medium and high frequency daily Internet surfers are 66 times and 45 times, respectively, not likely to find online newspapers a sufficient substitute for print newspapers as compared to a low frequent surfer. Also, a reader whose Internet skills are 'moderate' is 56 times not likely to find online newspapers an adequate substitute for print newspapers compared with one with 'very good' Internet skills.

Adequacy of online newspapers as substitute for television

In terms of perceptions about the substitutability of online newspapers for television, only 23% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement; *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are an adequate substitute for Zambian television*. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while 13% of them indicated being neutral. The results shown by the regression analysis (Table 3) show that the respondents' age, income and experience with the Internet in general, and with reading online newspapers in particular, are predictors of opinions on whether online newspapers are an adequate substitute for television. The findings specifically show that; 1. A respondent aged 26 – 35 years finds online newspapers an adequate substitute for television by 3.03 compared to a counterpart in the 18 - 25 years age-group; 2. A respondent earning K50,000 - K100,000 regards online newspapers as an adequate substitute for television by 2.25 times compared to one who earns below K50,000; 3. A reader who has been accessing the Internet for less than two years perceives online newspapers as an adequate substitute for television by 3.38 times compared to one who has been accessing the Internet for a period of two to five years; and 4. As the reader's experience of reading online newspapers goes up by a year, the reader's rating in terms of perceiving the adequacy of online newspapers as an adequate replacement for television also goes up by 1.04 times. Conversely, a reader who surfs the Internet thrice a day finds online newspapers inadequate as substitutes for the television by 63 times compared to a reader who surfs the Internet only once a day.

Table 10.4 : Predictors for reporting the adequacy of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers over Zambian television for news. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	Robust SE	95% CI	
Sex: [Female]	Male	0.93	1.00	0.27	0.59	1.70
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	3.24***	3.06***	1.71	1.02	9.14
	36-45 years	1.12	1.05	0.72	0.28	4.07
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	1.08	0.64	0.21	0.33	1.23
	University degree	2.68***	1.22	0.56	0.49	3.02
Income: [<50, 000K]	50-100, 000K	2.45***	2.88***	1.08	1.38	6.01
	101-250, 000K	2.92	1.78	1.22	0.46	6.88
	>250, 000K	2.92	2.24	2.73	0.21	24.36
Registered voter: [Yes]	No	1.03	1.53	0.68	0.64	3.68
Voted in 2016: [Yes]	No	0.94	0.79	0.30	0.37	1.69
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	0.44	0.59	0.29	0.23	1.56
	Thrice	0.34***	0.29***	0.12	0.12	0.66
	Four times and more	1.08	1.30	0.44	0.67	2.51
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.86	1.22	0.46	0.58	2.55
Number of years using the Internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	2.90***	3.72***	1.49	1.70	8.14
	6-10 years	2.32***	1.92***	0.61	1.02	3.61
	>10 years	2.02	1.82	0.94	0.67	4.99
Internet skills: [Very good]	Good	0.95	1.02	1.04	0.14	7.57
	Moderate	0.73	0.87	0.30	0.44	1.73
	Very poor	2.11***	1.54	0.53	0.78	3.01

Socio-economic factors influencing choice of online newspapers over traditional media

Online newspapers compete with other news channels (new and old) for attention from the audience. To this effect, 57% of the respondents answered in the affirmative to the question; *Have you ever been faced with a situation where you had to choose to get news or information from an online newspaper instead of a traditional newspaper?* Forty-one percent (41%) professed not having been faced with such a situation and 3% of the respondents were not sure. In preferring an online newspaper to a traditional print newspaper, the respondents gave the following reasons (Figure 10.1): 77% of them were influenced by cost consideration, 67% by the need for up-to-date news, 32% by the value of the news and/or information (content), 23% reported having trust and confidence in the online newspaper, 6% gave other reasons and 2% could not disclose their reason/s.

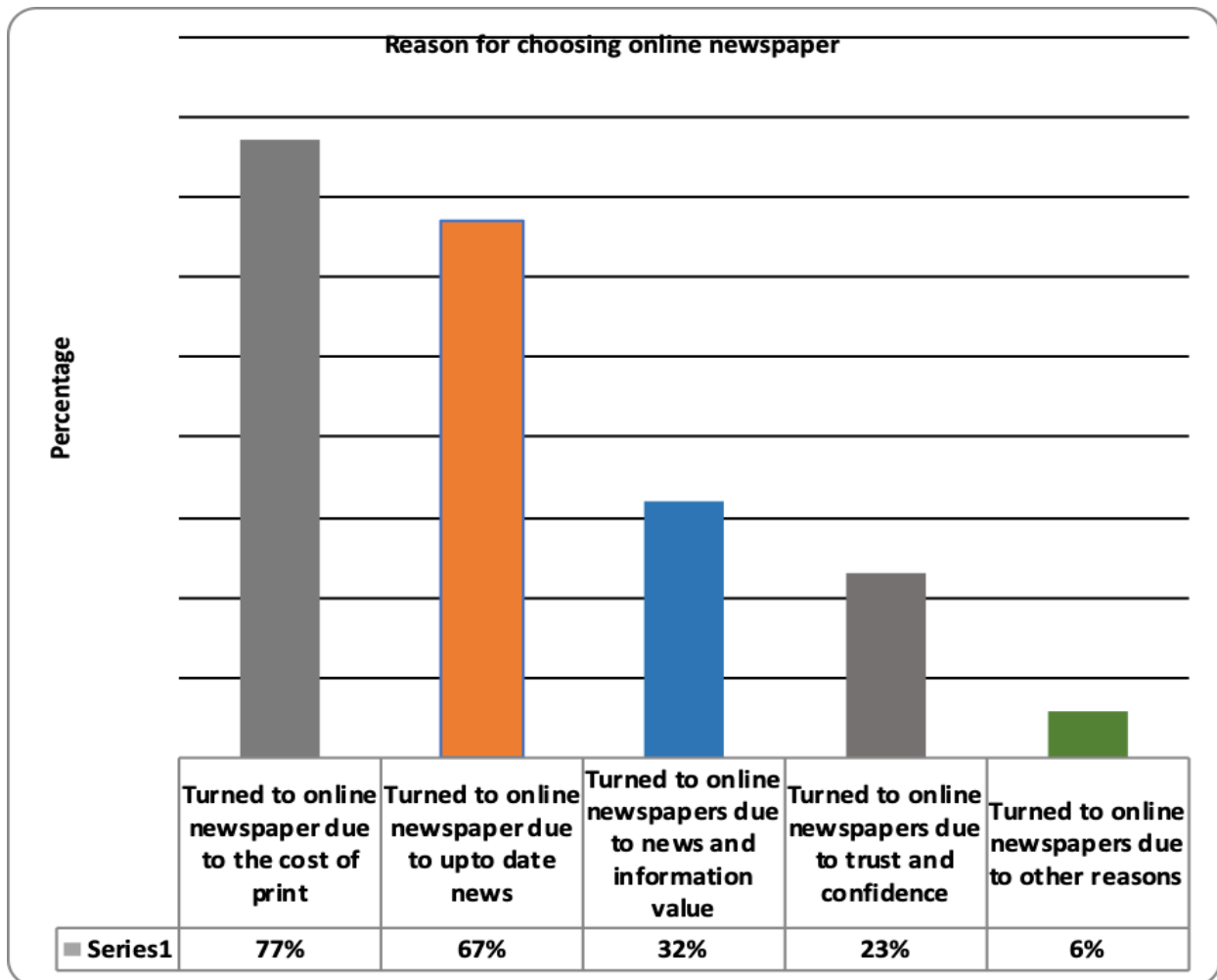


Figure 10.1 : Reasons for choosing an online over a print newspaper.

Source: Author's field data

Perceived credibility and substitutability effects

Research question 4 asks whether or not the perceived credibility of online newspapers is a predictor of motivations for using online newspapers at the expense of traditional channels. The results indicate that overall, 64% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the perception that Zambian stand-alone online newspapers are credible sources of information. Ten percent (10%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the perception and the rest were either neutral or not sure. The study assessed the respondents' affirmation on the subject through the statement; *If there are different versions of the same story on national ZNBC television, ZNBC Radio or in print newspapers, I would stick with the version of the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers.* Only 25% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The rest (75%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea of sticking with the online version of the newspaper. This implies that the overwhelming majority of the respondents trust the traditional media (as a collective) more than the online newspapers, especially in terms of truthfulness. The results in chapter 9 also indicated that the readers who participated in the study rated the traditional mass media, both state-owned and privately-owned, higher than online newspapers in terms of overall credibility (72% privately-owned traditional media, 55% for government owned media and 42% online newspapers).

Discussion

Displacement effect: The extent of reach and frequency and intensity of use

Despite Zambian mass media audiences being classified as moderate readers of online newspapers, they are doing so at the expense of traditional mass media, specifically print newspapers. From the results, it can be inferred that online newspapers are now ranked second after television among the news sources categorized under the mass media genre on all the three fronts the study has assessed: (1) the number of audiences accessing the medium, which other researchers have defined as 'mere use' (De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005); (2). the proportion of audiences who turn to the medium for breaking news; and, (3) the intensity of use, measured by the number of days in a week the respondents

visited the medium. On all the three accounts, radio and print newspapers have been 'displaced' to the fourth and sixth places respectively among the seven news sources assessed in the current study.

From the perspective of the theory of 'Active audience' and the theory of selectivity⁵³ (Klapper, 1960), especially the latter theory, the high intensity characterising the use of online newspapers implies that the readers are not merely perusing through these media but they are paying attention to and interested in their contents. More fundamentally, the displacement effects perspective depicts readers as now spending more time on, and ostensibly paying more attention to, the contents of online newspapers than to what radio and print newspapers provide. Therefore, the hypothesis that online newspapers are merely 'alarm' media that are only providing breaking news, according to De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005), is contradicted by the results of the present study.

Displacement effect: Need for and time spent on online newspapers

Regarding displacement effect on account of the need for, and time spent on, online newspapers in comparison with the traditional mass media, the study found that online newspapers have negatively impacted on the readers' need for all the three forms of traditional mass media; television, radio and print newspapers, albeit to varying degrees. Three quarters of the respondents indicated a reduced need for print newspapers and about half for radio over the past five years because they are spending more time on online newspapers. Evidently, the same proportion of readers confirmed having cut down on the time they spent on print newspapers because of reading online newspapers. However, fewer respondents (about a third only) indicated having cut down on their need for watching television.

The results suggest that overall, and in line with the findings by other researchers such as De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005), reading online newspapers is a positive predictor of time and need-based displacement effect on print newspapers. De Waal, Schönbach and

⁵³ The theory of selective exposure argues that "By and large, people tend to expose themselves to those mass communications which are in accord with their existing attitudes and interests. Consciously and unconsciously, they avoid communications of the opposite hue" (Klapper, 1960: 19).

Lauf (2005:190) made the following conclusion: “Online news, in general, has acquired a stronger position among users over time at the expense of the readership of printed evening tabloids. Second, with regard to the interrelated roles of print and online news sites, the latter constitute the primary channel for users—in particular, among 16- to 49-year-olds.”

Figure 10.2 (below) demonstrates the disproportional displacement effects online newspapers have on the three traditional media; print newspaper, radio and television. However, contrary to earlier studies, the present study has established that television is the medium least cannibalised by online newspapers. Complementing this view, De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005) specifically concluded that more people were cutting down on the time they spent on television compared to the other news channels, which contradicts the findings of the present study. The results also affirm that the proportion of readers turning to online newspapers at the expense of print newspapers is much higher than previously reported, especially during the first decade of online journalism (1995 – 2005) (Bromley and Bowles, 1995; Chyi and Lasorsa, 2002). Therefore, this observation confirms earlier predictions that the impact of online newspapers on the print newspapers would profoundly manifest in later years (De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Murdoch, 2012). The seemingly progressive cannibalisation effect of online newspapers on their print counterparts can be explained in terms of such factors as loss of confidence in the traditional mass media among Zambian audiences (for reasons explained in the introduction) and the familiarity effect (explained in the proceeding section).

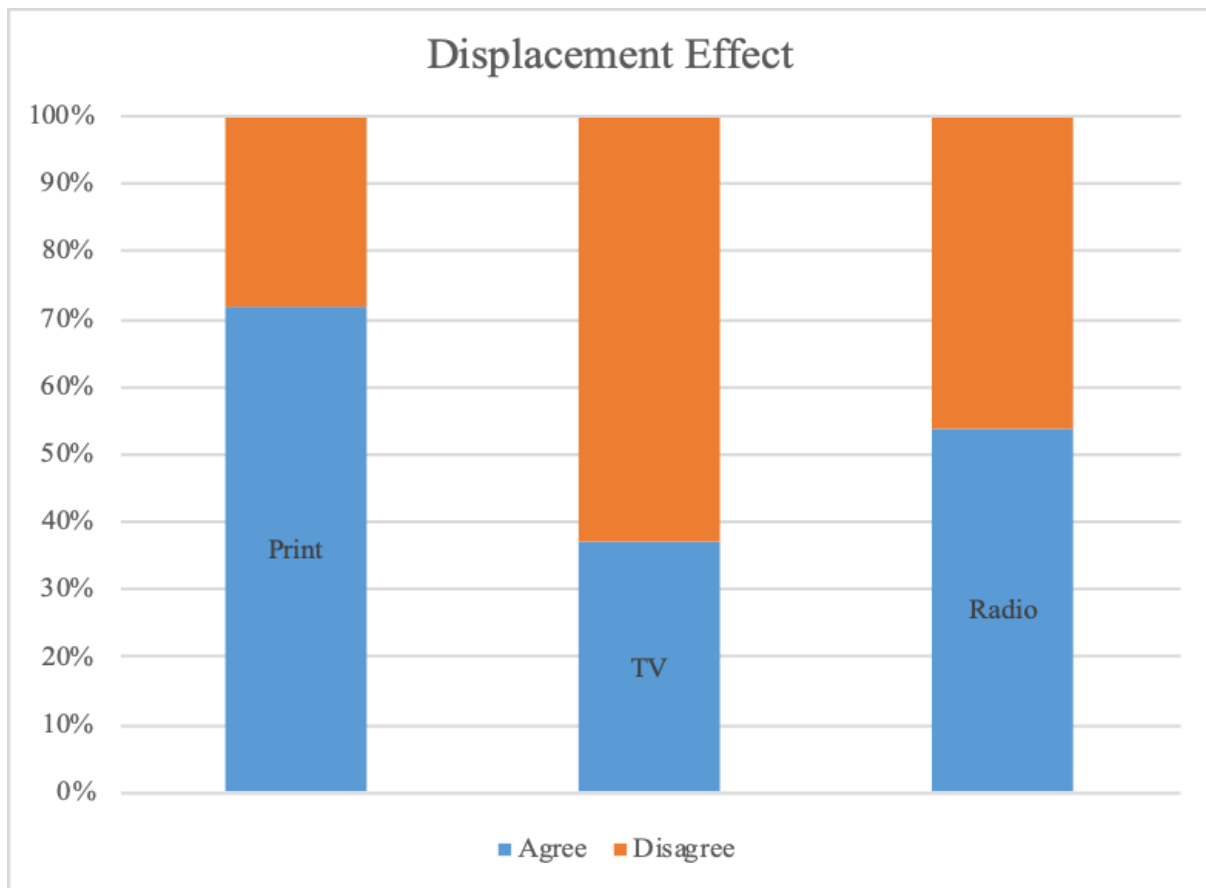


Figure 10.2 : Comparative displacement effect on the three traditional mass media ('Agree' represents displacement effect; 'Disagree' represents the 'pushback' to displacement).

Source: Author's field data.

In terms of demographic predictors of the time and need-based displacement effect, the results attest to the fact that long years of experience and high frequency of reading online newspapers are the key determinants of reduction in need for, and time spent on, all the three traditional media. In terms of experience with online newspapers, the 'reliance' principle and the uses and gratification theory have been advanced to explain why readers spend more time reading online newspapers. The two perspectives maintain that the more readers read the online newspaper, the more they appreciate them as the 'real product' that can be relied on.

The findings of the current study can be extrapolated in the context of the media 'reliance' principle within the uses and gratification theory. The principle particularly postulates a reciprocal or cyclic relationship between reliance and motivation (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). Kaye and Johnson (2016) concluded that the more strongly a medium satisfies the

gratification sought, the more heavily it is relied on. Similarly, the more it is relied on, the more it is repeatedly used to gratify needs.

Age, specifically the youths by Zambian classification (18 – 35 years of age), is another common predictor of reduced need for all the three conventional media channels: the print newspaper, television and radio. Years of experience with the Internet present conflicting results across the media genre, with long experience with the Internet precipitating a reduction in the need for and use of print newspapers. On the other hand, the fewer the years a youthful reader spends on the Internet, the more likely that an individual will reduce the need for, and use of, television. Political activism presents a mixed picture too; more individuals who are not registered voters cut down on their use of print newspapers in preference for online newspapers. However, those who voted in the 2016 elections increased their need for the radio.

The strong displacement effect the present study found among the youths is consistent with the findings of other studies, particularly the one conducted by De Waal and Schoenbach (2010). The findings of this study also agree with the explanation given by the two researchers that youths shun the print newspapers because they “feel that news sites serve the same needs as newspapers” (De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010:181). However, the present study also reveals that additional factors, notably cost consideration, play a crucial role in shaping the audience’s media choices in the case of Third World countries like Zambia, unlike the Scandinavian situation where De Waal and Schoenbach undertook their study.

The present study also reveals that the youths show a strong displacement effect on radio and television. It is plausible to assert that the high frequency in the use of mobile phones to access the online newspapers on their Facebook pages free of charge, gives the online newspapers a niche particularly over radio and television, whose news cannot easily be accessed online. This dovetails with the findings of other researchers (Lee and Leung, 2008; De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010). Lee and Leung (2008) quoted in De Waal and Schoenbach, (2010:181) summed up the point, thus: “Clearly, access to media in different spaces and through one’s availability of time are also important factors in the user-centric approach”. From an African perspective, Mabweazara (2011) added to the narrative in his

observation that audiences of online media are increasingly ‘on the move’ with hand-held devices especially the mobile phones, which he says have become the technology of choice on the African continent. The present study reports an overwhelmingly high use (97%) of mobile phones to access the Internet and online newspapers (see also chapter 6). The current study confirms a rapid increase compared to the 77% reported in the 2018 national survey (The Zambia Information Communication and Technology Authority, 2018) with other means of accessing the Internet showing 15% via a computer at home, 11% on a computer at the office and 8% on a computer at the Internet café.

Perceived substitutability effects of online newspapers

The study measures the perceptions of the respondents regarding the adequacy of online newspapers as a substitute for print newspapers and television, as a proxy indicator for the substitutability or replacement effect of online newspapers (the ‘ultimate of displacement’ according to Westlund and Fardigh, 2011). The results of the study indicate that the substitutability effect is much less than the displacement effect on the two mainstream media that were assessed: print newspapers and television. An estimated 50% of the respondents interviewed for this study perceived online newspapers as sufficient substitutes for the print newspaper, indicating a roughly 25-point reduction compared to the displacement effect (reported time and need-based reduction in terms of use). A much lesser proportion (20%) perceived online newspapers as sufficient substitutes for television, showing a 17-point reduction from the displacement effect (again based on the time and need measures reported in preceding sections). This implies that the majority of Zambian users are hesitant to completely do away with the traditional media, at least not for now.

Based on the reported perceived substitutability effect, print newspapers are again shown as the most effected, albeit to a lesser degree compared to the displacement effect. The statistics generated by this study also suggest that the proportion of audiences who have substituted print newspapers for online ones has risen from what some of the earlier researchers have established. For instance, the assertion by Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011:219) that ‘far less readers were substituting traditional print for online newspapers’

is inconsistent with the situation obtaining among the Zambian audiences. Assuming that the perceptions of the respondents correctly approximate the actual media behaviour, at least half of the Zambian traditional media audiences across Lusaka Province have completely done away with print newspapers in favour of stand-alone online newspapers.

In terms of the predictors of perceived substitutability effect on television and print newspapers, the number of years spent reading online newspapers and income emerge as common factors for both media. Low to medium income earners find online newspapers a sufficient substitute for both television and print newspapers. This finding supports the hypothesis advanced earlier that poverty determines media behaviour and choices. Online newspapers are cheaper in terms of accessibility compared to both television and print newspapers, especially considering the fact that the majority of the readers in the sample were on Airtel network and again the majority of them (62%) accessed their favourite online newspapers through the network operator's Facebook pages. As reported earlier, Airtel entered into an agreement with Facebook guaranteeing the former free access to the social media platform.

With respect to the impact of experience with the medium (online newspapers) on the displacement effect, the proposition advanced earlier, that long years of experience with the medium increases the displacement effect, applies to the substitutability effect too. Following a number of years of continuous reading, some users seem to find the online newspapers adequate as the 'real product'. However, experience with the Internet produces mixed results. Whereas few years of experience with the online technology predict opinions with inclinations towards the adequacy of online newspapers as replacements for television, medium and high frequency daily surfing and moderate Internet skills point in the opposite direction. Although youths apparently show a strong replacement effect on television, they tend to show a different trend regarding print newspapers. This might be due to the following reasons: 1. the fact that their main need for accessing the media is news while they view television primarily as an entertainment medium (De Waal and Schoenbach, 2010); and, 2. the fact that television news cannot be easily accessed via the mobile phone, the main channel for accessing online news, as reported earlier in this study.

The evidence suggestive of high substitutability effect on print newspapers and television among the low and medium income earners buttresses the finding that poverty is a major factor in determining media choices among the Zambian news media audiences. In earlier sections, it was reported that turning to online newspapers at the expense of print newspapers among the Zambian audiences is predicated on the quest for up-to-date news and the question of affordability. The readers seem unbothered by the value of the content and least so by the perceived believability and the overall credibility of the online newspapers. Therefore, it is plausible to assert that the cost factor as an effect weighs heavily on print newspapers. This is plausibly so because despite costing a minimum of K10 (or US\$0.85) a copy, print newspapers are, according to the 'principle of relative constancy', technologically inhibited to compete with digital media in providing up-to-date and breaking news, which the readers' primarily reported as the gratification sought from their use of the media.

Putting poverty into perspective, a recent survey found that 54.4% of Zambians lived below the poverty line, with a monthly household income of K1, 801.30 or US\$18 (Central Statistical Office, 2015). This figure translates to a mere US\$0.6 (60 cents) a day, which falls far short of the cost of an average print newspaper in Zambia. On the other hand, online newspapers can be accessed free of charge on their Facebook platform as described earlier in the report. This scenario is summarised by De Waal and Schoenbach (2010:180) as: "Here, we can acknowledge significant disadvantages of printed newspapers in relation to news sites with respect to the fact that these present yesterday's news and charge for it."

Perceived credibility and substitutability effects

The present study investigated whether credibility is one of the predictors of the displacement and substitutability effects of online newspapers on print newspapers, radio and television (combined). Overall, the results suggest that Zambian readers consider online newspapers to be moderately or averagely credible. They rate the traditional media higher than the online newspapers, overall, demonstrating that they are inclined to believe them more than the online newspapers. The result is a further attestation of the observation that credibility is not a strong predictor of the displacement effects of online

newspapers specifically on print newspapers. Contrary to earlier assertions made by Johnson and Kaye (2015), the present study avers that credibility is not a strong predictor of motivation for and gratification from reading online newspapers.

Conclusion

From the comparative analysis of the extent of reach (exposure) between online newspapers and other sources of news and information that this study focused on, the results are conclusive that the advent of online newspapers in Zambia has negatively impacted on the three traditional mass media, namely; television, radio and print newspapers, albeit to dissimilar degrees. Comparatively, print newspapers are the most affected by the displacement effect on all accounts: audiences' frequency of use (exposure) and the need for the medium, the amount of time spent on the medium and degree of attention paid to the media contents. Television is the least affected medium and radio lies in-between.

While the results are conclusive that most of the readers are spending less time reading print newspapers due to the advent of online newspapers (displacement effect), it would appear that many readers are less enthusiastic about ultimately substituting (or replacing t) online newspapers for television and print newspapers. Therefore, the complementarity of the three media genres still holds, albeit indications that the need for and role of traditional mass media, especially print newspapers and radio, has diminished from what was reported in earlier studies. An experimental design, specifically by way of a longitudinal study is, however, required in order to arrive at the conclusion made by other researchers (De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Gustafsson, 2008) that the online newspapers are now permanently the 'real product' and the medium that the majority of the readers turn to during the time of convergence (that is, when the users are exposed to various media concurrently).

One confounding factor to the total replacement of traditional media by online newspapers appears to be the fact that the readers still regard news in traditional media generally as

more credible than that provided by the online media. In chapter 9 of this thesis, it was reported that the majority of the readers prefer to cross-check facts in online newspapers with the facts presented in other mass media channels in order to ascertain the authenticity of the news. Therefore, the substitutability effect extrapolated in the present study seems to be circumstantial to the audiences' changing needs, in addition to being audience specific. Arguably, there seems to be one emerging theory advancing the view that users who have been exposed to online newspapers for a longer time and more frequently, eventually accept the medium as their 'real product' and as the medium they turn to even in times when various media are competing for their space and time. It is plausible to conclude that substitutability has mainly taken root among the fervent and 'converted' users of online newspapers.

The results also present a nuanced picture of use among different demographics groups. Strong displacement effects manifest on all the three conventional media among the more frequent and long-term users of online newspapers and the youths. The results are also conclusive that economic considerations and the quest for 'breaking' and up-to-date news apparently manifest as the main 'pull factors' that explain why audiences gravitate towards online news media.

CHAPTER 11

INFLUENCE OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS: MODELLING THE EFFECTS AT MICRO-SOCIAL LEVEL

Abstract

This chapter offers a two-dimensional assessment of the perceived influence that online newspapers have on their readers at a personal or micro-social level. First, it assesses the perceived influence, which is measured in terms of three social motivations or gratifications sought (GS) against the gratification obtained (GO) by the readers of these online newspapers. The three social motivations are: surveillance or information seeking; socialisation; and utility. The second dimension is the characterisation of the reported influence from the 'Stages of Change' model and the expected functions of different forms of communication expressed in Rogers' (2015) Social Behaviour Change continuum. The study has established that most of the readers perceive online newspapers as having some influence on their lives. The perceived influence, however, varies from reader to reader and it is measurable; whereas relatively higher influence is reported at the lower level of awareness creation (surveillance), specifically when readers are looking for information on what is going on around the country and the world at large.

The extent of influence diminishes at a more complex level according to the behaviour change continuum, notably in terms of decision-making and the action taken. It appears that readers rarely rely solely on the information they obtain from online newspapers for decisions and actions that might have a bearing on their lives. The influence of online newspapers on the readers appears to fall within the context of established theories around which the power of the mass media revolves on the human socio-behaviour change continuum.

Key words: Behaviour change. Motivation. Gratification. Influence. Online newspapers.

Introduction

The assessment of the effects of mass media is a field of study on which much research has been conducted and many theories have been generated to propagate these studies (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). The massive research on the influence and effects of the mass media manifests in the amount of time spent and the resources invested in the production and distribution of the mass media (McQuail, 1979). Despite the amount of research being devoted to mass media, gaps in knowledge still remain (McQuail, 1979). "The questions most constantly asked of social research on mass communication and perhaps least clearly answered, have to do with the effects and social influence of different mass media" (McQuail, 1979:7). The fact that the field of mass media is a 'moving target' (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016) explains the persistence of the gaps in mass media as a field of knowledge.

The media industry is evolving at a faster rate and therefore, it demands new knowledge and theories all the time (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). For instance, the emergence of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and new media has come with its own demands for new knowledge and theories on the effects of individual or group behaviour in these new communications environments whose pace is dictated by the use of computers (Valkenburg, Peter, and Walther, 2016). Scholarship on the influence and effects of digital media on readership has gained momentum, especially considering the supposed role they have played in some of the major world events, such as the Middle East conflicts, starting with the Iraq War in early 2000 and the uprisings in the Arab states (Mabweazara, 2014).

The structural properties of the Computer-Mediated Communication, such as anonymity and timeliness (Letlhaku, 2010) and technological trends, such as personalisation attributes (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016), have been hailed by scholars and commentators as anchoring the supposed growing influence of new media on both social and political life (Letlhaku, 2010). It is not surprising therefore, that the past two decades have witnessed growth in the volume of literature on this subject. Researchers have been concerned about the need to ascertain the actual influence that the new and digital media

have on several aspects of the lives of their audiences (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016; McQuail, 1979).

The present study dovetails with this line of scholarship, as it specifically focuses on assessing the perceived influence or effect that online newspapers, which are the newest mass media genre since the advent of the Internet in the mid-Nineties, have on their readership. In Chapter Seven of this thesis, an attempt was made to assess the extent of reach and consumption of news from online newspapers, and to compare these with other news sources, especially the traditional mass media. Similarly, chapter 10 assessed the impact of online newspapers on the media ecosystem, again the focus being on the traditional news media. Both of these chapters were bent on assessing, comparing and characterising the positioning of online newspapers, as the newest of the mass media genre, within the existing media structures and systems. Within the context of this trajectory, the present chapter aims at not only assessing the influence of online newspapers on their audiences, but it goes an extra mile in terms of locating their influence within the matrix of the existing theories of the effects of the mass media. The analysis of these influences or effects is underpinned by the micro-level socio-psychological model.

In this chapter, the critical objectives of the inquiry are: 1. To establish whether readers' readership of online newspaper is a precursor to the consequences (named 'obtained gratifications' from the Uses-Gratifications Theory) and the 'media effects' (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016), and: 2. To characterise the influence of online newspapers within the existing theories of mass media effect, specifically on the Human Behaviour Change continuum from the perspective of the Diffusion of Innovation as a theoretical framework (Rogers, 2015). The end-result is to reinforce or dispel the authenticity of the 'old wine in new bottle' theorem; which asserts that new media (of which online newspapers are a part) serve the same purposes as the old' or traditional media, when one specifically focuses on their influence on individual users as evaluated from a socio-psychological perspective. The evidence from the reviewed literature suggests that the analysis of the influence or effect of online newspapers is an uncharted territory in terms

of research. It is against this background therefore, that the present study claims to be a pioneer.

Defining Influence, its Measurements and the Guiding Theoretical Framework

In the domain of mass media, influence is described as the force that media messages exert on individuals resulting in a positive effect or reinforcement in the audience or individual beliefs (McQuail, 1979; Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). Precisely, media effect is defined as the measurable final outcome resulting from media influence exerted by media messages (McQuail, 1979). In mass media, the distinction between media 'influence' and media 'effect' is obscure; hence, the two terms are used interchangeably in this chapter. What is clear, though, is that the influence can be instant or gradual, short term or long term and positive or negative (McQuail, 1979). According to McQuail (1979), discussing the influence of any mass medium without qualifying and specifying its influence makes it impossible to follow what is being evaluated and this renders the results of such an exercise contestable (McQuail, 1979). Therefore, two of McQuail's classifications or dimensions are relevant to the study as they are used to contextualise the influence or effect of online newspapers.

The first is the three-dimensions taxonomy used to dissect media effects at three discernible levels: 1. The distinction between media 'effect' and 'effectiveness'; 2. The time dimension, which is concerned about whether the focus is on the 'effect' in the context of the past, present or future; and, 3. The level of 'effect' being investigated, that is, whether it is an 'individual' (micro level) or 'group' or institutional level being studied. The measures of 'influence' or 'effect' vary for each of the three dimensions; the onus is on the individual researcher to specify and qualify the phenomena being investigated in a particular study (McQuail, 1979; Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016).

The present study focuses on the 'present' 'effect' of online newspapers on their readers at the micro-social or 'individual' level. A 'stages of change' analogy, anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2011; Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross, 1982), has been adopted to analyse and characterise the influence of online newspapers

from a socio-psychological viewpoint. Valkenburg, Peter and Walther (2016) posit that the media affect individuals in terms of changes in: 1. The *cognitive domain*, which can be measured in terms of the acquisition of any new information, the meaning or knowledge acquired through media consumption; 2. The change in the individual's *beliefs* about events, people, places and ideas; 3. The *attitudes*, which are measured in terms of the intention, judgments or attitudes; 4. The *affective domain*, or the emotional effect, whether positive or negative; 5. The *physiological domain*, which manifests through the automatic physical reaction; and, finally and ultimately, 6. The *behaviours*, which refers to the changes in actions. Many years of research have witnessed the emergence of a number of behaviour change communication (BCC) theories which have since gained root. These theories buttress the perception that socio-psychological change in the customers of the media is not instinctive, but it occurs in stages as summarised below:

BCC has its roots in behavior change theories that have evolved over the past several decades. These theories are valuable foundations for developing comprehensive communication strategies and programs. BCC practitioners draw upon various models and theories to design effective programs and activities. These include the Diffusion of Innovations model (Everett Rogers), the Stages of Change model (Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross), the Self-Efficacy model (Bandura) and the Behavior Change Continuum (World Bank) (Family Health International, 2002:21).

Apparently, the various theories differ slightly on the number of 'stages' that lead up to the final and desired change, which is the 'change in behaviour' or 'action' or 'adoption'. However, all the theories unanimously agree on the point that change is not a single event, but rather a long process. The present study analyses the influence of online media from the viewpoint of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (discussed in detail in Chapter Three). The rationale for choosing this theory is based on its concise articulation of, not only the stage-by-stage change process, but also the role communication plays at the different stages, an approach adopted by the present study (Rogers, 2011; Katz, 1957). A simplified version of the behaviour change continuum and the role of communication are illustrated in the model below (Figure 2).

Summary of Functions of Communication

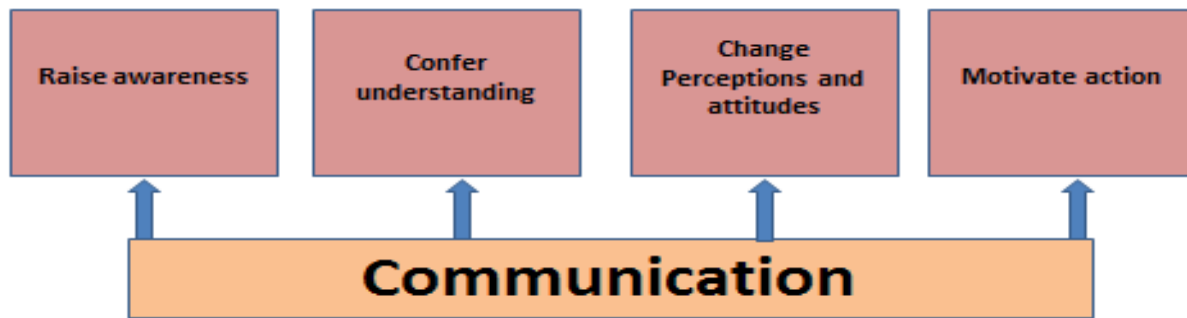


Figure 11.1 : Functions of communication in the human behaviour change chain (Source: original author unknown)

Secondly and more specifically, the present study is interested in the characterisation of the reported influence of online newspapers on the behaviour change continuum. In other words, the study seeks to ascertain the stage at which the ‘stages of change’ the online newspaper messages are the most influential. Extensive scholarship on the behaviour change continuum postulates that different forms of communication effect change differently at each of the stages of the change. Some scholars indicated thus:

Different channels have been shown to be more effective at different stages of the continuum and for achieving different goals. Communication through mass media can ensure that correct information reaches a specific population and can model positive attitudes, but when an individual or community is motivated to attempt new behaviors, policies and the larger social environment become more important (FHI, 2002:24).

The most well-established characterisation of the role mass media plays in the behaviour change continuum posits that forms of communication in mass media are most effective at awareness and informational (cognitive) stages, moderate at the perception or attitude change level and the weakest, or even totally ineffective, at the behaviour or action

inducement or 'adoption' level (Kaminski, 2011; Rogers, 2003). On the other hand, the interpersonal means of communication are weaker at the awareness level but stronger at the advanced stages, notably the attitude and behaviour change or adoption stages. Klapper (1960), who is regarded as the father of the 'Minimal Effects' Theory, made the following observation, "in analysis of the 1940 presidential elections, researchers observed that personal contacts appear to have been more effective than the mass media in influencing voting decision" (Klapper, 1960:32). Despite being challenged, this theory has remained relevant up to the present moment. The theory informs the designing and evaluation of many Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategies world-wide. The potency of interpersonal communication can be explained in the analogy given by Katz (1957:77) that, "interpersonal relations are (1) channels of information, (2) sources of social pressure, and (3) sources of social support, and each relates interpersonal relations to decision- making in a somewhat different way." A simplified illustration of the varying influence of the different forms of communication that occur at the different 'stages of change' is given in Figure 2 below.

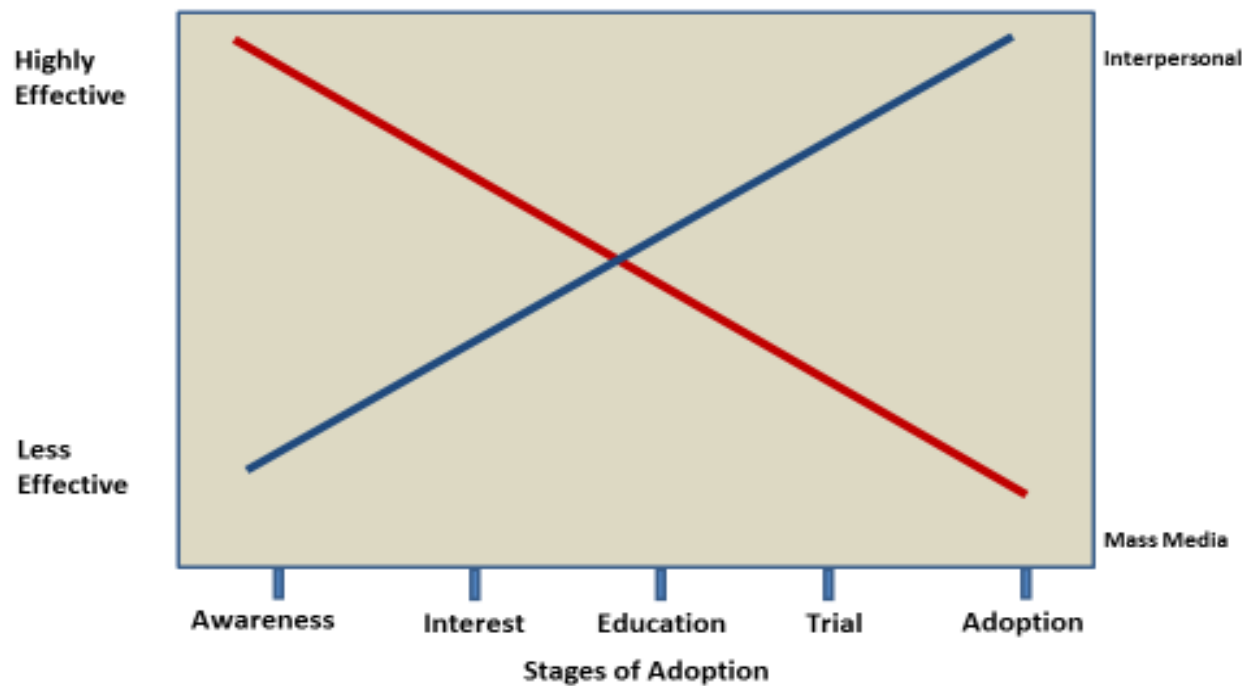


Figure 11.2 : Characterisation of the effectiveness of the different forms of communication at each stage of behaviour change (Source: redesigned by author. original source unknowns).

This characterisation of the effects of the media is consistent with the paradigm shifts in the theories on the effects of the media from the Lasswellian School of Strong Media Effects (Melkote, 1991; Schramm, 1971) to the 'Minimal Effects' theories (Klapper, 1960) and now the 'New Media Effects Era' (Sundar et al., 2015; Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). Earlier research models of media effects "consisted of (i) the all-powerful media, able to impress ideals on defenseless minds; and (ii) the atomized audience, connected to the mass media but not to each other" Melkote: 1991:67). On the other hand, the minimal media effects era, which is also referred to as the 'active audience' era, posited that communication reinforces the existing opinions or values and that it hardly, all by itself, causes effect (Klapper, 1960; Melkote, 1991; Schramm, 1971). "Rather, it operates in the midst of other mediating forces and conditions which, although considered external to the communication itself, have great influence on how successful the communication will be on an individual" (Mbozi, 1998:45).

Research into the effects of the media on the audience in the new media era is almost overwhelmingly conclusive, indicating that the personalisation properties of the computer-

media-communication results in a strong influence and hence, a resurgence of stronger theories on the effect of the media (Sundar et al., 2015; Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). Sundar et al. (2015), for instance, observed that preliminary evidence indicates that personalisation may increase the cognitive and emotional engagement of the users of the media (features 2 and 4), and in this way, it can enhance the effects of the media. Valkenburg, Peter, and Walther (2016:332) also observed that:

A final unmistakable trend in communication technologies that may enhance the likelihood of media effects is the increasing lifelike visualization in both mass and mass self-communication. Text-only CMC, which was still common around the start of the millennium, has been supplemented or even replaced by visual CMC (e.g. Instagram).

The second level of McQuail's classification of effect, which is useful for the study, focuses on the distinctive features or types of effects, which require distinct evaluation strategies. Mcquail (1979) identified five distinctive types of media effects or 'media situations' as: (1) the campaign; (2) the definition of social reality or social norms; (3) the immediate reaction or response; (4) the institutional change; and, (5) the changes in culture and society. The media influence or effect being explored in the present study falls within the category of the second taxonomy of media effects, that is, the definition of social reality or social norms. "Here, we mainly consider the process of learning through the media, a process which is often incidental, unplanned and unconscious for the receiver and almost always unintentional on the part of the sender" (Mcquail, 1979:14).

Mcquail (1979) presents a very broad array of effects in his "definition of social reality or social norms" classification. The present study seeks to measure the perceived influence of media at individual level within the perceived effectiveness of online newspapers in satisfying the expressed social needs or motivations of the audience. In other words, the study interrogates the extent to which the readers of online newspapers are gratified by what they seek (that is, the gratifications obtained in the context of the audience's needs as categorised by Katz, et al., 1973). This is best understood within the context of the uses and gratification trajectory (UGT).

The study adopts this approach to assess the relationship between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO), or the outcome of the consumption of media content (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). As presented in chapter 7, empirical data steadfastly confirmed the existence of a causal relationship between gratification obtained and the influence of the media on the audience (Yoo, 2011). In more precise terms, the more gratified the users are, the more they are likely to be influenced by a particular medium. Similarly, a causal relationship between the influence of a medium and its effect on the audience has also been established. This implies that the influence of the media is a positive precursor and predictor of the effect the media have on the audience.

Of the eight social motivations or needs that consumers seek from the media (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 7), the assessment of the gratification obtained and, ultimately, the influence of online newspapers (which is of interest to this chapter), focused on the top three which are most preferred by respondents in this study (see also chapter 6). The top three are: the 'Cognitive' motivation (also referred to as the 'Surveillance' or the 'Information and News Seeking' motivation), the 'Para-social Interaction' motivation (also known as the 'Socialisation' or the 'Social Integrative' motivation) and the 'Utility' motivation. The 'Cognitive' motivation perspective implies that the media are used by citizens as they seek to keep abreast with the current issues and trends in the country and around the world (Evans, 1990; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984) or the need to know what is going on at an international scale (Lain, 1986 in Mings, 1997). From the perspective of the Diffusion of Innovation Trajectory, surveillance motivation represents the rudimentary stage in the behaviour-change continuum, a stage that replicates awareness creation or cognitive change among the audience.

The 'social integrative' motivation, also known as the 'socialisation' motivation implies that media audiences seek affective gratifications, which in some sense, are related to social interaction that users of the media gain from consuming media content (Levy and Windahl, 1984; Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengren, 1985; Rubin and Perse, 1987a; Swanson and

Babrow, 1989; and Wenner, 1985 in Mings⁵⁴, (1997). This perspective also renders itself to the strengthening of the readers' contacts with the family, friends and the world and to converse with other readers, which allows readers to learn about other people's opinions (Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). From the perspective of the Network Society Theory, (Castells, 1996) argues that new media, of which online newspapers are a part, are particularly structurally better positioned to fulfill the socialisation motivation than the old media (refer also to chapter 7).

The 'utility' motivation perspective refers to the perceived direct usefulness of the media in matters such as the formation of opinions and the making of plans or decisions and to act on them (Evans, 1990; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984; Rubin and Perse, 1987b; and Wenner, 1985 in Mings, 1997). As discussed in chapter 7, the term 'utility' refers to the information the audiences seek in order to guide them in making decisions about future plans, such as a political candidate to vote for in an election. From the point of view of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, this is the ultimate stage in the Behaviour Change model and is measured in that light in the context of this study.

Basing the analysis on the development communication perspective (discussed in detail in chapter 7), some development agents have already embarked on the use of new media in general, and online newspapers in particular, as agents of social change in various fields (such as HIV and AIDS, health, agricultural extension, among others). From the content motivation perspective, chapter 7 has also demonstrated that some readers of online newspapers opt for these media alternatives seeking content of a developmental nature. Therefore, this chapter has gone further afield in its attempt to characterise the type of influence online newspapers are capable of exerting on their readers, specifically from the Diffusion of Innovation perspective.

⁵⁴ <http://www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/007/3/007312.HTML>. Accessed 23 September 2018).

Research Questions

- 1: To what extent do online newspapers have an influence or effect on their readers from the following media-effects perspectives: 1. Surveillance or Informational: 2. Socialisation; and, 3. Utility?
- 2: How can the influence or effect of online newspapers on their readers be characterised from the perspective of the Diffusion of Innovation model?
- 3: To what extent does the perceived credibility of online newspapers affect their influence on the readers?
- 4: What demographic factors are most likely to contribute to the influence of online newspapers on their readers?

Literature Review

The media, whether traditional or new, social or otherwise, have a common feature, the ability to connect and influence the public (Caruana, 2013). Printed newspapers are known for widening the range of public topics, events and issues their audiences are aware of (Schulz, 2003). Research conducted on printed newspapers shows that they improve their readers' knowledge of the topical issues occurring around them (Guo and Moy, 1998; McLeod et al., 1999; Schulz, 2003). However, studies that specifically focused on the transactional effects of computer-mediated communication of online newspapers on their audiences are almost non-existent. One particular area being investigated in the present study, but which is totally missing in all the reviewed literature, is that which attempts to characterise the effect of online newspapers on the behaviour change continuum as articulated in the Stages of Change Theory postulated by Rodgers (2015).

Scholars in the media fraternity traced research on the effects of media to antecedent researches on mass communication (Valkenburg, Peter & Walther, 2016). This has made some scholars to suggest that future research on media issues should seek to address the underlying mechanisms and contingent conditions under which personalised media content may exert positive or negative transactional influences on the audiences (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). Conceptually, the influence and effects that computer-aided media

communication has on the readers is a subject of conflicting views between the proponents of strong media effects and those that hypothesise a minimal media effect. The bulk of the available scholarship supports the proposition that the new media and their associated technologies aided by their convergence with social media networks put them on a stronger footing in terms of exerting more influence and effect on their users. Valkenburg, Peter and Walther (2016:332) also observed that:

A final unmistakable trend in communication technologies that may enhance the likelihood of media effects is the increasing lifelike visualization in both mass and mass self-communication. Text-only CMC, which was still common around the start of the millennium, has been supplemented or even replaced by visual CMC (e.g. Instagram).

Valkenburg, Peter and Walther (2016), further prostituted the view that there are more positive influences the new media have owing to the fact that they have been facilitated by a great deal of mobile and multi-media technologies. They indicate thus:

Communication technologies have become ever more mobile. They moved from our desk (desktop), to our bag (laptop), to our pocket (smartphone), which has significantly altered our media use (feature 1). Not only has the time we spend with communication technologies increased significantly, but also our tendency to media-multitask (i.e. the use of TV, radio, print, the internet or any other medium in conjunction with another) (Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016:331).

According to Unwin (2012), the effects of digital media on political processes have remained as controversial as they are misunderstood. In Unwin's (2012) view, there is a strong inclination among various actors to believe that the digital media are indeed gravitating towards the democratisation of political processes, though the evidence to support such assertions is rather scanty or unavailable. Several factors have been cited as having contributed to this standoff among them, particularly the fact that too many variables are involved, for instance the type of regimes, the degree of Internet diffusion as well as the social roles played by the Internet.

The other reason borders on the supposedly contentious definitions of the variables; for example, the boundaries of democracy and the methodology of measuring it are still subject to debate. Unwin (2012) went as far as interrogating the purported role of the digital media in sparking and spurring on the Arab uprisings by presenting two paradoxical propositions of these media to the citizens on the one hand and governments on the other. He contends that throughout history, technology has been shaped and used by those wielding political power to hold on their positions. However, such views by Unwin (2012) are not necessarily based on empirical data.

Best and Wade (2009) shared Unwin's (2012) view. In their paper titled *The Internet and Democracy; Global Catalyst or Democratic Dud*, they concluded that the Internet has not proved to be a very powerful predictor of democracy from 1992 to 2000. The two authors argued that one of the shortcomings of the Internet, as it relates to democracy, is its failure to explain the significant variations at the core of democracy. However, the authors conceded that the period 2001 to 2002 witnessed a rise in the influence of the Internet on democracy (Best and Wade, 2009). Arguably, the digital media have also been used to enhance democracy in African countries in general and Nigeria in particular (Ajayi and Adesote, 2015).

In a similar study, Brian and Dan (2012) concluded that the digital media have the disruptive capacity that enables citizens to discuss common issues including sharing political information as well as critically monitoring the actions of the governments and corporate interests. This implies that unlike the bureaucracy associated with the traditional media, digital media afford the citizens the opportunity to engage each other at anytime, anywhere and without necessarily 'qualifying' to participate. In terms of fighting for democracy through the new media, the study revealed that new and alternative sources of information, which are becoming available to Africans across the continent at a tremendous pace, are breaking the hegemonic strongholds that stifle information flow by undemocratic African governments and their leaders. Nonetheless, the media are manifesting themselves as a powerful force advocating for better governance on the African continent. The struggle for qualitative democracy, inclusive development and peace

in Africa is currently being, and will increasingly be, waged on mobile phones, the Internet and the social media platforms (Brian and Dan, 2012).

Gumede (2016) postulated that the use of the new media has given many Africans the means with which to hold governments and leaders accountable, to shape policies and to push for improved governance. The study concluded that the Internet and the social media are also increasingly influencing the traditional media and the public political discourse at national level. Kalyango and Adu-Kumi (2015) have also concluded that the Internet and other personal, wireless electronic digital devices have reduced the time information seekers and 'citizens' used to spend receiving or delivering the news and other information. Some research studies which focused on the effect of online newspapers on their readers have zeroed in on specialised fields of study, such as public health. For instance, in their study, Lauridsen and Sporrang (2017) examined the Danish media's coverage of antidepressants between 2010 and 2011 in order to determine the influence it might have had on the change of perception regarding the use of these antidepressants. The researchers were motivated by the fact that news media had become a major source of information on public health, which in some instances, had influence on individuals' opinions and decisions about health-related topics. The study employed three media theoretical concepts; agenda-setting, priming and framing, to examine the influence of the media on the use of antidepressants. The authors concluded that:

The media's *agenda-setting*, *priming* and *framing* of antidepressants led the public to have a more skeptical view on antidepressants, which probably contributed to a decrease in the usage of antidepressants. The media's focus on severe side-effects and the authorities' ties to the pharmaceutical industry is important as this can lead to a discussion about the usage of antidepressants which in turn could lead to more optimal use (Lauridsen and Sporrang, 2017:635).

In a study conducted on the medical field, Williams et al. (2000) concluded that the "*media in many cases appears to have a greater effect than information provided by regulatory*

*authorities.*⁵ Schoenbach, de Waal and Lauf (2005) investigated the impact of online and print newspapers on fostering readers' awareness of public events and issues affecting them in an everyday setting. They specifically investigated and compared the effects of online and print newspapers on the extent of their audience's 'perceived issue salience'. They concluded that:

Frequently visiting an online newspaper, however, does not expand the range of perceived topics. In other words, using the online channel primarily for (brief) updates, e.g. as an 'alarm medium', may further the awareness of the most important events, but does not really widen one's perceived agenda. Spending more *time* on an online newspaper does not expand the agenda either, at least for the general audience. Possibly, extra time spent online is used more for 'research' or in-depth orientation Eveland and Dunwoody (2000:253).

In their conclusions, Schoenbach, de Waal and Lauf (2005) were supported by the assertion that online newspapers enhance more activity and control among their users as audiences tend to focus more on a narrower range of topics according to individual interests. However, Schoenbach, de Waal and Lauf (2005) concluded that the effect of online newspapers in widening the readers' agenda is likely to change once online newspapers become more widespread in a particular society. Currently, it appears that online and print newspapers are responsible for shaping the agenda for their audiences in different ways and they effectively accomplish that responsibility for different groups of audiences. Since this study was undertaken fourteen years ago, a lot has changed in terms of the plurality and accessibility of online newspapers to wider audiences and thus, it may be argued that these conclusions are no longer valid. This justifies the need for conducting an up-to-date investigation.

In terms of the mediatory role that the media play in the context of the perceived credibility in influencing their audiences, the legendary work of McLuhan (1964), in his book *The Medium is the Message*, summarises the established theoretical perception that the medium and its content are two very distinct but related elements. "The role that

source credibility, content believability, likeability and attitude toward a message play at different stages in the communication process and in audience decision-making is not in doubt” (Caruana, 2013:234). Alluding to the Medium-Effects-Message Theory, McCombs and Shaw (1993:62), posit that, “Whether we like it or not, news dictates what we think about, and more subtly, how we think about it”. Precisely, the results of the study by Caruana (2013) support the proposition that the medium changes the message. It is argued that “Indeed, presentation and method, in addition to content, influences us to form opinions” (Caruana, 2013:234).

Results

Influence on Surveillance or Knowledge Awareness

The surveillance functions of any mass medium include, first, the need to enhance the audience’s understanding of the news in particular and current affairs in general; and second, to specifically foster the political developments of a particular country. In terms of the political influence the online newspapers have on the respondents, the present study demonstrates that 89% of them agreed (14% strongly) with the statement; *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have helped me understand the politics of our country*. Only 5% of the respondents disagreed and the rest were either neutral or unsure. Regarding the influence the media have on understanding the news and current affairs, 97% of the respondents agreed to the statement that; *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have played a role in making me understand what is going on around places where I am not physically present in my country and globally*. Only 2% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 1% of them were neutral.

The Logistic Regression Model (Table 11.1 below) presupposes that two demographic factors, the years of experience with the Internet and Internet skills, influence opinions on whether or not online newspapers have had an effect on the readers’ understanding of the politics of their country. The model specifically shows that, without controlling for the other factors (unadjusted odds ratio), a reader who has been using the Internet for more than 10 years is 5.63 times more likely to be influenced to understand the politics of the country through reading online newspapers than the one who has been surfing the Internet for

only 2 – 5 years. Further, a reader whose Internet skills are poor is 4.18 times more likely to be influenced by online newspapers than one whose Internet skills are still poor.

Table 11.1 : Likelihood that readers better understand politics due to readership of Zambian Online Newspapers; The Multiple Logistic Regression Model. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.79	0.99	0.64	0.28	3.52
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	2.01	3.11	3.09	0.44	21.83
	36-45 years	1.59	3.69	5.58	0.19	71.60
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	1.25	0.65	0.48	0.15	2.77
	University degree	1	1	-	-	-
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.92	1.19	0.99	0.23	6.08
	K101-250, 000	0.77	0.22	0.42	0.01	9.24
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Residence [High density]	Rural	1	1	-	-	-
	Low density	2.60	1.45	1.15	0.30	6.89
	Rural	1	1	-	-	-
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.44	0.62	0.64	0.08	2.51
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.60	0.83	0.80	0.12	5.50
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1	1	-	-	-
	Thrice	1.15	1.52	1.40	0.25	9.22
	Four times and more	0.60	0.50	0.40	0.11	2.39
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	3.73	8.30	14.32	0.28	243.96
	Moderate	0.61	00.99	1.02	0.14	7.34
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.89	1.02	0.98	0.15	6.78
	6-10 years	1.8	1.73	1.86	0.21	14.29
	> 10 years	5.63***	2.36	3.11	0.18	31.26
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.32	0.91	0.82	0.16	5.27
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	2.78***	4.18***	3.08	0.99	17.70
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.09	0.99	0.22	0.64	1.54
	-	1	0.90	0.14	0.66	1.24

***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket.

Influence on the Socialisation Function

From the perspective of the Socialisation Effect (RQ 2), two statements were used to assess the extent of influence the online newspapers have on readers. First, the respondents were also asked to establish the extent to which online newspapers had an effect on their understanding of other people and on shaping their own thoughts. The responses show that in effect, 92% agreed (25% strongly) to the statement: *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have played a role in making me understand what other people are thinking about an issue and in shaping my own thoughts*. Only 3% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 5% were neutral. The Multiple Logistic Regression model (not attached due space limitation) does not show any particular relations between any of the independent variables and the influence of online newspapers on readers' understanding of other people's thoughts on a variety of issues and on shaping their personal opinions.

The second statement measures the respondents' views regarding the influence of online newspapers on the promotion of connections between themselves and other people. The measuring statement reads: *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have played a role in making me interact with other people, some of whom I do not even know*. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (93%) agreed (23% strongly) to the statement, 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 2% of them were either neutral or not sure. The study further reveals that the social status of the readers of online newspapers, which is specifically determined by the type of residence they inhabit, and the weekly frequency of reading online newspapers, has a bearing on the readers' opinion that online newspapers had played a role in making them interact with other people (The Logistic Regression Model – Table 2). As far as the nature of residence is concerned, a reader residing in a low density area is 20.52 times more likely to have been influenced by interaction with other people through exposure to online newspapers than a reader of online newspapers residing in a high density area. On the other hand, the study shows that every one day's increase in a reader's weekly frequency of reading online newspapers results in a 52 times reduction in the socialisation effect (implying a negative effect).

Table 11.2: Demographic factors determining influence of Zambian online newspapers in increasing readers' understanding of what other people are thinking about an issue and to shape personal opinions on issues. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.82	0.95	0.79	0.19	4.82
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.90	1.99	2.67	0.14	27.44
	36-45 years	1	1	-	-	-
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.78	0.60	0.57	0.09	3.90
	University degree	1	1	-	-	-
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.28	2.02	1.98	0.31	13.36
	K101-250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Location [Urban]	Rural	2.5	0.95	2.20	0.01	90.42
Residence [High density]	Low density	2.14	1.54	1.93	0.13	17.93
	Rural	2.83	4.33	10.93	0.03	609.95
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.53	1.19	1.34	0.13	10.76
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.07	3.05
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	2.62	1.17	1.26	0.14	9.63
	Thrice	2.38	0.62	0.66	0.08	4.94
	Four times and more	0.46	0.15	0.21	0.01	2.37
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	2.17	1.84	1.63	0.32	10.49
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.94	1.16	1.19	0.16	8.62
	6-10 years	0.65	2.11	2.83	0.15	29.44
	>10 years	1.37	3.58	5.99	0.13	95.14
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.45	1.36	1.20	0.24	7.63
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	0.61	0.48	0.50	0.06	3.70
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.87	0.88	0.29	0.46	1.69
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.75	0.83	0.18	0.54	1.27

Influence of Online Newspapers on the Utility Function

The study measured the influence of online newspapers on the utility function basing the assessment of four statements the researcher posed to the respondents. From the perspective of Rogers' (2015) Innovation-Diffusion Model, the Utility Functions entails the assessment of the influence of online newspapers on the readers' opinions, attitudes and actions. In terms of the influence or effects of online newspapers on persuading the readers to choose whom they would like to support politically (Statement 1), 73% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that online newspapers shaped their views on which political parties to support in the country. Seventeen percent (17%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 10% were either neutral or not sure. From the perspective of the logistic regression model (Table 11.3), political activism, experience with the Internet and the frequency of reading online newspapers emerge as the demographic factors that determine whether a reader is influenced by online newspapers regarding a political figure or organisation to support. In terms of the specifics, a registered voter is, though ironically, 50 times less likely to be persuaded by online newspapers to support certain political figures or organisations than a non-registered voter. Similarly, on a weekly basis, for every one-day increase in the frequency of reading online newspapers, there is a regressive effect on the reader's opinion on whom to support politically and the likelihood of being influenced goes down by 22 times. On the other hand, a reader of online newspapers who uses the Internet thrice a day (described in the study as a moderate user) is 3.42 times more likely to be influenced on whom to support politically than a once-a-day Internet user. Additionally, a reader who has been using the Internet for 6 – 10 years and another who has been using it for more than 10 years are 3.77 times and 9.66 times more likely to be influenced on the political party to support than a reader who has been surfing the Internet for only 2 – 5 years.

Table 11.3 : Zambia stand-alone online newspapers likelihood to shape reader's political views on whom to support among the political parties in the country, a multiple logistic regression model. Source: Author's field data.

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.92	1.04	0.39	0.51	2.15
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.63	0.56	0.40	0.14	2.28
	36-45 years	0.78	0.50	0.50	0.07	3.57
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.75	0.61	0.27	0.25	1.49
	University degree	0.64	0.79	0.46	0.25	2.49
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.09	1.75	0.80	0.71	4.30
	K101-250, 000	0.50	0.88	0.84	0.14	5.74
	>K250, 000	1	1	-	-	-
Location [Urban]	Rural	0.38	0.18	0.24	0.01	2.52
Residence [High density]	Low density	1.88	2.06	1.01	0.79	5.38
	Rural	0.41	1.74	2.45	0.11	27.27
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.50***	0.75	0.41	0.25	2.18
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.66	1.03	0.54	0.39	2.71
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	2.06	3.42***	2.13	1.01	11.61
	Thrice	1.22	1.59	0.88	0.54	4.73
	Four times and more	1.59	1.76	0.77	0.75	4.15
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.86	0.85	0.42	0.33	2.22
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.80	0.71	0.40	0.24	2.15
	6-10 years	2.23	3.77***	2.38	1.09	13.01
	>10 years	4.88***	9.66***	8.01	1.90	49.09
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	0.97	0.99	0.43	0.42	2.33
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	0.57	0.35***	0.17	0.14	0.90
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.04	0.97	0.13	0.74	1.27
p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.16	3.73

On whether the online newspapers had an influence on their voting decisions during the 2016 general elections in Zambia (Statement 2), 56% of the respondents agreed (4% strongly) to the statement: *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers played a role in influencing me to make up my mind on who to vote for in the 2016 elections*. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 12% of them were either neutral or not sure. Without controlling for other demographic factors (unadjusted ratios), level of education, location (whether urban or rural based), political activism and Internet skills are regarded as crucial factors in determining whether a reader of an online newspaper would be persuaded by this new medium on whom to vote for during Zambia's 2016 general elections (see logistic regression model, Table 11.4). Notably, the following significant negative relationships (the 'boomerang' effects) manifest: 1. a reader of online newspapers who holds a bachelor's degree and above is 67 times more unlikely to be persuaded by the newspaper on whom to vote for than a reader with a mere secondary school qualification; 2. A reader based in a rural setting is 51 times less persuaded by the online newspaper than an urban-based reader; 3. A registered voter is 70 times more unlikely to be persuaded than a non-registered voter; 4. A reader who actually voted in the 2016 general elections is 60 times more unlikely to be persuaded by the online newspaper than one who did not vote; and, 5. A reader possessing very poor Internet skills is 57 times less persuaded than one with poor skills.

Table 11.4 : Factors determining influence of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers on individual choice of political party voted for in the 2016 general elections, a multiple logistic regression model. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.87	0.86	0.25	0.48	1.52
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.62	0.63	0.35	0.21	1.88
	36-45 years	1.34	1.80	1.43	0.38	8.56
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.73	0.89	0.32	0.44	1.81
	University degree	0.33***	0.40	0.20	0.15	1.07
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.81	1.30	0.49	0.62	2.75
	K101-250, 000	0.36	0.62	0.49	0.14	2.90
	>K250, 000	1.20	1.42	1.57	0.16	12.45
Location [Urban]	Rural	0.65	3.42	4.15	0.31	37.04
Residence [High density]	Low density	1.43	1.08	0.45	0.47	2.45
	Rural	0.49***	0.12	0.15	0.01	1.42
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.30***	0.52	0.23	0.22	1.23
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.40***	0.59	0.22	0.28	1.24
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.55	1.09	0.54	0.42	2.85
	Thrice	1.10	0.76	0.34	0.32	1.80
	Four times and more	0.93	0.60	0.22	0.29	1.24
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	0.67	1.04	1.31	0.09	12.33
	Moderate	1.13	1.27	0.49	0.60	2.69
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.87	0.86	0.36	0.38	1.97
	6-10 years	1.22	2.17	1.12	0.78	5.99
	>10 years	2.51	3.70	2.60	0.93	14.67
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	0.41	0.35	0.42	0.03	3.77
	Moderate	1.05	0.78	0.28	0.39	1.58
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	0.51***	0.43***	0.16	0.21	0.91
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.01	0.98	0.11	0.78	1.22
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.99	0.87	0.07	0.75	1.03

The third statement the study used to assess the influence of online newspapers on the Utility Function reads; *Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have influenced me to consider buying products advertised on their websites*. The results show that forty-one percent (41%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, 52% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the remaining 7% were either neutral or not sure. As shown on the Logistic Regression Model (Table 11.5), the level of education, income, frequency of daily Internet use and Internet skills affect the level of influence online newspapers have on their readers in terms of persuading them to buy the commodities they advertise. In terms of the level of education, the model shows that a reader holding a bachelor's degree and above is 60 times more unlikely to be persuaded by the newspaper to buy an item advertised on the newspaper than a reader in possession of a bare secondary school qualification. The rest of the negative relationships unfold as follows: a reader earning K50,000 (around \$4,500 – K100,000) annually is 31 times more unlikely to be persuaded to buy an item advertised on the online newspapers than a reader earning less than K50,000 annually; a reader earning K101,000 – K250,000 is 70 times more unlikely to be persuaded than a counterpart earning K50,000; and, a reader who perceives his or her Internet skills as 'very poor' is 52 times more unlikely to be persuaded to buy the items advertised on online newspapers than one with poor Internet skills.

Table 11.5 : Likelihood of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers influencing purchase of products advertised on them, a multiple logistic regression model. Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI	
Sex: [Male]	Female	1.04	0.93	0.25	0.54	1.59
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.74	1.05	0.52	0.40	2.76
	36-45 years	1.60	1.26	0.96	0.28	5.63
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	1	1	-	-	-
	Certificate/Diploma	0.84	0.95	0.33	0.48	1.86
	University degree	0.26***	0.40***	0.17	0.17	0.92
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	0.59***	0.66	0.23	0.33	1.32
	K101-250, 000	0.30***	0.50	0.32	0.14	1.78
	>K250, 000	0.34	0.30	0.32	0.04	6.97
Location [Urban]	Rural	0.96	1.18	1.07	0.20	2.45
Residence [High density]	Low density	1.67	1.51	0.62	0.68	3.37
	Rural	1.09	0.93	0.89	0.14	6.03
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.69	0.90	0.41	0.37	2.18
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	0.81	0.92	0.35	0.44	1.92
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.71	1.23	0.59	0.48	3.17
	Thrice	4.10***	2.90***	1.38	1.15	7.36
	Four times and more	0.42	0.95	0.31	0.50	1.81
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	0.70	0.34	0.38	0.04	2.97
	Moderate	1.65	1.80	0.72	0.82	3.93
Number of years using internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	1.24	1.34	0.54	0.60	2.96
	6-10 years	1.34	2.42	1.17	0.94	6.26
	>10 years	1.32	2.26	1.48	0.63	8.14
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	1	1	-	-	-
	Moderate	1.93***	1.61	0.60	0.78	3.34
Years reading favorite newspaper	Very poor	0.48***	0.55	0.18	0.29	1.06
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	0.99	1.00	0.11	0.81	1.23
***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket	-	0.96	1.04	0.08	0.89	1.21

On the side of the positive influence, a reader who surfs the Internet thrice a day is 4.10 times more persuaded to buy an item advertised in online newspapers than a reader who surfs the Internet only once a day; and a reader who rates his or her Internet skills as moderate is 1.93 times less persuaded to buy items advertised in online newspapers than one with poor Internet skills and one with 'very poor' skills is 52 times more uninfluenced to buy such items than one with poor skills. In terms of skills enhancement, another outcome of the Utility Function approach used to assess the influence or effects of the new media shows that 61% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the fourth statement, which reads: *The interactive features of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have played a role in enhancing my own skills to interact on the computer and in new areas of internet interactivity generally.* Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas 11% of them were either neutral or not sure.

The Relationship between Influence and Satisfaction and Perceived Credibility

The study also measured the extent to which the perceived gratification which emanates from the perceived credibility of online newspapers affected the perceived influence of online newspapers on their readers. In terms of the role played by gratification on the influence of online newspapers, a good majority (82%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that reads: *Overall, the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers have influenced me because I am satisfied with them.* Of the respondents, four percent (4%) disagreed with the statement and 14% were neutral to it. All of the following demographic factors appear to have had a positive bearing on the influence the online newspapers are perceived to have on their readers due to the satisfaction they bring to the readers (multiple regression model, not attached due to space limitation): income; political activism; daily frequency of surfing the Internet; the years spent reading online newspapers and, the weekly frequency of reading online newspapers. Focusing on the specific variables, a reader earning K50,000 (about \$4,500) annually is 7.61 times more likely to be influenced by online newspapers due to the perceived gratification he or she gets from them than a reader who earns below K50,000; a reader who is a registered voter is 11.04 times more likely to be influenced by the online newspapers due to gratification than one

who is not; a moderate daily Internet surfer is 11.20 times more likely to be influenced by the newspapers than a once-one-day (low frequent) surfer; a one-year increase in the years of reading online newspapers results in a corresponding 1.45 times increase in the influence that online newspapers are likely to have on their readers' satisfaction with them; and, a one-day increment in the weekly frequency of reading online newspapers results in a 2.0 times increment in terms of the influence they will have on their readers due to the gratification they bring to them.

With respect to whether the perceived credibility is a barrier or intervening variable to the influence that online newspapers have on their readers, the majority (64%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement: *Overall, I am influenced by the Zambian stand-alone online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility.* Seventeen percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 18% were either neutral or not sure. The Logistic Regression Model (Table 11.6) reveals that readers of online newspapers who use the Internet moderately on a daily basis (twice daily) and those who have spent more than 10 years using the Internet (also known as the digital natives) are 3.97 times and 5.14 times, respectively, more likely to report being influenced by these online newspapers despite these newspapers having reputation or otherwise.

Table 11.6 : Self-reported influence of Zambian stand-alone online newspapers regardless of perceived credibility.

Source: Author's field data

	Category	OR	aOR	S.E	95% CI
Sex: [Male]	Female	0.57	0.65	0.23	0.32 1.32
Age category: [18-25 years]	26-35 years	0.46	0.29	0.21	0.07 1.23
	36-45 years	1.03	0.28	0.24	0.05 1.49
Education: [Secondary]	Primary	-	-	-	- -
	Certificate/Diploma	0.89	0.53	0.23	0.23 1.23
	University degree	0.60	0.38	0.22	0.12 1.17
Income [K50,000]	K50-100, 000	1.07	1.79	0.78	0.76 4.22
	K101-250, 000	1.20	2.75	2.26	0.55 13.78
Location [Urban]	>K250, 000	1.13	5.34	7.22	0.38 75.54
Residence [High density]	Rural	0.57	0.39	0.44	0.04 3.49
	Low density	1.90	2.03	1.04	0.75 5.53
	Rural	0.81	2.45	2.90	0.24 25.05
Registered voter: [No]	Yes	0.66	0.34	0.21	0.10 1.16
Voted in 2016: [No]	Yes	1.21	2.46	1.42	0.79 7.63
Internet use per day: [Once]	Twice	1.81	3.97***	2.40	1.21 13.04
	Thrice	1.85	2.51	1.31	0.91 6.97
	Four times and more	1.23	1.69	0.74	0.72 4.00
Internet use per week: [High]	Low	4.69	9.73	12.22	0.83 114.15
	Moderate	1.31	1.16	0.53	0.48 2.83
Number of years using Internet: [2-5 years]	< 2 years	0.94	0.61	0.32	0.22 1.73
	6-10 years	1.20	1.09	0.66	0.34 3.58
	> 10 years	5.50***	5.14***	3.79	1.22 21.79
Internet skills: [Poor]	Good	-	-	-	- -
	Moderate	0.64	0.58	0.26	0.24 1.39
Years reading favourite newspaper	Very poor	0.82	0.66	0.28	0.28 1.54
Days reading online newspaper per week	-	1.10	0.99	0.13	0.77 1.28
	-	1.10	1.13	0.11	0.92 1.35

***p<0.05. Reference category in bracket.

Discussion

The chapter examines four research questions which seek to characterise the influence that online newspapers have on their readers, the demographic factors determining the influence of online newspapers on their readers and it further seeks to establish whether or not credibility is an intervening variable to gratification. Ultimately, the chapter explores the influence of online newspapers on their readers. In terms of the characterisation of the influence of online newspapers from the surveillance, the socialisation and the utility functions of the media (RQ 1), the study establishes that overall, the influence ranges from very high to low. On aggregate, the results of the study confirm that online newspapers show a very high influence on the surveillance and socialisation functions on the one hand, but a low level of influence on their utility function on the other. Precisely, the study establishes that the reported surveillance influence of online newspapers on their readers is very high in terms of getting the readers to know about the politics of their country and what is going on in Zambia and the global community.

With respect to the demographics of the readers who are mostly influenced by online newspapers on political awareness, the study has revealed that this influence is particularly higher among the readers with a long experience of surfing the Internet and those possessing poor Internet skills. The relationship between having spent many years experiencing the use of the Internet and the political influence of online newspapers on the reader could be best explained in terms of the Reliance Theory. In media circles, the 'reliance' principle is also explained in terms of the Uses and Gratification Theory. The theory presupposes a reciprocal or cyclic relationship between reliance and motivation (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). The theory postulates that the more strongly a medium satisfies the gratification sought by the readers, the more heavily it is relied on by its audience. Similarly, the more it is relied on, the more it is repeatedly used by the users to gratify their needs (Kaye and Johnson, 2016). On the other hand, the relationship between having poor Internet skills and high search for political news is difficult to explain and no known previous study has managed to establish such a relationship.

The study has also found a high influence of online newspapers on the socialisation function, specifically the issue of making readers know each other and engage in

conversations. This reported influence of online newspapers on their readers bordered on getting readers connected as they converse with other members of the online community. This is an attestation of the positive role played by these new media in facilitating the establishment of a networked society as envisaged by van Dijk (1991) and Castells (1996). These two researchers envisaged the new media, online newspapers included, as actualising the philosophy of the network society through fostering interactivity among both individuals and the nodes in that social network (Castells, 1996). The features that enable the development of this seamless interactivity have been fully discussed in chapter 9 of this thesis. These features are defined as the human-to-human and medium-to-human interactive features, and they specifically allow readers to interact with each other, sharing views on a particular subject and connecting with various publishers and editors of online publications.

In terms of the demographics of the readers mostly singled out for the socialisation influence (RQ 3), the study has found that online newspapers tend to exert more of such influence on readers residing in low density areas. As explained earlier (refer also to chapter 6), the Zambian context demonstrates that these areas are almost exclusively earmarked for the well-to-do. Therefore, the most plausible explanation for this finding is that the more affluent readers of online newspapers become, the more they are likely to afford adequate data bundles that enhance longer and repeated online interactivity, a feature of online newspapers that is associated with the socialisation functions, specifically the human-to-human interactive features (also refer to chapter 9).

The use of interactive features enables readers to turn to the social networking links that sustain the production and consumption of online newspapers (Facebook, Twitter, and so on), and these features enable the readers to know what others think about a particular issue, posting own comments on a variety of stories, chatting with other users, engaging other readers in debate and sharing political views. Contrary, the study has established that an increase in the weekly frequency of reading online newspapers results in a reduction in the socialisation effect (a negative effect). It is a paradox that this finding somewhat defies logic in the sense that the more days a reader spends reading, the more they will find socialisation to be a gratifying and subsequently an influential experience (Kaminski, 2011).

Influence of online newspapers on the utility function

In terms of the influence of online newspapers on the utility function, the results are suggestive of a fairly high political influence on readers' decision regarding which one to support among Zambia's political parties, but they were only moderate in terms of influencing the voting patterns during the 2016 general elections in Zambia. The influence of online newspapers is evidently lowest as measured against the backdrop of the readers' choice of what they wish to buy among the products advertised on the websites of these online media.

With regard to the demographic factors that show a positive political influence at the level of persuasion (specifically on which party to support) and the actual behaviour (reported voting patterns), the study establishes a high daily frequency and many years of experience with the Internet (above six years) as having a positive influence on the reader's decision regarding the party they wish to support. On the other hand, the most educated readers (holding a degree and above), those readers with poor Internet skills and those located in rural areas were less likely to be influenced by online newspapers in terms of both which party to support and the political candidates they wished to vote for in the 2016 general elections in Zambia. Interestingly, even the politically active readers (both registered voters and those who actually voted in 2016) were also among the readers who were reportedly less likely to be persuaded by online newspapers on both the political party to support and the political candidates to actually vote for.

The results also show that an increase in the daily use of the Internet results in a reduction in the political influence that online newspapers have on their readers, specifically on which ones to support among the various political parties operating in the country. In other words, individual readers who surf the Internet more frequently on a weekly basis are more likely to be resistant to the political influence exerted by online newspapers than their counterparts who visit the Internet on rarer occasions. They are also likely to make decisions that are independent of media persuasion. Previous studies (for instance Mings (1997; Johnson and Kaye, 2000; Skogerbo and Winsvold, 2011) also established that the more the readers are educated and politically active, the more they are likely to be part of the active media audiences and they are likely to be more informed about, and stick to, the decisions they make regarding their political

choices. This analogy supports the long-established theories of media effect such as the Active Audience Theory, the Minimal Effects Theory and the Reinforcement Theory. It has been established that readers of online newspapers with poor Internet skills and those that are based in the rural areas, as discussed in other chapters of the thesis, are reportedly less frequent readers and hence, they are less dependent on the online newspapers for news and information. This renders them less amenable to the influence of these media, an analysis that has resulted from the Reliance Theory.

With particular reference to the influence of online newspapers on the role they supposedly play in persuading readers to buy items advertised on their news platforms (sales promotion), the results show that the more educated, the low income earners and the readers with very poor Internet skills are less likely to be influenced by the newspapers' sales promotion agenda. Contrary, readers who surf the Internet regularly and those possessing moderate Internet skills are more likely to respond positively to the sales promotions offered by online newspapers.

The weak influence that online newspapers have on sales promotion as it applies to the more educated can be authentically explained in terms of this group being more 'active,' and such informed audiences are likely to rely on various sources of information prior to crucial decisions-making. The weak influence the poor regarding sales promotions can be attributable to the fact that this group has financial considerations to pay attention to other than just media persuasion. For the readers with poor Internet skills, the weak influence of online media could be a result of poor surfing skills, a scenario which in turn limits the amount of the readers' exposure to the various items promoted via the online newspaper platforms.

Influence of online newspapers: a diffusion of innovation model perspective

Research Question 4 interrogates the manner in which the influence of the online newspapers can be characterised from the perspective of the Diffusion of Innovation Model as articulated by Rogers (2015). The findings of the study show that the influence of online newspapers on their audiences varies on the stage of behaviour change, a stage at which change is targeted and assessed. The study has further established a reportedly very high influence in terms awareness and the conferring of information or understanding (surveillance function), which forms the first and basic stage in the behaviour change continuum. The influence of online newspapers, however,

seems to diminish when it comes to the readers' changing perceptions or attitudes or personal decisions but much lesser at the action or adoption stage. The results show that the influence tends to diminish especially on issues that are likely to have consequences on the reader, such as what to buy, who to vote for and so forth (utility function). This finding seems to place online newspapers within the context of the well-established characterisation of the role of the mass media in the behaviour change continuum, which appears effective at the level of awareness and informational (cognitive) motivations; moderate at the perception or attitude change level and weak, or even totally ineffective, at the behaviour or action inducement or 'adoption' level (Kaminski, 2011; Rogers, 2003).

A significant majority of the respondents affirmed that online newspapers indeed had an influence on them, owing to the overall gratification they obtain from these online newspapers. In essence, this result suggests a strong correlation between overall gratification obtained from reading online newspapers and the influence that this media genre has on its readers. The study findings further suggest that readers who earn low income, those registered as voters and those with moderate Internet skills are likely to be the most gratified and subsequently the most influenced by online newspapers. An advanced analysis (the regression model) of the collected data also reveals that an increase in the weekly frequency of reading and many years of exposure to online newspapers, both correlate with an increase in the influence that these newspapers are likely to have on the readers as a direct result of the gratification readers are obtaining from this latest media genre.

The correlation between influence and frequent surfing and the vast experience with online newspapers could be explained in terms of the readers' familiarity with the media and the reliance theories (refer also to Chapter 10 of the thesis and other sections of this chapter). The Familiarity Theory posits that the more time the readers spend reading online newspapers, the more they tend to appreciate them as the 'real product' and, the more they appreciate the online newspapers, the more they get gratified by them. The media 'reliance' principle is also explained in terms of the Uses and Gratification Theory which postulates a reciprocal or cyclic relationship between reliance and motivation (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). The theory further maintains that the more strongly a medium satisfies the gratification sought, the more heavily the

audiences rely on it. Similarly, the more the media is relied on, the more it is repeatedly used to gratify the need of its users (Kaye and Johnson, 2016).

The study also analysed the extent to which online newspapers' perceived credibility affects their influence on the readers. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents did not consider the perceived credibility as an impediment to the gratification they obtained from online newspapers which subsequently exerts some influence on them. This means that credibility does not manifest as an intervening variable in the gratification-influence relationship. In other words, the appeal of online newspapers to their readers does not recede despite credibility issues. An advanced analysis the researcher adopted further reveals that, specifically, longer experience with the Internet, coupled with moderate daily usage, may allow users to 'evolve' and therefore seal their commitment to online news platforms of their choice.

Conclusion

By and large, the results of the study are conclusive that online newspapers exert some influence or effect on their readers. The characterisation of the influence of online newspapers on their readers ranges from high to low on the behaviour change continuum from the perspective of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The findings show that the influence is thus very high on the surveillance (cognitive) and socialisation functions and it ranges from moderate to low among the three measures of the utility function the study adopted. Among the stages of behaviour change that constitute the utility function, the influence of online newspapers is moderate at the persuasion and decision stage and lowest at the implementation stage which takes into account taking personal actions, for instance, voting for a particular political candidate in an election or buying a particular product being promoted by these media on their sites.

From the Diffusion of Innovation perspective, this finding places the online newspapers within the Media Effects Theorem, which posits that the mass media are more effective at the early stages of awareness and knowledge creation but weakest at the more complex stages of behaviour change or action. The findings of the study also confirm that the readers of online newspapers are active consumers who reciprocate the influence of these newspapers through exerting their own influence which counters that exerted by the same media.

The study managed to establish a causal relationship existing between the gratification obtained from online newspapers and the influence the same media exert on individuals. Individual readers who are gratified by these media are more easily influenced by the same media. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies and the established theories that underpin this study. The study has further established that perceived credibility is not an intervening variable to the gratification readers obtained from online newspapers and, ultimately, their influence on the readers. However, the study establishes that certain demographic factors affect the influence of online newspaper, both negatively and positively. For instance, the study found out that readers in possession of high educational qualification, those readers that are politically active, readers based in the rural areas and those readers with poor Internet skills are resistant to political influence, specifically the political party to support and the political candidate to vote for.

Further, low income earners and the more educated readers are resistant to the marketing influence exerted by online newspapers, specifically with reference to buying the products advertised by them. Therefore, these study findings lend themselves to the conclusion that cognitive and resource abilities profoundly determine media influence at advanced stages of the behaviour change continuum, notably behaviour change. On the other hand, the study proves that familiarity with, and reliance on, the online newspapers plays a significant role in bringing about gratification on the part of the readers and, in turn, it is this gratification that accounts for the influence that the online newspapers have on their readers. These findings confirm the relevance of the familiarity and reliance theories to the influence or effects of online newspapers on their readers.

CHAPTER 12

THE EPILOGUE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a synthesis of the findings and the conclusions of the study. It elucidates how the findings relate to the initial conceptual models or frameworks and the emerging generalisations.

Overview of evolution of online newspapers in Zambia

Online-only newspapers, referred to as 'online newspapers' throughout the thesis, date their existence from 1998 with the launch of the *Southport Reporter* in Liverpool. They have grown exponentially since then and established themselves globally as a mainstream medium (Li, 2006; Boczkowski, 2004). While the development of online newspapers in Zambia and generally in Africa is not well documented, their rapid rise and practices suggest that the trends in online journalism on the continent do not differ much from those in Western countries.

Available data suggest that online journalism in Zambia dates from 1996 when a weekly newspaper, the *Post*, started publishing an online version. This was barely a year after established newspapers in the United States first went online. In 1999, the *Lusaka Times* brought out what is thought to be the first online-only newspaper in Zambia. Since then a flurry of online newspapers have appeared, most of them registered outside Zambia to circumvent de-registration and other restrictions and avoid persecution. By June 2019 there were 15 established online newspapers that were either owned by Zambians or were covering Zambia. In an exploratory study of these media in Zambia, Mbozi (2014) noted that traditional media were turning to digital distribution because of the increasing costs of printing. Global trends in information and communication technologies (ICT), such as the development of software platforms that offer increasing access to information, growth of Internet bandwidth and expanding cellular networks, suggest that online newspapers will continue to attract more readers and widen their audience reach.

The sustainability models that govern Zambian online newspapers are not well documented. Available data suggest that some have attempted to raise revenue

through subscription fees, which offered restricted access to their sites. However, this model was as good as dead on arrival. It failed to generate enough revenue and the venture collapsed, as had happened with online newspapers in other parts of the world (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Panda and Swain, 2011). Studies of revenue models for online newspapers globally conclude that publishers went online without a clue of whether the innovation would be financially viable (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Kamerer and Bressers, 1998). It is logical to suppose that this was the case among Zambian online newspapers. The major source of revenue for Zambian online newspapers is display and classified adverts, both local and Google-sourced. They also benefit from direct donor funding, a source of finance that seems to be unique to this mass medium in Zambia. Whether such sources can be sustainable remains to be seen.

The content of Zambian online newspapers can be described as ‘more of everything’ (Greer and Mensing, 2006) – more news, more multimedia, more interactivity and more revenue-generating features. They are generally up to date with the global trends in diversity of content and news presentation. However, they are perceived to fall short in the quality of their journalism. Their content is almost exclusively local – news, features, reader-generated content and adverts. Although news is the dominant feature, the sites seem to strike an uncomfortable balance in allocating space between news and advertising, which has been the case globally (Boczkowski, 2004; Greer and Mensing, 2006).

Zambia has no specific policy or law regulating online media. The operations of online newspapers are guided by the Constitution of 2016 – both positively and negatively – and by other national laws that oversee Internet governance. While Article 20 of the Constitution expressly provides for freedom of expression regardless of its form, the country has laws that inhibit Internet freedom generally and online journalism in particular (CIPESA, 2016). The Penal Code Act contains wide-ranging provisions that criminalise public scrutiny of the president and government and publication of information likely to cause ‘fear and alarm to the public’ (CIPESA, 2016). Commentators note that this law has been used selectively to block certain websites and to withdraw ‘undesirable’ content. Government censorship of independent online news outlets and arrests of journalists and individuals who have criticised the government on online news sites and social media were cited, for instance, in a Freedom House report in 2017. The restrictive policy, legal and regulatory environment notwithstanding,

Zambian online newspapers have been criticised for the type of journalism they practice. The few research reports on the subject conclude that while readers find online newspapers to be generally reliable sources of independent, uncensored and up-to-date news, there are misgivings about the credibility, trust and believability of the news they carry (Mbozi, 2014; Chai, 2009, 2013, 2018; Chishala, 2015).

The main question addressed in the study was how Zambian news media audiences have responded to the emergence and presence of online newspapers. It focused on six factors:

- Reach, readership and motivations for reading
- Content diversity and gratification sought and obtained from content
- Use of and gratification sought and obtained from interactivity features
- Perceived credibility and its probable impact on reader gratification
- Impact of the emergence of online newspapers on traditional news media
- Perceived influence of online newspapers on their readers

Reach, readership and motivations for reading online newspapers

This study established that readership of online newspapers was modest but growing – about six in every 10 individuals in Lusaka Province access and read them. The new medium was found to be the third most preferred media type for delivering breaking news, after Facebook and television, across the demographic categories identified in the study. Facebook commanded the greatest reach and was the source of choice for news. It was followed in descending order by television, online newspapers, radio, online versions of print newspapers and print newspapers. The study did not establish whether, in citing Facebook, the respondents meant the popular social network site itself or the access it gave to pages of online newspapers; most respondents said they accessed their favourite online newspaper through its Facebook page.

The intensity of exposure to the various media was rated by the frequency with which the respondents turned to each one for breaking news. For weekly exposure, the study found that television was the most intensely accessed medium (just under six days in a week), followed in descending order by Facebook, online newspapers and radio. Most

of the respondents were found to be high-intensity online newspaper readers, turning to them more than five days a week. The study supported to a large extent the conclusion of Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011:222) that 'on average, the most frequent online readers were younger, richer, more educated, more politically active and more often male than frequent print readers'. The mean number of days spent reading online newspapers increased in tandem with number of years that respondents had been using the Internet, an observation that is in line with reliance theory.

As for the social motivations for reading online newspapers, most respondents cited information and news-seeking (or surveillance), followed by social interaction and avoidance (or aversion to traditional news media). Personal integrative needs (prestige) and utility were the least cited. A similar pattern emerged when surveying the most gratifying needs: highest was information and news seeking, followed by social interaction, avoidance and utility. Sixty-four percent of respondents favoured online newspapers for 'breaking and up-to-date news', 62% for adverts, 55% for 'more independent news', 46% for 'detailed news', 38% 'due to Internet access' and another 38% for their interactive features. Thirty-five percent cited 'credibility of the news', 34% 'uncensored news', 30% 'because they are cheaper than print' and 11% 'posting personalised comments'.

The results were conclusive about the modest but growing reach and readership of online newspapers. The main readers of online newspapers were young (aged 18 to 35), urban-based, better educated and Internet savvy. They were also likely to be frequent Internet surfers and to be experienced in using the Internet. These users turned to the online newspapers as the third main source of news, after Facebook (which may include Facebook pages of online newspapers) and television. Intensity of reading online newspapers was found to be high among 25- to 36-year-olds, university graduates, those who surfed the Internet once a day only and among those with many years of experience using the Internet (six years and above). Others who spent time reading online newspapers accessed the Internet via WiFi, dongle or router and those who regarded their Internet skills as 'very good'. Most of them accessed their favourite online newspaper through its Facebook page and on their mobile phones. According to readers' responses, online newspapers would be read more widely if there were not slow Internet speeds, connectivity problems and expensive Internet bundles, among other challenges. A digital divide was evident in the study: more urban than rural

respondents, more 'well-to-do' than the less privileged and more educated than the less educated access and spend more time reading online newspapers. While different groups of readers seek to satisfy different needs, surveillance and socialisation were seen to be motivations across all the sub-groups polled in the study. Respondents who have many years of experience accessing the Internet seem to be less likely to be satisfied with reading online newspapers for utility, or 'perceived direct usefulness in some matters such as forming opinions and making plans or decisions' (Katz, et al , 1974; Levy and Windahl, 1984; and Wenner, 1985, in Mings, 1997).

The study confirmed that users know exactly what they seek from online newspapers and what satisfies them. This is in line with the communitarian ethos of the uses and gratification theoretical framework adopted for the study.

Content of online newspapers: reader motivations, preferences and gratifications

An overwhelming majority (91% of the 335 readers of online newspapers) turned to this medium for information of a general nature, such as politics, gossip, scandals, sport, business, art, fashion and entertainment. Only 55% initially sought information of a developmental nature or 'information that would help to improve their livelihoods and that of their families', such as HIV/AIDS, agriculture, environment, climate change, nutrition, poverty reduction and gender. These findings qualify the notion that

ICT and particularly the traditional media [have] to play this role of influencing development by providing the people with necessary information and required skills to overcome the present economic imbroglio in Africa (Akpomuvie, 2010:165).

Logistic regression analysis showed that readers' need for content of a general nature increased in tandem with number of years of reading online newspapers and that moderately educated and low-income earners were more likely to turn to online newspapers specifically for developmental content than those with many years of experience with the Internet. The level of responses was moderate for 'motivation for use' and low for 'frequency' and 'extent' of use for both general and developmental content. Politics and current affairs were the greatest drawcards in general content, followed by gossip about public figures and sport. In regard to developmental content, topics about governance were cited by the highest number of respondents, followed

distantly by general health, education and HIV and AIDS. Climate change, nutrition and environment were the least utilised.

Most readers said they were moderately satisfied with the content of online newspapers, especially sport and pastimes, followed by shopping, gossip about public figures, and politics and current affairs. For developmental content, governance topics were cited as the most gratifying, followed by education, general health and HIV and AIDS; environment and climate change were the least. A mismatch was noted between the content that the readers sought and that to which they were actually exposed and were most gratified by. This lends support to the relevance of the serendipity principle.

Regression analysis revealed that experience with the Internet and with reading online newspapers influenced readers' perceptions of whether they were satisfied with the general content of online newspapers. Readers considered to be high-frequency users of the Internet were more likely to find general news and information adequate than infrequent surfers. As for socio-demographic factors that predict interest in developmental content in online newspapers, the regression model showed the relevance of income and social status. Less educated readers and those earning low incomes were more likely to appreciate this type of content (ostensibly) for the opportunities to improve their livelihoods than those living in low-density areas (and who were therefore likely to be higher-income earners).

The results are conclusive and lead to a generalisation that most readers of online newspapers seek content of a general or less serious nature in preference to developmental content. Respondents are mostly interested in and gratified by political and current affairs topics, sport, gossip and educational content. Interest in and the need for general content increases in tandem with the number of years of reading online newspapers. This confirms the relevance of the reliance theory to exposure to this type of content and the news medium generally.

Interactivity features: use and effect on gratification

Interactivity as a motivation for turning to online newspapers for first-time readers was cited by only four in ten readers, while the majority (62%) were motivated more by latest news and information. The study found an association between residing in a low-density residential area (generally better-off readers) and attraction to online newspapers for their interactivity features. In Zambia, living in a low-density area is a

proxy indicator of higher social status; the opposite applies to high density area, which typically has crowded, low-cost housing.

Respondents made relatively little use of the various interactivity features offered by online newspapers. Interactivity features that offered 'options for the public to respond, interact or even customise certain stories' were the most preferred and used. As for use of human versus medium interactivity features, most respondents sought and more frequently used the features that enabled them to interact with other readers (human or human-to-human interactive features). Though no correlation analyses were undertaken, the results confirmed a relationship between choice of features and the motivation for visiting the newspaper. For instance, the use of human-to-human interactivity features corresponded with a desire for socialisation. The choice of medium/human interactivity features accords with the finding that Facebook was rated the most regularly visited news medium, the most cited source of breaking news and the route through which most readers accessed their favourite online newspaper. Human/medium features were the least favoured in terms of what readers sought and frequency of actual use. These features allow for posting personalised information or material such as news stories or views, letters to the editors, news tips and photos.

Many of the 42 interactivity features identified in online newspapers were infrequently used. 'Knowing what others think about an issue', 'chat on Facebook page of newspaper', 'ability to navigate Facebook page of newspaper' and 'posting own comments on stories' were cited by the greatest number of users. These four features resort under the human-to-human and medium/human interactivity features.

An overwhelming majority of readers said they would continue to read online newspapers and liked them specifically for their interactivity features. Interactivity therefore has a significant role in gratification from online newspapers. While respondents said they did not initially turn to online newspapers for their interactivity features, interest in interactivity was seen to grow with more frequent exposure. Subsequently, interactivity became a factor leading to gratification, expressed in repeat visits to online newspapers. Scores of readers' satisfaction from the four sub-categories of features ranged from moderate to low. The human interactive features emerged as the most gratifying of the four groups.

In summary, in general and overall there is infrequent and low use of interactive features by readers of online newspapers in Zambia. Nor is interactivity a major motivation for visiting online newspapers for the first time. The finding is in tandem with other earlier studies (Chung and Yoo, 2008; Yoo, 2011). However, interest in and use of the features develops with greater 'familiarity' of the medium. Most readers said they used features in the interactivity category in preference to multi-mediality and hypertextuality features. The choice of medium/human interactivity features corroborates with the finding of the study that Facebook is the most regularly visited news medium, highest source of breaking news as well as the route through which majority of the respondents in the study accessed their favourite online newspaper/s.

Multiple regression analyses pointed to the positive influence of the number of years of reading online newspapers, frequency of use of the Internet and good Internet skills on gratification obtained from interactivity features of online newspapers. These factors are inter-related in that they are associated with proficiency in use of the Internet and with the interactivity features offered by Zambian online news sites. The findings support the conclusions of earlier research (for instance Chung and Yoo, 2008; Mitchelstein, 2011) that Internet skill is a militating factor to gratification obtained from use of interactive features of online newspapers (process motivation). They also support the theory emerging from previous studies (for instance Rafael and Ariel; 2007; Lowry et al, 2009; Yoo, 2011; Hassan, Latiff and Suhaimi, 2015) that 'greater use of interactivity features is a predictor of greater gratification levels, which in turn affects readers' attitudes toward the online newspaper and repeat visit intention' (see also chapter 8).

Credibility of online newspapers

Overall 62% of the respondents perceived online newspapers to be credible. Internet skill was found to be the only influencer of readers' perceptions about the overall credibility of online newspapers as sources of information. Regression analysis found that readers with moderate Internet skills were more likely to find online newspapers to be credible sources of information than those who rated their skills as 'very good'. Respondents raised concerns about the anonymity of publishers of online newspapers and their sources, arguing that it compromised their accountability, and that their reporting was mostly politically slanted and not always factual.

Readers' evaluations of 10 credibility markers ranged from high to low. Assessed on their own (without comparison with traditional news channels), online newspapers were rated high on reliability, impartiality and trustworthiness (in descending order). While online newspapers were perceived to be reliable and trustworthy sources of up-to-date, uncensored and independent news, respondents cited concerns over lack of professional conduct and dubious reporting practices. Specifically, readers were most concerned with inadequate investigative stories, exaggeration and lack of truth. These perceptions supported professional assessments of online newspapers by Chari (2009) and Chishala (2015).

Multivariate regression analyses found that the more time in years that readers spent reading online newspapers, the more they found them to be reliable and trustworthy, a correlation that is in line with 'familiarity' or 'mere-exposure' theory and reliance theory. The first holds that 'the more exposure we have to a stimulus, the more we will tend to like it' (Zajonc, 2001:). The analysis also indicated that better-educated readers were more critical of the reliability of online newspapers than those with less education. While registered voters were less likely to find online newspapers reliable, respondents who voted during the 2016 general elections said they found them trustworthy. In other words, online newspapers met the needs of individuals who voted, and gratification obtained therefore influenced their credibility rating, an observation made also by Johnson and Kaye (2004, 2010).

Online newspapers were rated less favourably on credibility than traditional state-owned and privately-owned news media based on average scores of 12 credibility standards. Online newspapers scored 48%, private traditional media 70% and government media 51%. Traditional news channels in Zambia are judged by readers to be only moderately credible, albeit slightly more credible than online newspapers. It is noteworthy that the overall credibility rating for online newspapers before and after the comparison with traditional media, which readers consider more authoritative, accountable and identifiable, fell from 63% to 45%. The fall could be attributed to the 'interaction effect' or 'effects of interface cues', a theory advanced by Go et al (2014. See chapter 8).

Online newspapers were rated worse than traditional state and private media on plagiarism, use of bad language and avoidance of apologising when in the wrong. Private traditional media and online newspapers were rated more culpable than state-

owned media over 'vendetta journalism', plagiarism and use of bad language, all of which are considered extreme forms of unethical media conduct. State-owned media were rated worse than online newspapers in terms of balance, fairness and reliability.

The results were conclusive that:

- Online newspapers are rated only moderately credible owing to a number of concerns readers have about their reporting practices and the anonymity of their publishers and sources.
- Zambian readers have issues with both traditional and online newspapers. In regard to believability, a cornerstone of news reporting, most readers polled in the study said they believed what they read in online newspapers only after they had verified the reports in the traditional media.
- An emerging generalisation is that perceived credibility, and specifically trust in the value of the news in online newspapers, increases with the number of years of reading them. This confirms the relevance of 'reliance' and 'familiarity' theories. In the light of uses and gratification theory, it is an indication that the Zambian readers know exactly what they expect from this medium by way of content and their professional conduct.

Displacement and substitutability effects of online newspapers on traditional media

This aspect of the study analysed and compared displacement and replacement (substitutability) effects of online newspapers on television, radio and print newspapers. Three indicators measured displacement effect: 1. extent of reach and use of each medium; (2). Time spent on each medium/selective exposure; and (3) need for each medium.

The study found that the advent of online newspapers had reduced readers' need for these traditional mass media, albeit to varying degrees. Three-quarters (72%) of respondents reported a reduced need for print newspapers, about half (54%) for radio and 37% for television in the previous five years because they were spending more time on online newspapers. The same proportion (three quarters) of respondents said they had reduced the time they spent reading print newspapers. The study found that

most readers were spending more time on television, Facebook and online newspapers (in that order) for breaking news and information. It also found that the proportion of readers turning to online newspapers at the expense of print newspapers was much higher than previously reported, especially during the first decade of online journalism (1995 – 2005), for instance by Bromley and Bowles (1995), Stempel and Hargrove (1995), Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) and Skogerbo and Winsvold (2011). This finding confirms earlier predictions that the impact of online newspapers on the print newspapers would profoundly manifest in later years (De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf, 2005; Murdoch, 2012). With regard to total displacement or substitutability, a lesser number of respondents (52%) found Zambian stand-alone online newspapers to be an adequate substitute for Zambian print newspapers and only 23% for print newspapers.

As for the time-based and need-based demographic predictors of the displacement effect, the results attest that lengthy experience and frequency of reading online newspapers are common key determinants in reducing the need for, and time spent on, the three traditional media. The more time readers spent reading online newspapers, the more they felt they needed them and spent time on them at the expense of the traditional news media. This suggests relevance of the 'reliance' theory, which asserts that the more time readers spend reading them (online newspapers), the more they appreciate them as the 'real product' that can be relied on. It also supports the theory advanced by Ball-Rokeach (1985) and Kaye and Johnson (2016) that a reciprocal or cyclic relationship between reliance and motivation is formed after lengthy media exposure.

Age is another common predictor of reduced need for print, television and radio. Younger readers, in their preference for online newspapers, have less need for print, radio and television. Experience in years with the Internet presented mixed results across the media spectrum. Lengthy Internet experience pointed to a reduction in the need for and use of print newspapers. On the other hand, the fewer years a reader spent on the Internet, the more likely he or she would reduce need for and use of television.

Respondents seemed only moderately bothered by the value of the content and perceived credibility of the online newspapers. This contradicts the conclusions by Johnson and Kaye (2016) that credibility was a strong predictor of displacement effect of reading online newspapers for traditional media. Low- to medium-income earners

found online newspapers an adequate substitute for both TV and print newspapers. This finding supports the established theory that poverty determines media behaviour and choices. It is plausible to conclude therefore that costs effect weighs heavily against Zambian print newspapers, which 'sell yesterday's news' at an average price of K10 (US\$ 0.71) a copy.

In conclusion the study established that overall and in line with the findings by other researchers (such as De Waal, Schönbach and Lauf,2005), reading online newspapers is a positive predictor of time and need-based displacement effect on traditional news media, especially print newspapers. Long years of experience with online newspapers increased their substitutability effect, as was the case with displacement effect. This study established that the advent of online newspapers in Zambia is reminiscent of cannibalisation effect of television, radio and print newspapers. However, the displacement effect was different for each of the three media. Print newspapers are the most affected by the displacement effect on all counts: time spent on the medium, the need for it and perceptions of its adequacy. Most readers are spending less time reading print newspapers in preference for online newspapers (displacement effect). However, most of them are also reluctant to totally replace (substitute) online newspapers for television and print newspapers.

It would seem therefore that readers regard online newspapers as being complementary to traditional mass media. One confounding finding was that readers regarded news in traditional media as generally more credible than that offered by the alternative media. Most readers preferred to cross-check facts in other media in order verify material presented in some online newspapers. The substitutability effect extrapolated in the present study can be said to be circumstantial and audience-specific. It can also be concluded that substitutability has mainly taken root among the fervent and 'converted' readers of online newspapers.

Perceived influence of online newspapers

This aspect of the study measured the influence of online newspapers in terms of three core functions: surveillance (or news seeking), socialisation and utility (Mings, 1997). It characterised the reported influence from a 'stages of change' model or social behaviour change continuum (Rogers, 2015). The utility function was assessed for its

influence on readers' opinions on a particular issue – whether online newspapers had changed their attitudes or persuaded them to take action.

The study found overwhelming surveillance influence: 89% of readers said they had been influenced to understand the politics of the country and 97% were influenced in understanding 'what's going on in places when I am not there – in my country and globally'. Regression analysis showed that readers with many years of experience of using the Internet were more likely to be influenced to understand the politics of the country from reading online newspapers.

Influence associated with socialisation was also high. Ninety-two percent of the respondents said that Zambian online newspapers had played a role in helping them understand what other people were thinking about an issue and shaping their views. Another 93% said they were influenced in regard to connections with other people. Regression analysis found that readers with relatively high social status (indicated by their areas of residence) were more likely to be influenced to interact with other people as a result of exposure to online newspapers than readers with less social standing (those living in a high-density area). On the other hand, the socialisation effect declined among readers who read online newspapers more frequently.

In regard to the utility function, 73% of respondents reported that Zambian online newspapers had helped them shape their views about which political parties to support. Regression analysis showed that political activism, experience with the Internet and frequency of reading online newspapers were predictors of whether a reader was influenced by online newspapers about whom to support politically. Registered voters were less persuaded than non-registered voters, as were readers who increased their weekly frequency of reading online newspapers compared to less experienced and moderate users of the Internet and readers with long years of experience of using the Internet.

The study found that online newspapers were less influential in persuading readers to take action based on what they read: only 41% of the readers agreed that they were influenced to buy products being advertised on Zambian online newspapers and 56% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Zambian stand-alone online newspapers played a role in influencing me to make up my mind on who to vote for in the 2016 elections." Sixty-one percent reported that the interactive features of Zambian online

newspapers had helped to enhance their personal computer skills to interact with other websites and other people.

Eighty-two percent of the readers said that online newspapers 'influenced me because I am satisfied with them'. Logistic regression analysis found that reported influence due to satisfaction with the medium grew in tandem with an increase in years and weekly frequency of reading. There was found to be limited impact of perceived credibility on gratification (or satisfaction) from online newspapers. Nonetheless, 64% of the respondents reported that perceived credibility had negatively affected the extent to which they were influenced by Zambian online newspapers.

The results are therefore conclusive and lead to the generalisation that perceived influence of online newspapers is high at the lower level of awareness creation (surveillance) and socialisation. Influence diminishes for the utility function, specifically at the more complex level in the behaviour change continuum espoused by Rogers (2015). These levels involve decision making and taking action based on information provided by these new media. The other conclusion is that readers were hesitant to rely on the information obtained from online newspapers for decisions and actions that might have a bearing on their lives. Therefore, the influence of online newspapers appears to fit with established theories about where the power of the mass media lies on the human socio-behaviour change continuum. The study confirms the impact of socio-demographic factors – political activism, education, Internet skills and experience and the digital divide, for instance – as intervening variables in the influence of online newspapers on their readers, in line with established active audience theories. Logistic regression analysis found that reported influence due to satisfaction with online newspapers grows with the increase in years and weekly frequency of reading them.

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PART III – APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance – UKZN, South Africa



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

28 November 2017

Mr Parde Shakantu Mbozi Z16063763
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College d Campus

Dear Mr Mbozi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1213/0170
Project title: Online Newspapers and Reader Gratification: Modelling the effects of interactive Features, Content and Credibility among Zambian Readers

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

With regards to the response received on 24 November 2017 to our letter of 12 October 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Prof Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
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Appendix 2: Gate Keeper Authority – Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services

Telephone: +260-211-237150 E-mail: admin@mibss.gov.zm Fax: +260-211-235410		In reply please quote No.
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA		MIBS/101/9/1
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING SERVICES		
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY		
P. O. BOX 51025 LUSAKA		
3rd February, 2017		
Mr. Parkie Mbazi University of Zambia Institute of Economic and Social Research P.O. Box 30900 LUSAKA		
RE: REQUEST FOR GATEKEEPER AUTHORITY LETTER		
We acknowledge receipt of your letter informing us about your PhD studies with the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, in South Africa.		
We are pleased to inform you that our Ministry will render unqualified support to your proposed field of research by availing all necessary information that you shall need during the course of your studies.		
Further, you shall be accorded unimpeded access to our Ministry to facilitate the desired level of interaction with members of our staff as you gather all the relevant information for your studies.		
		
Godfrey Malama PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING SERVICES		

Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance – CSO



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

[All correspondence should be addressed to the Director]
[Website: www.zamstats.gov.zm]

REF:

CSO/101/8/15

1st March, 2017

Mr. Parkie Mbozi
Institute of Economic and Social Research
Lusaka

REQUEST FOR GATEKEEPER AUTHORITY LETTER-USE OF SAMPLING FRAME, MAPS FOR ONLINE MEDIA STUDY

Reference is made to your letter dated 5th February, 2017.

Your request is well noted and appreciated. We would however advise that you provide to us your sample design which may include the objectives of the study. One of our sampling statisticians will work with you in order to have the sample of Enumeration Areas (EAs) drawn. The sampling frame is never given out in its entirety. You are also allowed to make a request for maps based on the sample of EAs drawn.

Yours Sincerely,

John Kalumbi
Director of Census and Statistics

CC: The Director, INESOR, UNZA

P. O. Box 31908, Lusaka, Zambia. Tel: +260- 211- 251377 / 253655 / 251385 / 257605 / 257604
Fax: +260- 211- 253468 / 253908. E-mail: info@zamstats.gov.zm

"To coordinate and provide timely, quality and credible official statistics for
use by stakeholders and clients for sustainable development"

Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance – Information Brochure

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA



**Institute of Economic and Social Research
(INESOR)**

Online newspapers and reader gratification: modelling the effects of interactive features, content and credibility among Zambian Readers

Information Brochure

September 2017

My name is _____. I am working with the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) of the University of Zambia. We are conducting a survey in this area about readership of **online Newspapers in Zambia**. The study is being conducted as part of a PhD programme for Mr Parkie Mbozi, under the supervision of Prof Ruth Teer-Tomaselli of the University of Kwazulu Natal in South Africa. I would like to ask you a few questions about the issues. The survey will take approximately 40 minutes. You were randomly selected to participate in this study through the list of households compiled by the Central Statistical Office during the 2010 Census of population and housing.

Whatever information you will provide will be strictly confidential and not be shown to any other persons. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. If we should come to any question that you do not want to answer, just let me know and I will go on to the next question. You are also free to stop the interview at any time or withdraw altogether. However, we hope that you will participate in this survey since your views are important. Should you request, an electronic copy of the final projects will be sent to you on completion.

Should have any queries about the survey when I am gone you can contact the following:

The Principal investigator

Mr Parkie Mbozi, Research Fellow, Institute of Economic and Social Research, University of Zambia, P/O Box 30900, Plot No. 2631, Chudleigh, Munali Road, Lusaka, Zambia.

Mobile Number: 0973 399484: email: parkie.mbozi@unza.zm

If you have any queries regarding ethical issues you may contact ERES Converge IRB office at the following physical address and contact details:

33 Joseph Mwilwa Road

Rhodes Park

Lusaka, Zambia

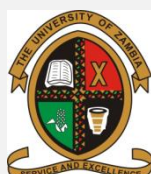
Email: eresconverge@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: +260 955 155633/ +260 955 155634

I will now proceed to read to you the consent statement for your signature.....

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance – Consent

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA



Institute of Economic and Social Research
(INESOR)

Online Newspapers and Reader Gratification: Modelling the Effects of Interactive Features, Content and Credibility among Zambian Readers

Respondent's Consent Form

September 2017

CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY OF LEARNERS' READING PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENT

Respondent

I have understood the conditions of participating in this study and give consent to participate.

Signature (Thumb Print).....

Witness Signature/(Thumb print).....

Appendix 6: Principal Questionnaire



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

READERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

***Online Newspapers in Zambia: a Characterization of Readership,
Influence on Readers and Impact on Media Ecology***

March 2017

PART ONE – FOR ALL RESPONDENTS IN SAMPLE

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

1.1: Identification Data

001	Questionnaire Identification Number		QNUM
002	District (Circle)	Chilanga 1 Chirundu 2 Chongwe 3 Kafue 4 Luangwa 5 Lunfunsa 6 Lusaka 7 Shibuyunji 8	PROV
003	District (see code sheet)		DIST
004	Constituency (see code sheet)		CONS
005	Ward		WARD
006	Type of Location (Circle)	Urban 1 Rural 2	LOCN
007	Interviewer Name		INTC
008	Interviewer Code	[__ __ __] code	NAME

009	Date of Interview Completed (day/month/year)	/ / /	DATE
010	Start Time	[__ __ __]	STIME
011	Researcher/Supervisor Name		SNAME
012	Researcher/Supervisor Code	[__ __ __] code	SCODE

Checked by Researcher/Supervisor: Signature_____ Date: _____

013	Response status	Complete	1	DECOD
		Refusal (did not want to partake)	2	
		Refusal (other reasons)	3	

Comments

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Enumerator please ask to speak to the head of the household. If head is not available please ask to speak to the spouse or the next person who makes decisions when head of household is not there. If no suitable respondent is available please ask your supervisor for a replacement.

Enumerator: Tell respondent that you will begin by asking some basic questions about the respondent. Circle the response where codes are provided.

No.	Questions	Coding Categories	
101	Cell phone number of the respondent (<i>Enumerator: record the best phone number at which to reach the main respondent</i>)		CELL
102	Record sex of respondent	Female 1 Male 2	SEX
103	How old were you at your last birthday?	[]	AGE
104	What is your current marital status?	Never married 1 Married 2 Divorced/ separated 3 Widowed 4 Other: _____ 5	MSTAT
105	What is your highest education that you have completed?	No formal education 1 Lower primary (Grade 1-4) 2 Upper primary (Grade 5-7) 3 Junior Secondary (Grade 8-9) 4 Senior Secondary (Grade 10-12) 5 College/Certificate 6 University 7	EDUC
106	What is your Employment Status?	Employed - public 1 Employed – private 2 Self Employed – Business 3 Not in formal employment 4	

107	What is your source of energy for cooking?	ZESCO grid	1	
		Other sources	2	

SECTION 3: ACCESS TO & USE OF INTERNET

108. How do you access the Internet?

- a) Mobile Telephone
- b) Using a dongle/modem
- c) Internet Café
- d) Wifi
- e) Other (Specify)

.....

109. Where do you access the internet from?

- a) Office computer
- b) Home computer
- c) Mobile phone
- d) Tablet

110. How many mobile phone networks do you access?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) More than three

111. How often do you access internet in a week.

- a) Every day (seven days a week)
- b) Six days a week
- c) Five days a week

- d) Four days a week
- e) Three days a week
- f) Two days a week
- g) One day (once) a week

112. On a typical day, how many times do you access the internet?

- a) Once
- b) Twice
- c) Three times
- d) More than three times

113. For each of the following services (in table below) indicate if it is a factor hindering your access to Internet.

Service	Rating				
	Big challenge	Problem	Just Okay	Very Okay	NA
Cost of smart phones					
Cost of bundles					
Internet connectivity					
Internet speed					
Frequent internet Interruptions due to power cuts					
Quality my mobile phone					
Poor technological infrastructure					
Lack of electricity to charge phone					

Other internet challenges
 (specify).....

112. How do you rate your skills in using the Internet?

- a) Very good
- b) Good
- c) Moderate
- d) Poor
- e) Very poor

SECTION 4: ACCESS TO MEDIA & ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

113. For each of the following news medium (in table below) please indicate to me which ones you access and how often in a week you get sources of news and/or information.

News Medium	How often get news				
	Every day	Five days a week	Three days	Once a week	NA (does not read)
Radio					
Television					
Newspapers (print)					
Newspapers (online)					
Facebook					
Twitter					
Other sources (Specify)					
.....					
.....					

114. For each of the following news medium (in table below) please indicate to me which ones you regularly go to for BREAKING NEWS.

News Medium	How often get news				
	All the time	sometim es	Rarely	Never	NA (does not get)
Radio					
Television					
Newspapers (print)					
Newspapers (online)					
Facebook					
Twitter					
Other sources (Specify)					

115. For each of the following Online Newspapers (in table below) please indicate to me which one/s are known to you and how often you turn to it.

Service	Knowledge	Frequency of Reading			
		Daily	Most days of week	Few days of week	NA (does not get)
	1 = Known to Candidate 0 =Not known				
Kitwe Times					
Livingstone Times					
Lusaka Times					
Lusaka Voice					
Mwebantu					
Ndola Times					
Tumfweko					
The Independent Observer					
Zambian Eye					
Zambian Eagle					
Zambian Intelligence News					
Zambia Reports					
Zambian Watchdog					
Zambian Informer					
Zambian Accurate & Balanced News					
Zambian News 24					
Other sources (Specify)					
.....					

.....					
Not Applicable – Does not read any online newspaper.					

Instruction: Interviewer Probe further if respondent does not indeed read any Zambian online newspaper. If s/he does not END INTERVIEW. Thank him or her for participation.

PART TWO – ONLY FOR RESPONDENTS WHO ACCESS AND READ AT LEAST ONE ONLINE NEWSPAPER

116. How did you know about the Online Newspaper/s known to you? (Tick all that apply).

- a) Searching through the internet
- b) List from the government
- c) Through Friends
- d) Involved in setting up the newspaper
- e) Links from facebook
- f) Links from tweeter
- g) Others (specify).....

117. Out of the online newspapers that you access, which one/s is your favorite online newspaper? Indicate your favourite three (1 being the most favoured)

1.....

2.....

3.....

.....

118. Why is it your favorite online newspaper?

.....

.....

SECTION 5: READERSHIP OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS – MOTIVATIONS, FREQUENCY & SATISFACTIONS

119. The table below has list of reasons other readers before have given for turning to online newspapers. Indicate the importance you attach to each of them.

Characteristics	Rating				
	Very important	Important	Not important	Neutral	Not Sure
Breaking news					
More independent news					
Credibility of the news					
Updates with latest news					
Uncensored news					
To gather views of other readers					
To share my views					
Attractive features of online media					
Because I have internet access					
Because it is cheaper than print newspapers					
For adverts					
Other (specify).....					

120. The table below has a list on interactive features of online newspapers. For each indicate the frequency you use.

Characteristics of Online Newspapers	Frequency of use				
	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never	Not Sure
Interactive features - Options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories.					
Hyper-textuality - ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks.					
Multi-mediality – mix of media formats best tell a certain story (e.g YouTube,).					

121. The table below has a list on interactive features of online newspapers. Indicate the importance you attach to each of them.

Characteristics of Online Newspapers	Rating				
	Very important	Important	Not important	Neutral	Not Sure
Interactive features - Options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories.					
Hyper-textuality - ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks.					
Multi-mediality – mix of media formats best tell a certain story (e.g YouTube,).					

122. If in the table above you rated **INTERACTIVITY** as important, indicate in table below: 1. How often you use each feature; 2. Importance you attach to the specific features; and 3. Also indicate how satisfied you are with using each of the features.(Rank 0 to 5 (0 being not applicable; 5 highest ranking on each of the three)).

Interactive Feature Type			
Human/Medium Interactive Features/ Sending information	Frequency of use	Importance attach	Level of satisfaction
Post stories			
Submit photos			
Submit news tips			
Send e-mail to editors			
Send letters-to-editor			
Email link to writer of article			
Link to the publishers			
Other uses (Specify)			
Human Interactive Features/Exchange			
Post own comments on stories			
Know what other readers think about the issue			
Engage other readers in debate			
Post my views on a subject			
Share my political views			
Chat with other users			
Chat on FaceBook of website			
Chat on Twitter of website			

Question & Answer links			
Other uses (Specify)			
Other uses (Specify)			

123. If in the table above you rated **MULTI-MEDIALITY** as important, indicate in table below: 1. How often you use each feature; 2. Importance you attach to the specific features; and 3. Also indicate how satisfied you are with using each of the features. (Rank 0 to 5 (0 being not applicable; 5 highest ranking on each of the three)).

Medium Interactive Features			
Information seeking orientation	Frequency of use	Importance attach	Level of satisfaction
YouTube			
Live TV broadcast streaming			
Radio streaming			
Video files			
Informational Adverts/Stories on numerous topics from other sites (e.g. health tips; snoring solutions, how other people got rich, etc.			
Audio (recorded files)			
Other uses (Specify)			
Other uses (Specify)			

124. If in the table above you rated **HYPER-TEXTUALITY** as important, indicate in table below: 1. How often you use each feature; 2. Importance you attach to the specific features; and 3. Also indicate how satisfied you are with using each of the features (Rank 0 to 5 (0 being not applicable; 5 highest ranking on each of the three)).

Medium/Human Interactive Features			
Personalisation orientation	Frequency of use	Importance attach	Level of satisfaction
Ability to navigate to Facebook			
Ability to navigate to Twitter			
Ability to navigate to other websites			
Ability to access adverts			
Ability to access other documents (e.g. constitution, election results)			
Ability to access other pages and archive desk			
Ability to avail statistics on bloggers (post readership)			
Other uses (Specify)			
Other uses (Specify)			
Not applicable.			

125. The table below contains features of online newspapers that gives the reader an opportunity to receive personalised information. For each indicate: 1. How often you use each feature; 2. Importance you attach to the specific features; and 3. Also indicate how satisfied you are with using each of the features.(Rank 0 to 5 (0 being not applicable; 5 highest ranking on each of the three)).

<i>Medium/Human Interactive Features</i>			
Personalisation orientation	Frequency of use	Importance attach	Level of satisfaction
Receive weather information			
Receive customized topics/headlines			
Receive customized headlines			
Receive community information			
Receive calendar of events			
Greeted by site			
Search feature			
E-mail updates/alerts			
Other uses (Specify)			
Other uses (Specify)			

126. The table below contains features that online newspaper publishers use to gather information from readers. For each indicate: 1. How often you use each feature; 2. Importance you attach to the specific features; and 3. Also indicate how satisfied you are with using each of the features.(Rank 0 to 5 (0 being not applicable; 5 highest ranking on each of the three)).

Medium/Human Interactive Features			
Information collection by publishers	Frequency of use	Importance attach	Level of satisfaction
Advertising information			
Licensing information			
Contacting the publishers			
Applying for job from publishers			
Fill in Subscription form			
Participate in Opinion Polls			
Log-in information			
Other uses (Specify)			
Other uses (Specify)			

127. The table below contains a list of personal BENEFITS other people turn to media in general for. Please RANK 1 to 5 (5 being highest ranking) which of the BENEFITS you turn to online newspapers for. Also indicate the level of satisfaction you got in the last six months for each of the anticipated benefits (again 1 being lowest and 5 highest).

Anticipated benefits	Rank in importance among the 5	Level of satisfaction
<i>Cognitive Needs:</i> associated with strengthening information, knowledge and <i>understanding</i>		
<i>Affective Needs:</i> strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experiences and feelings.		
<i>Personal Integrative Needs:</i> strengthening credibility, stability, confidence and status.		
<i>Social Integrative Needs:</i> strengthening contacts with family, friends and the world		
<i>Tension Release Needs:</i> related to escape and diversion.		

SECTION 6: RELEVANCE OF CONTENT OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

128. The table below has a list on REASONS or type of information other people read online newspapers for. Also indicate the frequency you read each of them for.

News Medium	How often get news				
	All the time	sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA (does not get)
Politics And Current Affairs					
Business					
Sport					
Arts					
Education					
Health					
Gossip About Public Figures					
Entertainment					
Shopping					
Lifestyle					
Hobbies					
Adverts					
Other sources (Specify)					
.....					
.....					

129. The table below has a list on REASONS or type of GENERAL information other people read online newspapers for. For each indicate how satisfied you are with the information you get on it.

News Medium	How satisfied				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Very dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	NA (does not get)
Politics And Current Affairs					
Business					
Sport					
Arts					
Education					
Health					
Gossip About Public Figures					
Entertainment					
Shopping					
Lifestyle					
Hobbies					
Adverts					
Other sources (Specify)					

130. The table below contains a list of statements about your level of satisfaction of the DEVELOPMENT information that your get from online newspapers. The type of information is supposed to better your life in a number of ways. For each statement please indicate your level of satisfaction.

Type of Information	Level of satisfaction				
	Very true	True	Not Sure	Not true	NA (does not get)
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in POLITICS & GOVERNANCE.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in HIV & AIDS.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in AGRICULTURE.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in CLIMATE CHANGE.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in GENDER.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in NUTRITION.					
Online newspapers satisfy my information needs in BUSINESS & FINANCE.					
Other sources (Specify)					

SECTION 7: INFLUENCE OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

131. Online newspapers have played a role in influencing ME to make up my mind on who to vote for?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

132. Online newspapers have helped understand the politics of our country.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

133. Online newspapers have influenced ME to consider buying products advertised on them.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

134. Online newspapers have helped ME to search for a job to apply for.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

135. Online newspapers have played a role in making ME understand what's going on around places where I am not physically there – in my country and globally.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

136. Online newspapers have played a role in making ME understand what other people are thinking about an issue and to shape my own thoughts.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

137. Online newspapers have played a role in making ME interact with other people, some of whom I don't even know.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

138. The features of online newspapers have played a role in enhancing my own skills to interact on the computer and in new areas of internet interactivity generally.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree

- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

SECTION 8: TRUST, CONFIDENCE IN & CREDIBILITY OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

The following section is intended to establish how much you trust the online newspapers as sources of news and information.

139. I have personal TRUST in online newspapers as sources of information.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

140. Online newspapers are CREDIBLE sources of information.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....
.....

141. Online newspapers are RELIABLE sources of information.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....
.....

142. Online newspapers provide BALANCED coverage of the opposition and the government of the day.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- g) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....
.....

143. Online newspapers provide FAIR coverage of the opposition and the government of the day.

- f) Strongly agree
- g) Agree
- h) Disagree
- i) Strongly disagree

- j) Neutral
- k) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

144. Online newspapers provide TRUTHFUL coverage of the opposition and the government of the day.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

145. Online newspapers EXAGGERATE the coverage of news.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- f) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

146. Online newspapers carry out INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM to provide readers additional information.

- a) Strongly agree

- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- g) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

147. On-line newspapers use ACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE in the coverage of news.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not Sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....

.....

148. Online newspapers provide news sources a chance to state their side of the story.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not Sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....
.....

149. Overall, I am satisfied with the online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not Sure

150. Overall, I am influenced by the online newspapers regardless of their perceived credibility.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not Sure

151. If they are different versions of the same story on national ZNBC TV, ZNBC Radio or print newspapers, I would stick with the version of the online newspapers.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- h) Not sure

What is the reason for your answer? (Please expand if you wish)

.....
.....

152. Reading an online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down my need to read a **print newspaper**.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- i) Not sure

153. Reading an online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down my need to watch news on **Television.**

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- j) Not sure

154. Reading an online newspapers (not the version of a print newspaper) slows down my need to watch news on **Radio.**

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Neutral
- k) Not sure

155. The table below contains a list of standards or habits expected of the professional media against the type of media in this country (enumerator explain types provided). For each value please indicate which of the media types satisfies it (the standard or habit).

Media Standard or Habit	Media Type				
	Govt Print Newspapers	Govt TV	Private TV & Radio	Private Print Newspapers	Online Newspapers
Truthfulness					
Balance (<i>giving both Ruling Party & opposition voices</i>)					
Factual					
Fairness (giving all sides of story)					
Accuracy					
Reliable					
Believable					
Using decent language					
Giving apology when wrong					
Plagiarism					
Vendetta					
Giving ordinary people voice					

SECTION 9: VIEWS ON IMPACT OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS ON TRADITIONAL MEDIA

156. Would you like to see the emergence of more online newspapers in the country?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

157. Have you ever been faced with a situation where you had choose to get news or information from an online newspaper instead of a traditional newspaper?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

158. If your answer to Question 149 is “Yes”, what factor/s made you decide to turn to online instead of traditional print newspapers? (Tick all that applies)

- a) Cost of print newspapers
- b) News and information value
- c) Up to date news
- d) Trust and confidence
- l) Not sure
- m) Other reasons (specify).....
- n) NA – Never made such a choice

SECTION 10: VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT TREATMENT OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

159. The Government of Zambia should control the online newspapers.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not sure

160. I know the owners of these online newspapers.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not sure

161. I know the offices of my favourite online newspapers and I can easily interact with the staff.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not sure

162. Members of the public 'injured' by these online newspapers can easily take legal action.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not sure

160. Just for the sake of the study, who do you support politically?

- a) The Ruling party
- b) An Opposition party
- c) Did not vote

Thank you for participating in this interview!

Interview End Time (24 hour time): [____|____|]

I have come to the end of my questions. Is there anything you would like to add or ask us?