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Assessing the Effectiveness of Social Media in Journalism Practice: A Case Study of Television Journalism in Lusaka

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Abstract

This study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of social media in television journalism, focusing on television stations in Lusaka. Spurred by rapid influence of social media on traditional news industry, the study anchored on media ecology theory aimed to explore the challenges and opportunities posed by digital revolution. The findings revealed that social media is a highly effective tool in television journalism, supporting real-time reporting, investigative research, audience engagement, and the ability to handle sensitive content responsibly. It also demonstrated

that Social media allows television journalists to interact with their audiences, gather and verify information, and enhance the impact of their stories through extended reach and feedback. The thesis findings divulge significant changes in news dissemination practices, highlighting both the benefits and drawbacks of social media integration helping media practitioners on strategies to enhance journalistic standards and foster media literacy in an increasingly digital media landscape.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Journalism Practice, Lusaka, Social Media, Television Journalism, Zambia

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The integration of social media platforms into journalism practice has fundamentally altered the landscape of news dissemination, particularly within the television sector. This paper examines the effectiveness of social media in journalism practice, focusing on television stations in Lusaka. It explores key concepts, global and local contexts, policy issues, conventions, perspectives, arguments, historical developments, developments in the area of study, effects of the phenomenon, and consequences. The media landscape in Zambia has experienced significant transformations with the advent of social media, which has introduced new dynamics to journalism practice, particularly in urban centers like Lusaka. Zambia's media system includes public broadcasters like the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) and private outlets such as Muvi TV and Diamond TV. Historically, television journalism in Zambia operated under state-controlled frameworks with limited independent scrutiny. However, the liberalization of the media sector allowed private players to emerge, diversifying news production and delivery Mambwe (2013) ^[20]. Over the years, various studies have highlighted these benefits. They include the reduction in news production processes, reduced investment in distribution, enabled multi platform delivery and online presence for media houses, altered business models to ones that are more efficient and leaner, and led to innovations in media, among others Bukowa (2012) ^[4]. All these changes are observable in countries across the world, including Zambia. In a study to investigate the level of use, scope and impact of the internet on journalism in Zambia, Mambwe (2013) ^[20] concluded that the internet has had a positive impact on journalism practice and has brought about significant changes in the profession and media or news industry. By extension, social media have further enhanced these impacts in even more extensive and unprecedented ways.

The media in Zambia has increasingly become more diversified since 1991 Makungu (2004). Previously, it was mostly state-run, with a few church-run outlets. Generally, the media are regarded as a vital part of Zambian society. Access to Internet in Zambia began in November 1994, when the country became the fifth African country to gain full access to Internet Mambwe (2013) ^[20]. By 2021, Zambia had 10,357,442 mobile internet subscribers, out of a population of 18.4 million people ZICTA (2021). Various commentators have attributed this to the implementation of technologies such as 3G or 4G, the increased

access to cheap internet-enabled mobile phones, and the roll out of optic-fibre networks as the cause of the elevated levels on mobile penetration Manchishi *et al* (2023) ^[21].

Rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including internet and smartphone penetration, have reshaped how news is produced and consumed. The Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) reports substantial increases in mobile internet users, reflecting widespread adoption of digital platforms for communication and information. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become integral to Zambian journalism. These platforms allowed journalists to access real-time information, engage with audiences, and distribute content widely.

According to Wanda and Gondwe (2021) ^[28] the rise of social media provided alternative voices outside traditional media channels, challenging the dominance of state broadcasters. Zambian journalists now often rely on user-generated content and social media trends to shape news narratives, a shift that reflects broader global media patterns. In Lusaka, television stations such as Diamond TV have embraced social media as an extension of their news delivery. Perspectives on the role of television journalism have evolved, with some embracing social media as a tool for audience engagement, while others perceive it as a threat to journalistic integrity. Debates have ensued regarding the reliability of information disseminated through social media platforms compared to traditional journalistic standards Bruns (2018) ^[3]. The need for speed can compromise accuracy, leading to the dissemination of unverified information. Furthermore, the economic model of television journalism faces disruption as advertisers shift to digital platforms, impacting revenue streams. Historically, television journalism in Lusaka has transitioned from being state-controlled to a more diverse and dynamic landscape, with social media further reshaping the industry.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Social media integration into television journalism practice in Lusaka poses significant challenges, as evidenced by empirical data and local statistics. Despite the rapid expansion of social media usage globally, the implications for journalistic integrity and audience trust remain under-explored within the Zambian context. Local statistics from the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) reveal a substantial increase in social media consumption alongside traditional television news viewing. According to a recent survey conducted by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia, 75% of Zambian household's access news content through social media platforms, highlighting the growing influence of digital media in shaping public opinion. Moreover, empirical studies conducted within the Lusaka region underscore the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms. Research by the University of Zambia Media Studies Department found that 60% of sampled social media news stories lacked credible sources or verification, contributing to a climate of uncertainty and distrust among viewers. The existing gap lies in the lack of comprehensive research examining the impact of social media integration on television journalism practices in Lusaka. While studies from other contexts offer valuable insights, the unique socio-political landscape of Zambia

necessitates localized investigation. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with social media integration in Lusaka television journalism. By examining current practices, policy frameworks, and audience perceptions, this research aims to inform industry stakeholders, policymakers, and media practitioners on strategies to enhance journalistic standards and foster media literacy. In light of the escalating influence of social media on public discourse and information dissemination, a thorough investigation into its impact on television journalism in Lusaka is imperative. By bridging this gap in knowledge, this study aims to empower stakeholders to navigate the evolving media landscape responsibly and effectively.

1.3 Objectives

1. To investigate the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism.
2. To assess the effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists, audience and news sources to access diverse perspectives.
3. To ascertain the effectiveness of social media in live reporting and streaming.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How effective is social media in promoting investigative journalism?
2. How effective is social media in facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists, audience and news sources to access diverse perspectives?
3. What is the effectiveness of social media in live reporting and streaming?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Marshall McLuhan provides a framework for understanding how media environments shape human perception, behaviour, and societal dynamics. In the context of researching the effectiveness of social media in television journalism in Lusaka, Zambia, Media Ecology Theory offers insights into the interplay between traditional broadcasting methods and the emerging landscape of social media platforms. McLuhan (1964) ^[22]. According to McLuhan, the medium itself shapes and influences the message being communicated. In the context of this research, the theory gave insight on how the constraints of social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) influence the types of content produced by television journalists in Lusaka. The theory helped to examine how these platforms shape audience engagement and interaction with news content.

In Lusaka, the introduction of social media platforms alongside traditional broadcasting methods has created a new media ecosystem. McLuhan (1964) ^[22] famously described the world as a global village interconnected by electronic media. In Lusaka, social media platforms have expanded the reach of television journalism beyond traditional geographic boundaries, allowing for instantaneous communication and interaction with audiences both locally and globally (Castells, 2010) ^[6]. Researchers can investigate how these interconnections have impacted the dissemination of news, audience participation, and the construction of collective narratives within the Zambian

context (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) ^[12].

By applying Media Ecology Theory to this research, a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between traditional broadcasting methods and the evolving landscape of social media platforms in television journalism in Lusaka was gained. This theoretical lens enabled the study to explore how changes in media environments shape journalistic practices, audience engagement, and the broader sociocultural context of news consumption.

2. Literature Review

The literature review navigated the effectiveness of social media in journalism practice structured three different themes. Date was explored from different perspectives which assisted in giving clear insight on the study and giving highlights on the existing gaps.

The first theme was structured on assessing the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism, were similar studies were conducted by Hermida (2010) ^[17] which was to examine how Twitter impacts journalism. This study used Ambient Journalism theory to explain how social media enables the public to consume news in an ongoing stream. Purposive sampling of tweets related to news from prominent media accounts was employed. The study revealed that Twitter allowed a form of journalism that was always on influencing news coverage by making it more immediate and interactive, but it could also compromise depth due to the platform's brevity.

Banda and Kayenga (2016) ^[1] examined the role of social media in investigative journalism: A case of Zambian online journalists. Simple random sampling of Zambian online journalists was employed in the study. He found that social media served as a valuable tool for investigative journalists in Zambia, particularly in highlighting corruption and social issues. However, limitations such as government censorship and restricted internet access reduce its overall effectiveness.

The second theme was ascertaining the effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists, news sources and audience to access diverse perspectives where a global and local perspective were reviewed. Schmidt (2014) conducted a study to investigate how new media facilitates networking and collaboration among journalists on a global scale. Systematic sampling of new media from prominent journalists and public figures related to specific news topics was employed. The study revealed that new media promoted cross-border collaboration, enabling journalists to engage the public. However, the brevity of news limited in-depth discussion, and there was a risk of misinformation spreading within these networks.

Chama and Banda (2017) ^[8] assessed Zambian journalists and audience interactions, *Journal of African Media Studies*. The study employed simple random sampling of journalists and social media users from major cities in Zambia. It revealed that Social media is instrumental in broadening access to diverse perspectives, especially on social issues and political news. However, government oversight and occasional internet restrictions challenge journalists' ability to fully engage with diverse audiences online.

The last theme investigated the effectiveness of social media in live reporting and streaming. Newman (2011) examined how social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook influence live reporting in real-time news events globally.

The study was anchored on media convergence theory which explained the blending of traditional and digital media in reporting and distribution. Case study analysis of major global events, including the Arab Spring, where social media played a key role in live reporting. Selective sampling of social media posts and news reports from multiple events to assess the role of social platforms was employed. Newman found that social media was highly effective for real-time reporting, enabling fast information dissemination. Phiri and Tembo (2018) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of social media in facilitating live reporting and information dissemination during Zambian political events. Stratified random sampling of journalists and citizen reporters from urban and rural areas was employed. The study revealed that social media was effective for live reporting in Zambia, especially during elections, as it offered a quick way for citizens to share information.

3. Research Methodology

The study addressed gaps identified in the literature by detailing the research methodology. This included the research design, target population, study area, sample size determination, data collection methods, data analysis, triangulation, and limitations. Ethical considerations, reliability, and validity testing were also highlighted.

3.1 Research design

The research design employed in this study was a mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of social media on television journalism in Lusaka (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) ^[11, 18]. This approach allowed for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings (Patton, 1999) ^[23].

3.2 Rationale for Methodology

A mixed-method approach, as defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) ^[11], integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods to address complex research questions effectively. This approach enabled the examination of both quantitative trends and qualitative insights,

3.3 Target population

The population for this study comprised residents of Lusaka District across different television stations. To ensure representation, convenient sampling was employed to reduce costs and gather available data (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Creswell, 2014) ^[14, 10]. Providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) ^[26, 18].

3.4 Sampling design

Data for this study was collected using a questionnaire survey through convenient sampling, a non-probability method often chosen for its cost-effectiveness, simplicity, and time efficiency. This approach involves selecting participants who are readily available in a specific location (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Creswell, 2014) ^[14, 10].

3.5 Data collection method

A structured survey among television journalists was conducted to assess the effectiveness of social media in

journalism practice. The survey utilized a representative sample size of 50 journalists to ensure the generalization of results (Creswell, 2014) [10]. Data was collected using a questionnaire survey conducted through convenient sampling, a method chosen for its practicality and efficiency (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016) [14]. Questionnaires were distributed online and in person to nearby television journalists, employing closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data (Fink, 2015) [15].

3.6 Content Analysis

A systematic analysis sample of television news broadcasts from major stations in Lusaka was carried out to identify the extent and nature of social media integration. This included examining the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism, facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists, serving as news sources and reflecting audience perspectives, and supporting live streaming and reporting (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018) [10, 30].

3.7 Data analysis

A systematic analysis of television news broadcasts from major stations in Lusaka examined the extent and nature of social media integration, focusing on its effectiveness in investigative journalism, networking among journalists, audience perspectives, and live streaming. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel and analyzed using STATA for quantitative analysis, employing descriptive and inferential statistics (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018) [10, 30].

3.8 Triangulation

Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to provide comprehensive insights, emphasizing convergences and discrepancies across sources. The mixed-methods approach ensured a thorough investigation into the effectiveness of social media in television journalism in Lusaka, contributing to both scholarly research and industry practice. Triangulating data from surveys, content analysis, interviews, and focus groups enhanced validity and reliability, minimized bias, and supported robust conclusions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Patton, 1999) [11, 23].

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 presentation of results based on background characteristics of results

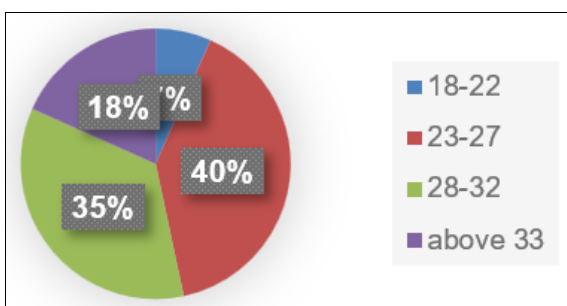


Fig 1: Age

According to the results in figure 1, 40% (20 out of 50) of the respondents were aged between 23 to 27, 35% (17.5 out of 50) were aged between 28-32, 18% (9 out of 50) were aged above 30 and 7% (3.5 out of 50) were 18-22 out of the 50 respondents that participated in this study.

Participants were asked to indicate what department they operate under and these were the results.

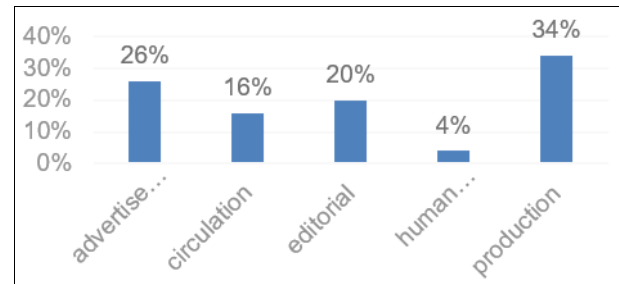


Fig 2: Department

According to the histogram, 50 respondents were interviewed, and it was found that 26% (12 out of 50) worked under advertisement, circulation department had 16% (8 out of 50), 20% (10 out of 50) worked under editorial department, 4% (2 out of 50) worked under human resource and 34% (17 out of 50) worked from production.

4.2 Presentation of findings based on the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism

Respondents were asked what investigative tools they find effective for researching and news gathering, their responses are summarized below;

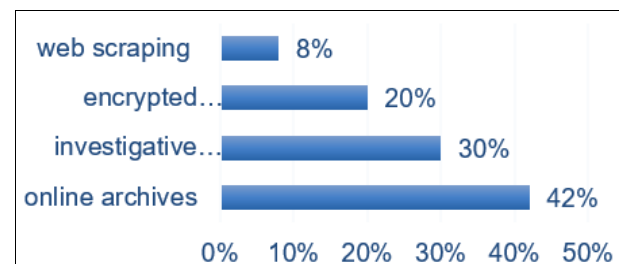


Fig 3: Investigative tools

From the histogram, it was found that out of 50, 8% (4 out of 50) found web scraping as an effective tool for researching and gathering information, 20% (10 out of 50) preferred encrypted communication, 30% (15 out of 50) used investigative journalism tools and 42% (12 out of 50) used online archives.

Participants were asked to state what matters they report on and these were the findings;

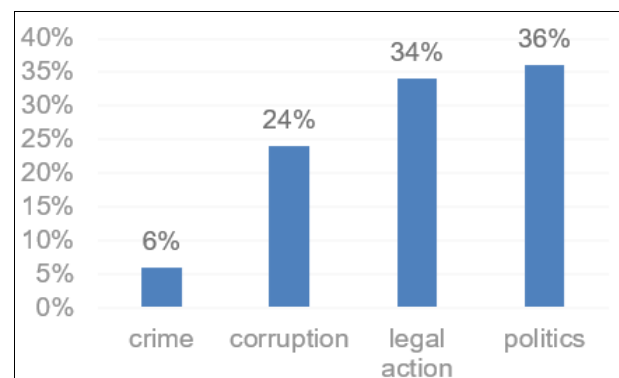


Fig 4: Matters investigated

Out of 50 participants that took part in the research 6% (3 out of 50) investigated on crime, 24% (12 out of 50)

investigated on corruption, 34% (17 out of 50) investigated on legal action and 36% (18 out of 50) investigated on politics.

Participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism and these were their responses;

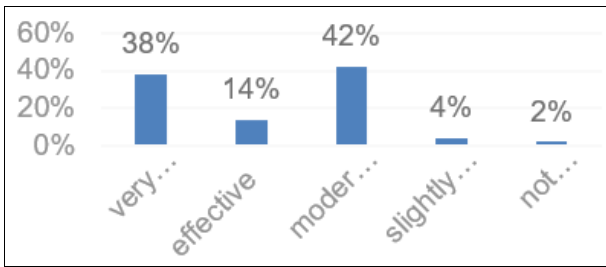


Fig 5: The effectiveness of social media in promotion investigative journalism

Out of 50 participants that took part, in the study 38% (9 out of 50) evaluated the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism to be very effective, 14% (7 out of 50) evaluated it to be effective, 42% (21 out of 50) evaluated it to be moderate, 4% (2 out of 50) evaluated it to be slightly and 2% (1 out of 50) evaluated it to not to be effective.

4.3 presentation of findings based on the effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists audience and news sources to access diverse perspectives

Participants were asked to state how they protect their sources especially when working with sensitive information and their responses were;

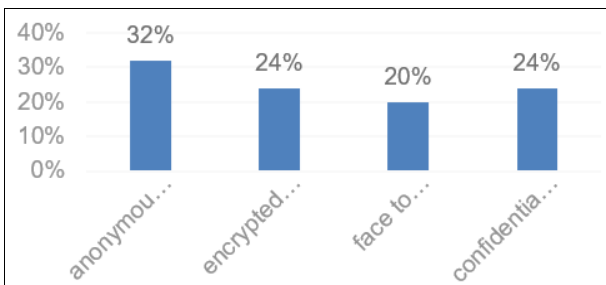


Fig 6: Source protection

Out of 50 participants of this questionnaire, 32% (16 out of 50) stated that they used anonymous submission tools, while 24%(12 out of 50) stated that they used encrypted communication, 20%(10 out of 50) used face to face meetings and 24%(12 out of 50) used confidentiality.

Participants were asked to state how they align their reporting with other journalists and ensure consistency and the following were their responses;

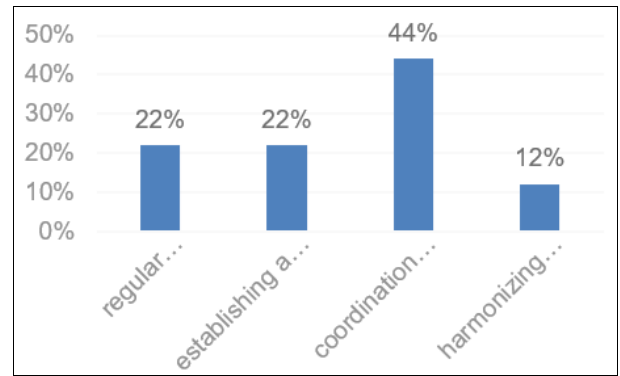


Fig 7: Ensuring consistency in journalists reporting

From the 50 participants that were interviewed, 22% (11 out of 50) stated that they align with regular communication meetings, 22% (11 out of 50) stated that they align their reporting with other journalists and ensure consistency through establishing a shared editorial vision, 44% (22 out of 50) through coordinating fact checking and verification and 12% (6 out of 50) through harmonizing timelines.

Participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking and collaboration and these were their responses;

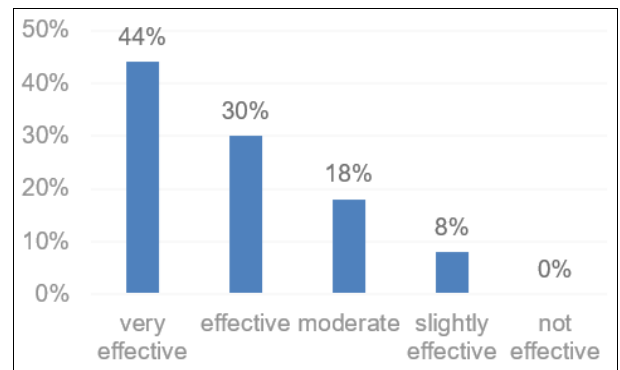


Fig 8: Effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking and collaboration

From the 50 participants that participated 44% (22 out of 50), evaluated the effectiveness of social media in facilitating networking as very effective, 30% (15 out of 50) stated that it is effective, 18% (9 out of 50) found it moderate and 8% (4 out of 50) stated that it is slightly effective.

4.4 Presentation of findings based on the effectiveness of social media in live reporting and streaming

Participants were asked to state what stages they use to ensure live reports are timely and accurate while posting updates on social media and these were their findings;

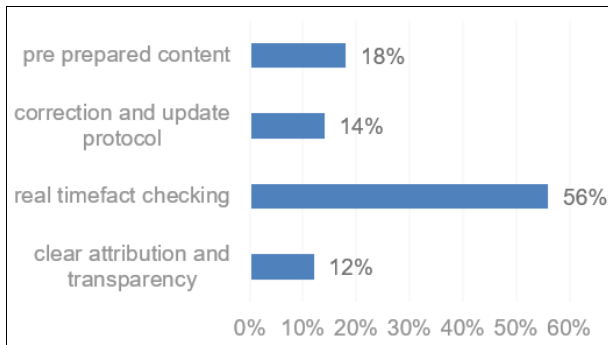


Fig 9: Stages in live reports while posting updates on social media

From the 50 participants that took part in the research, 18% that is 9 out of 50 use prepared content, 14% that is 7 out of 50 use correction and update protocol, 56% that is 28 out of 50 use real-time fact checking and 12% that is 6 out of 50 use clear attribution and transparency.

Participants were asked to state stories they find live streaming to be most efficient and these were the findings;

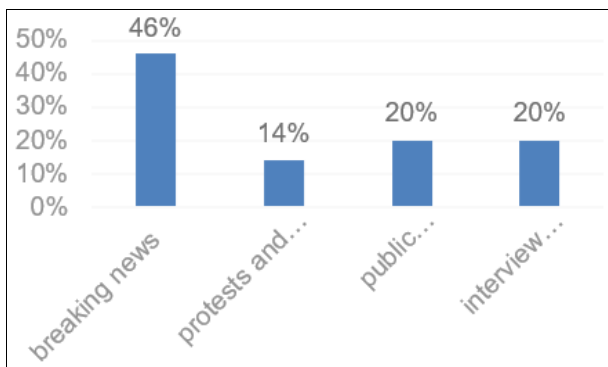


Fig 10: Types of stories during live streaming

Out of 50 participants that undertook the study, 46% that is 23 out of 50 stated that breaking news are stories that they find to be most efficient, 14% that is 7 out of 50 stated that protests and social media are the most efficient, 20% that is 10 out of 50 stated that public speeches and conferences are the most efficient and 20% that is 10 out of 50 stated that interview programme are the most efficient.

Participants were asked to state how they handle the potential spread of misinformation on social media platforms and these were their responses;

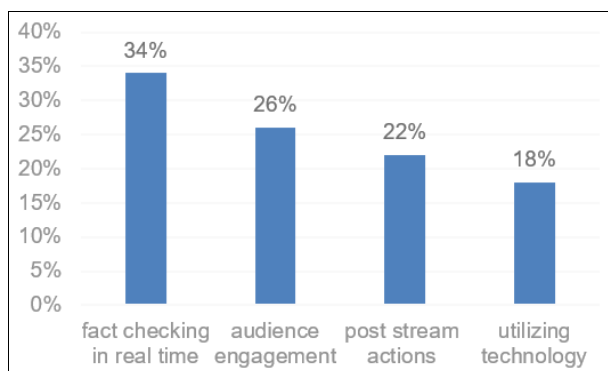


Fig 11: Potential spread of misinformation during reporting on social media platforms

Out of 50 participants interviewed on this topic, 34%, that is 17 out of 50 preferred fact checking in real time, 26%, that

is 13 out of 50 preferred audience engagements, 22%, that is 11 out of 50 preferred post stream actions and 18%, that 9 out of 50 preferred utilizing technology.

Participants were asked to evaluate the effective of social media in live reporting and steaming and these were their responses;

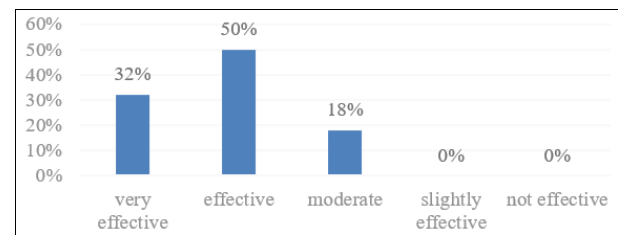


Fig 12: Social Media in Live Reporting and Streaming

The histogram above represents participant’s satisfaction levels for the effective of social media in live reporting and streaming. From the 50 respondents that participated in the research 32% that is 16 out of 50 found the effectiveness of social media in live streaming very effective, while 50% that is 25 out of 50 found the indicator effective, 18% that is 9 out of 50 stated that it was moderate.

4.5 Discussion of research findings

The age demographics revealed that 40% of respondents are aged 23 to 27, 35% between 28 to 32, 18% above 30, and 7% are aged 18 to 22. This youthful demographic is indicative of a generation that has grown up with social media, which can impact their comfort and proficiency in using these platforms for journalistic purposes. Younger journalists tend to be more adept at utilizing social media for news gathering and dissemination, reflecting a shift in how news is reported and consumed Powers & Verweij (2019) [24]. The predominance of younger journalists in this sample suggests a potentially greater effectiveness of social media in engaging audiences who prefer digital news consumption. The specialization of respondents showed that 34% work in production, 26% in advertisement, 20% in editorial, 16% in circulation, and 4% in human resources. This distribution indicates a strong emphasis on production, which is critical in the context of social media, as multimedia content often performs better on these platforms. The effectiveness of social media in journalism can be significantly attributed to the ability to produce engaging, shareable content that captures audience attention Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) [19]. Consequently, a workforce with a strong production background may enhance the overall effectiveness of social media strategies within the organizations represented in this study.

The survey results indicate a clear preference for certain tools among investigative journalists. 42% (21 out of 50) of respondents found online archives to be the most effective resource for researching and gathering information. This reflects the importance of accessing verified and historically rich data, which is crucial for credible journalism Bennett (2017) [2]. Following online archives, 30% (15 out of 50) used specialized investigative journalism tools, demonstrating a reliance on tailored resources that facilitate deep dives into specific subjects.

The questionnaire also explored the types of issues that participants investigate. A significant 36% (18 out of 50) reported focusing on political matters, followed closely by

34% (17 out of 50) investigating legal actions. Corruption and crime were less frequently addressed, with 24% (12 out of 50) and 6% (3 out of 50) respectively. This emphasis on political and legal issues underscores the role of investigative journalism in promoting accountability and transparency in governance, a function that social media can enhance by facilitating rapid information sharing and public engagement Waisbord (2018) ^[27].

Regarding the effectiveness of social media in promoting investigative journalism, 38% (19 out of 50) rated it as very effective, while 42% (21 out of 50) considered it moderate. This indicates a recognition of social media's potential to enhance visibility and public engagement, tempered by concerns about misinformation and audience fragmentation Sullivan (2018) ^[25].

The role of social media in journalism has grown significantly, offering new avenues for networking and collaboration among journalists, audiences, and news sources. Protecting sources remains a fundamental aspect of journalistic integrity, especially when dealing with sensitive information. In the questionnaire, 32% of participants (16 out of 50) reported using anonymous submission tools, highlighting a proactive approach to ensuring source confidentiality. Additionally, 24% (12 out of 50) utilized encrypted communication, while 20% (10 out of 50) preferred face-to-face meetings for sensitive discussions. The emphasis on confidentiality, which was noted by 24% (12 out of 50) of respondents, reflects the continuing need for trust and security in the journalist-source relationship Gade (2017) ^[16].

To maintain the credibility of reporting, it is vital for journalists to align their efforts. The questionnaire revealed that 44% (22 out of 50) of participants coordinated fact-checking and verification to ensure consistency in their work. This collaborative approach is crucial in an era of rapid information sharing, where misinformation can easily proliferate Bennett (2017) ^[2]. Furthermore, 22% (11 out of 50) indicated they aligned reporting through regular communication meetings and shared editorial visions, emphasizing the importance of sustained dialogue among journalists to maintain journalistic standards and coherence Deuze (2006) ^[13].

Ultimately, 44% (22 out of 50) rated social media as very effective in facilitating networking, while 30% (15 out of 50) found it effective. This indicates a strong belief in the potential of social media to enhance professional relationships and collaborative efforts among journalists.

Timeliness and accuracy are critical components of effective live reporting. According to the survey, 56% (28 out of 50) of participants prioritized real-time fact-checking as their primary strategy for maintaining accuracy while delivering live updates. This approach underscores the importance of verifying information before sharing, especially in fast-paced news environments where misinformation can spread rapidly Carlson (2018) ^[5].

Additionally, 18% (9 out of 50) relied on prepared content to facilitate quick updates, which is a common practice among journalists to ensure readiness for breaking news Chadwick (2017) ^[7]. The use of correction and update protocols was noted by 14% (7 out of 50) of respondents, emphasizing a commitment to transparency and accountability in journalism. Lastly, 12% (6 out of 50) focused on clear attribution and transparency, further

reinforcing the ethical standards necessary for maintaining audience trust Wardle & Derakhshan, (2017) ^[29].

The effectiveness of live streaming varies depending on the nature of the story being reported. The findings indicate that 46% (23 out of 50) of participants found breaking news to be the most suitable context for live streaming. This aligns with research that demonstrates the immediacy and urgency of breaking news as optimal for real-time engagement.

Moreover, 14% (7 out of 50) indicated that protests and social movements are effectively covered via live streaming, showcasing how social media can amplify voices and narratives often overlooked by traditional media. Similarly, 20% (10 out of 50) identified public speeches and conferences as suitable for live coverage, while another 20% (10 out of 50) cited interview programs as efficient for live streaming. These insights revealed a diverse range of applications for live streaming in journalism, reflecting its potential to engage audiences in real-time discussions.

The potential spread of misinformation during live reporting is a significant concern. The data revealed that 34% (17 out of 50) of participants prioritized real-time fact-checking to address this challenge. This strategy is crucial in combating the rapid dissemination of false information, particularly in the age of social media where accuracy is often compromised for speed.

Audience engagement was another preferred method, chosen by 26% (13 out of 50), illustrating the importance of interactive communication in clarifying facts and dispelling rumors. Together, these strategies highlight the proactive measures journalists can take to uphold credibility in an increasingly complex media landscape. Finally, 32% (16 out of 50) found social media's effectiveness in live reporting to be very effective, while 50% (25 out of 50) considered it effective, indicating a broad consensus on the platform's significance in contemporary journalism.

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of social media in journalism practice, it was important to conduct this study especially due to the current popularity of social media which has a huge impact on traditional journalism which is affecting traditional journalism. Due to this reason, it is necessary to investigate how journalists in the case television journalism can use social media alongside television media in their news sourcing, audience engagement, live streaming and reporting, investigative journalism, collaboration and networking among journalists among others.

This study was anchored on the media ecology theory. This theory offered insights into the interplay between traditional broadcasting methods and the emerging landscape of social media platforms. In the context of this research, one could analyse how the constraints of social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube) influence the types of content produced by television journalists in Lusaka. The theory made it easy to examine how these platforms shape audience engagement and interaction with news content. This study employed a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of social media on television journalism in Lusaka. This approach allowed for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings.

The findings demonstrated that social media is a highly effective tool in television journalism, supporting real-time reporting, investigative research, audience engagement, and the ability to handle sensitive content responsibly. Social media allows television journalists to interact with their audiences, gather and verify information, and enhance the impact of their stories through extended reach and feedback. In the realm of investigative journalism, television journalists have found social media instrumental for gathering information, accessing resources, and enhancing the visibility of in-depth reporting. The preference for online archives (42%) and specialized investigative tools (30%) underscores social media's value in offering comprehensive resources that facilitate the research-intensive nature of investigative reporting. Additionally, social media expands audience reach, which is vital for investigative stories on television that aim to inform and mobilize the public. By highlighting investigative stories on social media, journalists can extend the impact of their televised reports, driving public discourse on issues such as political and legal matters, which 70% of respondents indicated as focus areas. Social media has proven particularly effective in enhancing real-time reporting, a cornerstone of television journalism. With 56% of journalists prioritizing real-time fact-checking and 18% using prepared content, social media supports the immediacy required in television broadcasting. The ability to quickly fact-check and disseminate updates aligns with television journalism's need for speed and accuracy, making social media a valuable tool for live broadcasts that aim to engage audiences as events unfold. Additionally, 46% of journalists cited audience engagement as very effective, indicating that social media enhances interactivity beyond the screen, allowing audiences to react, ask questions, and participate in the news process.

This interactivity also enhances the traditional, often one-way, model of television news by fostering an ongoing conversation with viewers. Social media plays a critical role in facilitating networking and collaboration among journalists, audiences, and news sources. As journalists navigate this evolving landscape, leveraging social media effectively will be essential for accessing diverse perspectives and upholding the integrity of their work as social media plays a pivotal role in enhancing live reporting and streaming practices among journalists. However, challenges such as managing misinformation, navigating ethical considerations, and dealing with censorship mean that social media should be used as a complementary tool to traditional journalism practices. Overall, the results indicate that, despite certain limitations, social media significantly enhances the effectiveness of television journalism by making it more immediate, interactive, and responsive to the demands of a digital audience.

media more effectively to serve the public and enhance the impact of television journalism in Lusaka.

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