THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PRINT JOURNALISM:
A CASE STUDY OF THE STAR NEWSPAPER

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for degree award or anywhere else for academic purposes. No part of this project may be reproduced without prior permission of the author.

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Declaration by Supervisor

This research project paper has been submitted for examination for the award of master's degree in Communication Studies - Public Relations, to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi, with my approval as the university Supervisor.

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DR. SAMUEL SIRINGI   **DATE**

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my parents, and especially my dad George Kiguta, who closely monitored my studies when I was little to ensure I passed with flying colours. This is for you dad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of social media on print journalism, with a focus on *The Star*, a Kenyan daily newspaper owned by Radio Africa Group. The study investigated how the advent of new media namely Facebook, Twitter, among other platforms, has affected newspaper circulation, readership, style of reporting and the extent to which newsroom has been reorganised to respond to social media influx. The study is pegged on three objectives namely: to find out how social media has changed (or not changed) the style of reporting in *The Star,* to investigate the structural newsroom operations in the face of new media, and to compare new media's readership with print media. The study employed a qualitative approach and analysed resultant data thematically using *priori* and *posteriori* analyses. Observation and key informant interviews were used to generate data collection. Findings revealed that *The Star* newspaper's market share was declining due to competition from social media content. Lack of compelling articles, inability by some editors to adjust to the reality of the day, lack of innovative strategies of selling the paper were quoted as some of the factors that hinder the paper from reclaiming its market. The study found out that despite the challenges, *the Star* is coming up with new strategies of reaching a wider audience. The findings conclude that social media has affected the performance of print newspapers. Although the older generation of readers accustomed to print newspaper continue to buy the product, young people, who are the majority, rely on Facebook and Twitter for news, which has led to decline in newspaper circulation. Social media platforms thus pose challenges inasmuch as they complement print newspaper, raising concerns such as plagiarism. The study recommends that the Media Council of Kenya reins on plagiarism by lobbying for laws to curb the vice. It also recommends that *the Star* builds capacity of its staff to enable them to adapt to new emerging demands of social media, especially in content generation.

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INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter will cover the background of the study, provide discussions of the problem statement, and list general and specific objectives of the research. It will also include research questions, justification of the study, rationale, scope and limitations of the study. Operational terms used will also be enumerated.

1.1 Introduction and Background

The newspaper industry in general has recorded minimal profits. In the last one decade, a number of newspapers have folded, according to newspaperdeathwatch.com, mostly in the first world countries, which is a pointer to the threat facing print media globally. According to the site, one of the most resilient print versions, *The New York Times,* is facing financial constraints. The drop in print revenue has accelerated from nine per cent in 2016's first quarter to 19 per cent in the last quarter, Mathew Ingram writes. Advertising revenue of *The Times* is also on free fall. The *Wall Street Journal* also posted dismal financial results and announced plans to consolidate sections and trim its workforce.

In an article by Margaret Njuguna (2016) that was published by Capital Business on May 5, Florence Omami who lives in Nairobi says since she bought a smartphone she no longer needs a newspaper to update herself on the current affairs. Gregory Odidi said Sh60 for a copy of newspaper is too high if he can access the same information online.

The advertising dollars are not forthcoming due to the slowdown of economy as more and more people are not able to buy newspapers (Mahmud, 2009).

The uptake of new media has left traditional journalists struggling in a fast-paced media world. The preference being given to online publishing is undermining traditional journalism because the speed with which a story gets published is key, which denies journalists enough time to provide full details since the focus is on the number of hits a digital story gets. But cutting back on print reduces political participation even when people have access to online news (Schulhofer-Wohl and Garrido, 2013).

But as (Loechner 2010) points out, despite newspapers having a legacy of breaking news and uncovering stories of historic proportion, they are losing ground to a generation of consumers embracing digital and mobile alternatives. Some well-known news media names now have Twitter followers that are almost as large as the circulation of their newspapers or viewership of their TV shows (Farhi, 2009). As Haddow & Haddow (2013) points out, social media tools are powerful in guiding journalists in new methods of disseminating news because the tools enable convergence of video, audio and text. This has raised concern on whether social media as a source of news will replace print media in the near future. Daily newspapers will have smaller staffs doing more work and getting paid less. It is predicted that every city will have at least one print newspaper for the foreseeable future (Klein 2009).

Bloggers will probably want to focus on issues that matter to them even though the issues are not in the interest of the public. Also, even if they would like to be the main sources of information, they may not have the financial muscle that mainstream media has (Holtz 2009). Despite the social media revolution, conventional newspapers still have a place in society and cannot be wished away. Macharia (2016) writes the winners are not necessarily those with the highest hits, but those who produce unique, interesting content and have ways to monetise their ideas.

Social media is therefore the route back to a connection with the audience. And if people adopt technological tools such as Twitter and Facebook, it may add value to traditional journalism. The new journalism thus involves partnership. Only with trust and connection will a new business model emerge (Skoler, 2009). In this sense, the presence of online newspapers is not meant to destroy traditional print but to reinforce it.

The Star is a daily newspaper based in Nairobi, Kenya, a subsidiary of Radio Africa Group. It was launched in July 2007 as *Nairobi Star,* and rebranded *The Star* in 2009. *The Star'*s circulation was around 15-20,000 in 2010 (against a total Kenyan newspaper circulation in 2010 of about 320,000), compared to 5-8,000 in 2007.The paper first made profit in September 2009.

Early 2016, Radio Africa Group embraced convergence in response to new media revolution in a bid to increase profitability of its various businesses. Departments were merged, and reporters are now required to work for multiple platforms which include XFM, East FM, KISS radio, *The Star,*

Radio Jambo and KISS TV. In the process, a number of employees were retrenched, while others resigned because they felt they did not fit in the new newsroom operations.

The owner of RAG Patrick Quarco hinted at laying off more employees in 2017 to boost company's earnings, citing declining advertising revenue occasioned by social media platforms. Today, *the Star* has built a strong web presence that attracts more than two million unique visitors, but the management intends to keep print alive by producing high quality low-cost operation, evidenced by the organisation's latest newspaper design, which is highly illustrative. The management's strategy is aimed at spawning and setting in motion social media usage with popular tools being Twitter, Facebook and Star online.

Online presence has enhanced the role of social journalism leading to the expansion of the scope of work for online staff, which includes creating a new position of Digital Editor. The changes were brought about by the realisation that crowd dynamic shapes online content more than editors, hence the need to use social media to communicate and collaborate with readers. Those who use social media correctly don't create content but generate conversations, which creates communities (Comm, 2009)

Twitter and Facebook have greatly changed how news is gathered by news organisations. These social media tools are becoming more important than ever and in a way their popularity stems from the ability to easily create one's own applications (Gordon, 2009). About a decade ago, newspapers, governments, corporations and PR firms were the main sources of information. The people would consume it only by reading stories published by the print media.

Today's audiences do not just want to read, they also want to comment, give feedback, interact with news sources and voice their opinions on the stories they have read. This shift, sometimes called new media revolution, is not the death of conventional journalism but a birth of democratic way of disseminating news that brings to life journalism's key rules: honesty, transparency and giving a voice to the person who doesn't have one.

With this technological shift, people who have been recipients and consumers of information are now producers, further complicating the role of traditional journalist. There is a possibility that reporters will become more independent and will not be working for a specific news organisation for a long period of time (Podger 2009; Lewis 2009).

The nature of social media has therefore made it possible for online newspapers to emerge, as the venture requires minimal cash investments; only online presence needs to be sustained. People are now free, and have the opportunity to generate content and get the other side of the story by getting news from the Internet which is seen as free from control (Rosenstiel, 2005).

However, although traditional newspaper revenue is dwindling, online advertising alone cannot attract enough revenue because of the myriad of other issues facing digital content. The challenges include maintaining readership and lack of control over content, leading to plagiarism by journalists.

According to Alexa.com, Google.com, Facebook, Google.co.ke, Yahoo.com, Blogspot.com, YouTube.com, Wikipedia.org, LinkedIn, Twitter, and the Nation Media Group are the most visited websites. This means newspaper apps being rolled out by media groups are yet to gain ground even though the number is growing (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013).

Convergence entails integrated news production, multiplatform delivery of news, multimedia storytelling and participatory models of journalism (Domingo et al, 2007). As departments merge, journalists have had to take up additional responsibilities with no extra pay. For example, Star journalists are supposed to generate content for multiple platforms, which include Radio Africa Group's radio stations and websites. Further, reporters should file stories, take photos and videos. However, Bernard Ogoi, a Programmes Officer at Association of Media Women In Kenya says digital media has enabled journalists to go to the field without necessarily a cameraman, and file stories, take photos and edit them before sending it to the newsroom for publication (Media Council of Kenya, 2016).

This has made some broadcast journalists to work for print media and vice versa, leading to staff turnover leaving newsrooms understaffed. Although convergence has helped cut down operations

costs, it requires major organizational changes, demanding and costly editorial processes (Quinn & Quinn Allan, 2005; Steinle & Brown, 2012).

In convergence, journalists require to have multiple skills and to be retrained. However, news organisations are not retraining staff, which compromises the quality of their work. Aviles and Carvajal (2008) says newsroom convergence is not driven by technological processes but relies on technological innovation to achieve set goals and hence all modes of convergence have different outcome. And as Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) point out, the emergence of convergence and in particular economic and technological formats by the conventional news organisations support the general feeling that traditional media is on a terminal decline. But while this strategy is desirable and inevitable, it creates internal pressure for journalists and conflicts with conventional principles of journalism, which includes specialisation (Campbell, 2004).

1.2 Problem statement

In the 21st century, media organisations have suffered losses mainly brought about by enormous business challenges. Western-based mainstream news channels have borne the biggest brunt characterised by the death of newspapers. In Kenya, *Spot On* folded and so did *Nairobi News* newspaper, which is now a fully digital paper.

Further, the circulation of daily English newspapers in Kenya in 2015 declined to 98,548 copies from 2014's 102,000, a 3.4 per cent drop (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report 2015). The number of Kiswahili newspapers dropped with only 5,209 copies being sold on average, down from 5,800 the previous year. Online readership of news was the big winner with an average of 1.5 million online visitors each day in 2015, up from 2014's 1.02 million, a 53.7 per cent growth. Weekly English newspapers circulation fell by 5.8 per cent to sell 14, 975 copies, down from 15,900 copies (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report 2015). But PwC (2015) report shows the newspaper circulation will increase as it has been, although by a small percentage. Further, print advertising will continue to generate most of newspaper profits. It reveals spend on online news will rise, from 3.2 per cent in 2014 to about 8.5 per cent in 2019.

Yap (2009) says the challenge faced by conventional media, especially newspapers, has to do with the perfect storm of the global economic crisis, dwindling readership and advertising dollars, and the inability of newspapers to monetize their online efforts

The Standard, the Standard On Sunday, *the Standard on Saturday* by Standard Media Group, *The Star* by Radio Africa Group and *The People*, currently a free newspaper by Media Max Networks, command a sizeable market. Although circulation is low in Kenya, in 2010, only 320,000 newspapers were bought daily, according to Ipsos-Synovate (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013). However, in 2010, while *Kenya Times* and the *Daily Metro* owned by the Nation Media Group folded in 2009 due to financial constraints and declining circulation, the *Star,* then *Nairobi Star*, continued to grow. Editors at the news organization said the paper was selling between 15,000–20,000 copies a day in 2010, compared to 5,000–8,000 when it started.

In view of the above, the assumption that dwindling newspaper revenues are as a result of the advent of new media should be subjected to investigation. Further, although traditional journalists are the majority in the profession and much of online news is local and regional, less attention is being paid to how social media is affecting mainstream media (Abernathy, 2014; Fowler, 2011; Ryfe, 2012) hence the need for this study. As Simon (2009) points out, the internet and technological innovation is not to blame for the death of professional journalism, but the inadequate business model of newspapers. He further says high-end journalism is dying in America due to poor economic model and it will not be reborn on any other platform unless a better business strategy is adopted. Some observers think that conventional media practitioners should do some serious soul-searching and accurately feel the pulse of the nation in order to stay relevant (Yapp, 2008). The researcher will also explore if the decline in circulation is directly related to advent of social media or there are other factors.

1.3 General Objective

The research seeks to establish the impact of social media on print journalism, a case study of *The Star Publications.* It will investigate how the news organisation has been coping since the advent of new media.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To find out how social media has changed or not changed the style of reporting in *The Star*
2. To investigate *The Star's* newsroom reorganisation response to social media
3. To compare social media readership with *The Star* print readership

1.4 Research questions

1. How has social media changed or not changed the style of reporting in *The Star* newspaper?
2. Which structural newsroom operations have changed in the face of new media?
3. How has print newspaper readership been affected by new media?

1.5 Justification of the study

There are a number of studies that have been conducted on local print media vis-a-vis online journalism namely Rukanga (2016) and Nyakundi (2012). This is so because the influence of new media has been rising since the Web 2.0 forum that took place in 2004 (Waters & Lester, 2010). Ms. Mbithi-Magori of K24 says "news cannot exist without online platforms" while Mr. David Ohito who heads Standard Digital Content states "social media takes news to target audiences who do not visit websites" (The Media Council of Kenya, 2016). In mainstream media, dailies are instrumental in digging deeper into issues to get attention of those in authority, while social media breaks news (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013).

Consequently, research papers on linkages between online content and print readership have been published. However, while studies have focused mainly on giant media houses namely Standard Group and Nation Media Group, no work is specific on *The Star.*

Further, the paper was unveiled at a time new media was beginning to take root in Kenya, and it would be of interest to know how the newspaper is coping in the face of new media. In February 2016, the Star website www.the-star.co.ke was the second most visited Kenyan website, and sixth

on the global website ranking index Alexa (The Star Online, 2016). In light of the foregoing, the company is a fertile ground for this kind of research. Further, there are no comparative studies on social media and newspapers, specifically on *the Star*, and the study will provide new knowledge.

1.6 Significance

The general feeling is that the dismal performance of newspapers has been occasioned by social media revolution. Due to the new consumption habits, advertising dollars have moved to online news platforms (Boardman, 2013). Radio Africa Group, which owns *The Star* newspaper, has for two consecutive years in March laid off its staff in a bid to cut costs, owing to minimal returns generated by its newspaper business, according to the management. The low returns have been blamed on social media news sources, said to have reduced print readership, and consequently the paper has been attracting few adverts. The evolving media, however, involves changes in how people communicate, get informed, share content, entertain ourselves and are advertised to (Grueskin et al., Levy and Nielsen, 2010; Nielsen, 2012).

This study will therefore seek to show the decline in newspaper readership may not be directly related to social media news sources. Yellow reporting, armchair journalism, and the perception that newspaper is used as a tool for spreading propaganda and a mouthpiece for the government of the day, are other challenges facing print dailies.

The creation of the Government Advertising Agency, a body mandated to authorise public sector advertising and implementing sectoral standards, procedures, guidelines and managing consolidated government advertising funds could also be hurting newspaper business. Additionally, the advertising agency is viewed as a well-orchestrated calculated move meant to starve print media of funds through strict rules. The study will therefore analyse impact, response and professional journalistic in relation to *The Star's* online and print segment to ascertain the correct position.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study will focus on how social media has affected print media and the focus will be on *The Star* Publications. It will look at how social media has changed or not changed the role of reporters and editors, the relationship between online content and print media, and the structural operations of newsroom operations in the face of new media. The research will also focus on how convergence has transformed the organisation's print media since merging of some departments early in 2016, and what it portends for the conventional newspaper's future.

Newspaper circulation is a top secret of media organisations, and the researcher encountered challenges in getting information on the number of copies The Star sells in a day. However, surveys carried out by Ipsos Synnovate helped fill the gaps. Key informant interviewees comprised of senior editors and senior reporters did not provide answers to all questions due to the confidential nature of information that was being sought. Further, the researcher's philosophical leaning, epistemology, heavily relied on interpretation of reality, and as such some analysis could be biased. Additionally, the ethnography approach did not provide conclusive evidence because qualitative data is not scientific.

1.8 Operational Terms

New media: Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, websites

Traditional media: Newspaper

Social media sites: Twitter, Facebook

Online news: News story published on a web

Social journalism: Interacting with audiences on social media platforms

Story: News article

Social media: Facebook, Twitter

Facebook: A social website that allows users to share information, create digital profiles and invite others to interact with them by being friends (Safko, 2012)

Twitter: Is a microblogging website that limits tweets or messages typed and shared to 140 characters (Flynn, 2012)

YouTube: A social media platform described by some as "granddaddy of video sharing sites" (Flynn, 2012)

Wiki: An online site where users post and edit content, most popular being Wikipedia

Blogs: It is a short form of weblog and is a site where individuals detail experiences for sharing with others. The website started as a personal diary but has evolved into a form of citizen journalism (Harper, 2010

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This segment presents reviews on the existing theoretical and empirical literature by scholars and arguments relevant to social media vis-a-vis print media.

2.1.2 Impact of social media on professional journalism practice

New media has in many ways transformed the style of journalistic reporting, with the conventional media alive to the fact that audiences play a big role as sources of news and as news censors (Hermida, 2012). As a result, new media is has been labelled fifth estate by some observers (Cooper, 2006; Jericho, 2012). That social media has become a fifth estate means, it monitors coverage by mainstream media the same way conventional media keeps the government in check (Media Council of Kenya, 2016).

Due to the interactivity of new media, users are bolder in driving conversations that mainstream media shy away from due to their strict gatekeeping practices (Media Council of Kenya, 2016). That conventional media has incorporated social media in disseminating information, news is today reported faster and audiences appreciate immediacy (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013).

Unfortunately, Witschge & Nygren (2009) says the emergence of new media and citizen journalism has de-professionalised journalism. Though journalists have easier access to news, citizen journalists bypass newrooms, leading to publishing of information on various digital platforms that has not been verified. Their study, however, adds that although professional standards have been hurt, there is a return to journalistic values which set conventional journalists apart from other news sources (Witschge & Nygen, 2009). Further, Choi (2012) says after interviewing journalists who are part of the converged newsrooms, they said fear that technological changes would compromise the quality of news. Journalists were of the view that social media presents a number of limitations in delivering in-depth coverage of hard news and in disseminating accurate information.

With the emergence of numerous news agencies, each with its own websites, Twitter handles and Facebook, among other online platforms, the competition in news dissemination is cutthroat. This means newspapers in the West, and especially the US, have lost a large share of market and classified advertisement to the Internet. Observers say online businesses are becoming successful because they are not treated as part of the mainstream newspapers, and create new markets with new sources of income (Gilbert, 2002).

A large number of readers have cancelled newspaper subscriptions forcing businesses to reduce their advertising budget to cut costs. Consequently, the closure of print newspapers businesses, job cuts, bankruptcy and salary cuts are gradually becoming the norm in most firms (Mahmud, 2009). For the newspaper industry, reorganisation of newsrooms is meant to attract more audiences as well as create digital content strategies that meet their needs (Waal, 2014). Mabweazara et al. (2014) says this is happening in Kenya. The Star has embraced the changes.

In Kenya, print dailies still enjoy readership but the number of readers is on the decline. Most newspapers are owned by giant media houses such as Nation Media Group, with online platforms for *Daily Nation*, *Sunday Nation*, *Business Daily*, *Saturday Nation* and *The East African*. The existence of these businesses shows newspapers still enjoy wide readership.

In Malaysia, however, readership is yet to drop, as it remains the most preferred medium by advertisers. In as much as the new media has made inroads in the country, the sources of news for most audiences remain newspapers and TV (Yap, 2009).

The advent of softwares such as newspaper apps is an indicator that the newspaper industry is changing strategy to tap into the market comprised mostly of young readers who would like to read the paper, but do not have money to spend. Twitter handles and Facebook pages are today the main sources of breaking news. Today, journalism faces a dilemma because people can get online and publish their own stories without thinking about a journalist.

As a result, some representatives in the industry are seeking bailout from the government to recover some of the taxes paid on profits to cut losses (The Star Online, September 2009).

However, in as much as there are significant changes in the newspaper industry, especially efforts being made to monetize content and seek alternative sources of income, the decline in the newspaper industry is being overstated (Barthelemy et al, 2011). Further, the narrative that the

newspaper industry is on the decline has not taken into consideration the regional variations and businesses in emerging countries where print journalism is robust and growing (Barthelemy et al, 2011). However, observers see the advent of the new technology as a source of new challenges and opportunities for traditional journalism (Garrison, 1996).

This coupled with diminishing effectiveness in news dissemination, evidenced by lack of objective reporting, economic crisis has dealt a major blow on mass media enterprises. Self-censorship within the traditional journalistic community has increased new media's popularity which has been largely adopted by civil society. People are seeking freedom to generate their own news (Mohd, 2002 & Mustafa, 2007).

The saturated markets have made it difficult for audiences to be loyal to a particular news channel leading to loss of business for newspaper publications. Additionally, there is an emerging audience of young people who are not so much interested in news, and all the factors combined have taken toll on newspaper business leading to lower returns, massive layoffs, redundancies, down scaling and restructuring, stripping off revenue from established media houses (Kung, Towse, and Picard 2008; Curra 2008; Levy and Nielsen 2010; Picard 2010). According to a study by Nielsen Media Research in June 2010, about 25 per cent people spend their time on social media platforms (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011)

It has been difficult to understand the problems that media houses are grappling with because the media's explanation of the situation on the ground has been poor and there haven't been enough scholarly journals that provide solutions to the problems. It is, however, important to note that most news stories are anecdotal, lack depth, and seem to dwell much on dwindling revenue and loss of jobs for journalists rather than the social effects and new opportunities that the advent of new media presents (Chyi, Lewis, and Zheng 2012).

There is therefore the need for mainstream media to become society-centric as opposed to media-centric. This self-centredness by traditional media could as well be the reason why they are finding it hard to compete in a market flooded with all sorts of information. The function of news is to orient man and society in an actual world (Park, 1940).

Early 2016, *The Star Publications* sacked a number of staff in a restructuring process, all in a bid to streamline operations amid dwindling revenue. The focus is so much on the organisational performance and has little to do with meeting expectations of audiences. Scholarly work on the unfolding events has been polemical with minimal historical and comparative literature, indirect evidence of social effects to comprehend the impact of changes taking place in the conventional media (Siles and Boczkowski, 2012)

Consequently, fears are rife that traditional newspaper is on its deathbed and that we might be witnessing the end of an era of quality and ethical journalism. The perception being created is that redundancy will erode the gains of democracy brought about by free and authoritative news reporting. The arguments on the impact that new media has had on print journalism thus begs the question on whether it is really the twilight or new dawn for newspapers.

According to Sambrook (2005) social media should not make us forget the value of journalistic credibility – the value of trusting someone to bear witness to an event. He says bearing witness is a journalist's job, something technology cannot provide. It is for this reason that there is need to establish if newspapers have failed in their role to disseminate credible information leading to the gradual collapse of the industry, or people consume online news because it is easily accessible.

2.1.3 Emergence of New Media

Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, and blogs have brought news closer to the public. These social networks have varied characteristics. Facebook attracts a more mainstream and slightly older audience, but for students it has become the default networking site. Further, Bullas (2015) points out Facebook are the most popular social media platform, with more than a billion users every month. Every 15 minutes there are usually more than 49 million new posts on Facebook. Bullas says about 1.3 million posts are shared every minute, every day. About two-thirds of Facebook users, roughly 64%, click on news items. About 60% comment or like stories, with 19% doing it often.

Twitter, the fastest growing social media site, is the major source of news today *(New York Times, 2009)*. Pavlik (2001) says although some people are resisting change, mobile and digital technologies are part and parcel of news organisations in Kenya. The new media has a number of features. Social media can be used for individual to mass communications, and individual to

individual and mass to point message distribution. They are also extremely de-centralised, require very low investment, provide greater interactivity and public participation and are much more difficult to control (Banerjee, 2008).

New media will continue to grow as long as it enhances the brand visibility which usually benefits the traditional product. (Kawamoto, 2003). The two modes of news dissemination therefore are complementary. About 90 per cent of daily newspapers in the US have adopted online technologies and majority have own websites as they seek to expand to new markets (Garrison, 2001). The main reasons for the growth of news and information sharing in social media sites include the following: First, Facebook developed news and activity feed in September 2006, which is now a default setting on a user's homepage. It links online readers to mainstream news sites. This gives the user access to other news-related sites and recommendations appearing on the homepage (Newman, 2009). Additionally, it can cost literally nothing to create content and make it available for other people to enjoy (Comm, 2009).

Second, mainstream audiences today use social networks bringing their preoccupations and interests, including news sharing. The dramatic growth, in terms of global audience, recorded by Facebook between December 2007 and December 2008 was driven by users aged between 35 and 49. (Newman, 2009). The time people spend reading online content has more than doubled (Willnat, 2009) Fifteen per cent of online users use Twitter and the figure has quadrupled since 2010 (Smith and Brenner 2012). The number of Facebook active users has expanded from one million towards the end of 2004 to 1.1 billion users in March 2013 (Associated Press May 1 2013). Third, websites have icons that allow users to easily share and link to promoted social networks. Video integration with YouTube has proven to be a huge boon because of the younger demographic, and news sites have followed suit (Newman, 2009). A blogger can be a reporter and a person who owns a cell phone can take videos; Facebook, Twitter and other social media platform users can become news editors or a curator (Rich Brooks, 2011).While some online-content producers are "people who are not journalists" (Thurman, 2008) significant information published on blogs is usually devoted to public affairs (Matheson, 2004).

Millions of Kenyans own mobile phones and smartphones, which enable them to get news anytime and anywhere as long as they are in an area covered by internet network. The age of digital media has thus posed a threat to traditional newspapers, which usually release one paper per day. The new developments in digital technology have therefore created new methods for generating news, distributing content and its consumption by the mass, thereby leading to innovatory journalism practices. From the foregoing, all aspects of production, reporting and reception of news are evolving. These changes are likely to affect journalism curriculum, employment, training and how conventional journalists perceive their traditional roles.

Additionally, the innovation will have implications on news organisations' traditional business models, which will pave the way for the adoption of new financial strategies to finance journalism work. Also, the fundamental restructuring of print journalism is set to change political, ethical and democratic life of society locally, regionally nationally and globally. As social journalists strive to break news, journalistic codes of ethics take a back seat. While professional journalism is linked to democratic citizenship, the proliferation of online-generated content is being treated with skepticism, with journalists having to confirm credibility of the source before publishing it.

Social media strategist Lasica describes blogging as "a random act of journalism" (Lasica, 2003) while some other people debate whether blogs rival or complement traditional news channels (Rosenberg, 2002). But there is no knowledge domain, entrance requirement or accreditation for professional journalists, and as such journalists can refer to themselves as professionals (Singer, 2005). Journalism profession is becoming obsolete because publishing has been democratised by the social media. Any individual can be a publisher or a journalist (Shirky, 2008). Bloggers use platforms such as Blogspot.com and Blogger.com. In Kenya, well-known blogs, and some of the bloggers include Afromusing, the Kenyan Pundit, Mama Junkyard's, Bankelele, Gathara's World, Joseph Karoki, Kumekucha, inker's Room, Mental Acrobatics, and Mzalendo (Kenya Parliament Watchdog (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013)

But the future of quality journalism will not be reliant on the future of newspaper industry (Huffington, 2008).On the other hand, blogging is linked to citizen journalism and applies to a range of content including user-generated photos, videos, stories on social networking sites, given the name "participatory journalism" (Z`uniga, 2009)

3.1.4 Shift in Traditional Media Ethics

Digitisation has expanded the area of unsolved ethical and legal issues. Legal issues include protection sources of information, which is key in maintaining faith in professional journalism. It calls for new social skills, which include how to listen to a conversation, how to begin and maintain a new one, and how a communicator can intercept and defuse social media wars (Heenan, 2010). A community identity and digital ethos can influence the manner in which news consumers perceive credibility (Gamie, 2013). And as Nyabuga and Booker (2013) point out, the breaking news gadgets used by various media houses make it difficult to verify the quality, reliability, and credibility of information. They say ethics is ignored due to the pressure to increase revenue and competition for audience. But Farhi (2009) journalists must now verify comments before reporting.

Moral issues that have to do with how journalists use social media tools to disseminate news have arisen and largely changed news coverage (Martin, 2009). One of the most discussed ethical implications revolves around a journalist's personal and professional presences on social media and social networking sites. Journalists regularly lift texts and photos from the internet, and without attribution publish them on their own websites, causing copyright issues (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013). They further point out that the use of hidden cameras and microphones, mostly by investigative journalism are common.

Additionally, witnesses no longer have to give account of events through journalists. There is also the gradual death of exclusive stories because newsmakers, politicians, civil organisations disseminate news via Facebook and websites.

Readers have started losing trust in the media largely due to lack of objectivity and the fact that news channels are increasingly being used by the political class to spread cheap propaganda (Skoler, 2009). Some platforms have, however, evolved overtime with Wikipedia creating new rules to standardise, mobilise and organise masses to eliminate the spread of inaccurate information (McGrady, 2013). However, most people today don't care as much about who publishes news first as they do about whether the sites disseminating information got it right, and is available when needed. News needs to be on the platform people are checking wherever they are (Overholser, 2009). This in a way undermines values such as completeness, accuracy and

objectivity in reporting because the shift is on crowd dynamic – telling audiences what they want to hear even when the issue is not in the interest of the public.

The social media communications, for example on Twitter or Facebook, and blogging platforms have created faceless individuals who insult traditional journalists. Anonymity of news sources has therefore eroded objective reporting, according to Tim Graham, an author and reporter for the Buffalo News (Skoler, 2009). Journalists sometimes report stories posted on Twitter or Facebook without verifying authenticity of the news. Most stories break on social media before making their way to mainstream channels. In as much as this has encouraged citizen journalism and created a platform for social journalists to thrive, there are fears it may undermine the cardinal values of traditional media such as accuracy, objectivity and truthfulness. Static content won't cut it for the consumer in the future. Neither will static ethics; as media evolve so, too, will ethical guidelines" (Leach, 2009). All these factors will largely influence dissemination of news by print media, which may not necessarily work against conventional media.

The temptation to get breaking news out faster has led to publication of errors, according to Graham. News is diverse but not quality and in most cases a replication of the content published on print (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013). In 2015, for example, sections of media reported there was a mass grave in Mandera, based on a tweet by Senator Billow Kerrow, who later retracted the statement and apologised. This points to thriving of yellow and armchair journalism since the advent of social media.

Almost all forms of news can be shared online to caution citizens of an impending terror attack, but some people post falsehoods to create tension, which is unfortunately published by traditional journalists. This has watered down credibility of news. This has been linked to a declining workforce in professional journalism, a less aware public and misuse of democracy (O'Donnell, McKnight, & Este, 2012). But the future of quality journalism has got nothing to do with the survival of newspapers (Huffington, 2008).

> *Adopt the alternative media (interactivity, transparency, and immediacy), and new media platforms will follow the best practices of old media which include, accuracy, fairness and high-impact investigative journalism* (Huffington, 2008).

Newspapers are not dying but changing radically to meet emerging needs the new media users. The customer has changed (Rogers, 2008).

3.1.5 Editor's gatekeeping roles have changed

Print media is struggling with changing gate-keeping standards due to demands for interactive content produced by audience themselves. This has undermined the role of editors as their work has now been taken over by news apps and software.

A good number of companies, politicians and prominent personalities sometimes prefer to communicate important information via social media instead of organizing press conferences (Bull, 2015). This means it is up to journalists to follow news sources on social media. This means it is not optional for journalists to be on social media, they must follow news leads on new media. Before the advent of social media, editors broke news as they were sole custodians of scoops. But social media has changed the situation and journalists receive big stories third hand, fourth and sometimes fifth, long after it started doing rounds on social media (Alejandro, 2010).

He says the role of the reporter changes into that of verifying the information, and changing the angle of the story. With Facebook and Twitter becoming main sources of information, journalists' main role becomes that of curating data, selecting, sifting through and contextualizing vast amounts of information from new media platforms (Hermida, 2012).

Six top editors drawn from Antara News Agency (Indonesia), Bernama Radio24 (Malysia), Agence France Presse (in Canada, Singapore and the US) and BBC revealed media organisations have been gradually employing social media for branding and increasing their visibility in online platforms, driving web traffic to news sites and breaking news (Alejandro, 2010). However, the risks of relying heavily on social media include inaccuracy and hence the need to verify information; information overload and hence lack or little control over it (Alejandro, 2010)

In traditional journalism, news is filtered before it is published, but in social media the audiences filter videos or any form of information published on the social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Networking media is less preventive and allows sharing and interaction. The role of filtering information is editor's, but since the advent of social media, editors are no longer in control of what readers choose to read. One does not need to sit around waiting for a programme or a news story; he or she can receive it via WhatsApp or Facebook from friends.

For communicators, the limited resource is public attention, not publicity (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). A growing *attention economy* is taking advantage of increasing lack of attention (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Goldhaber, 1997). News coverage in traditional media involves tuning in, so in case a person is not paying attention to the news, then they might be engrossed in other activities (Podger, 2008). Editors are no longer gatekeepers. Their role has been taken over by softwares and social media platforms. In an article published by New York Times, Nicolas Kristof said audiences get their information online. As Dimitrov (2014) points out, editors and journalists direct the social flow of public debate and information.

According to 2013 Pew State of the Media study, most of Americans first get news from friends or family. A good number get updated by interacting with people or by having a conversation on the phone. This shows fewer people rely on newspapers for news. (Bullard, 2013). Active social media are likely to be more receptive to information received via their networks, who could be peers or journalists. Editorially, the traditional role of gatekeeping is therefore watered down (Alfred et al, 2012).

Essentially, a person's social networks assume the role of news editor in deciding which story, video or other content deserves attention. Only tech-savy journalists use networks because they understand the real value they add to today's culture (Skoler, 2013).

Editors on most occasions use social media platforms to boost their work by posting links on Facebook and Twitter. However, although many believe social media presence increases visibility of their news organisations to interact with audiences, few take full advantage of these opportunities (Bullard, 2013). Most media houses are not capitalising on the power of social media platforms to engage across all demographics.
Editors who quantify the number of readers or audience in most cases cite increased interaction with readers. They look at it as a positive impact of social media use. Some editors say their staffs ask questions aimed at eliciting debate on Twitter and Facebook (Bullard, 2013).

The emergence of social media has therefore increased audience participation and enhanced journalistic practice, for example the use of Twitter to break news (Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton, 2012). Although online platforms have blurred the line between producers and audiences, the freedom to report news has empowered disenfranchised groups and helped cover remote locations. However, the elite, who are mostly comprised of spokespersons and politicians, dominates sources of online news, just like in mainstream media. This further proves that even with the new media and the emergence of citizen journalism, participation in news dissemination has room for growth.

2.1.6 Profitability of Online Newspapers

Social media has led to loss of revenue for conventional media organisations (Lipschultz, 2015). As offline audiences shrink, online users are increasing, usually comprised of younger generation. However, these young people are not financially stable and prefer to get the content free of charge. Wellbrock (2016) therefore says traditional media houses are still grappling with ways of generating income from their online platforms to supplement money from advertising. Newspapers do not rely on the revenue from newsstands or subscribers, but advertisers (Paine, 2015).

But newspapers have been making small adjustments. For example, The Star rebranded in 2016, has constantly been improving its content and tightening deadlines so that the paper can go to press early.

Kung, Picard and Towse (2008) further point out that digital technologies have adversely affected value chains, market structures and business strategies. But on the other hand, digital technologies have created value chains, for instance, cutting down the cost of production and distribution Kung et al. (2008). With the advent of new media, some media houses have had to restrategise, with some doing a complete overhaul of their management to remain competitive. Slightly more than half of online newspapers improved slightly in 2001 (Trombly, 2002).

But the almost 10-year-study would have had totally different results if it was carried out in the current year. In 2001, Trombly found web content was the second source of revenue for newspapers, though people had not realised. These findings show that the impact of social media on print journalism started being felt over a decade ago. However, answers cannot be found in a study that was conducted over a decade ago, which calls for patience (Kirsner, 1997).

Online advertising is a long-term investment (Dorroh, 2005). This is because in as much as most audiences are tech-savvy, it is easier to see an ad published in a newspaper as compared with online platforms. But online ads are easy to monitor and offer more flexibility. Additionally, online ads can be tailored for specific audiences. Robertson (2005) says subscriptions for printed papers are declining because they can access same stories online for free. Increased subscriptions will therefore hurt newspapers' revenue. Even if digital-only subscriptions hit their targets, the income will only rise to 3.3 per cent of the firm's annual revenue, which is not sufficient to reverse the decline in circulation (Myllylathi, 2013). Consequently, the advent of new media and convergence has led to casualisation of journalism, with the terms of employment becoming less and less secure, leading to 'no pay or low pay" despite increased roles of a journalist (Bakker, 2012).

Social media has facilitated de-professionalisation of traditional journalism even as economic, quality and ethical questions are raised. Media houses are seeking entrepreneurial journalists and freelancers in a bid to cut operating costs, and the new workforce contribute to innovations in newsrooms (Gynnild, 2014).

In Kenya, viability of professional journalism has come under intense pressure, which has undermined the democratic role of reporting as journalists lose jobs, newspapers fold and costs are cut. *The Star* in March retrenched about 50 journalists in a bid to cut costs.
In as much as the future of journalism seems to lie in social media platforms, it is not clear how new media will recover ground lost in democratic reporting.

However, established digital native news organisations such as Buzzfeed, Vice and Huffington Post, have experienced a steady growth, which demonstrates the future is online newspapers (William, Harte and Turner, 2015).

The online papers, unlike print dailies, have not felt economic decline, which has hit hard mainstream media channels. New economic and cultural trends have also transformed journalism with focus shifting to 'big data', largely because of online users who are more visual. Data journalism enables new ways of storytelling, news-gathering, access to news by the public and journalists and visualisation. Big data has been key in reviving investigative journalism in geodata

and financial reports as it provides evidence to support facts (Coddington, 2015) However, this has given rise to "clickbait" and obsession with numbers which is not driven by professional judgment (Anderson, 2011).

Despite the risks involved, the new business models brought about legacy journalism, has diversified sources of income, for example crowd-funding projects on platforms such as Kickstarter allowing news to be generated from diverse earnings, even if it is for a brief period (Carvajal, Garcia-Aviles and Gonzalez, 2012).

2.1.7 Advantages of online platforms

In Kenya, about 64 per cent of internet users are below 25 years says a 2015 research by Google (Google, 2015). Audience demographics for *Daily Nation* website reinforces the findings, where more than two thirds of online readers are aged between 25 and 44 years (Google Analytics, 2016). The rise in number can be attributed to ease of using new media.

New technological advancements have made the job of conventional journalists easier but have changed how audiences get news and their expectations of the content (Meyer, Marchionni & Thorson, 2010). New media platforms offer flexibility and convenience. Apart from being an alternative source of revenue for newspapers, they have additional features. For instance, interactivity, which gives readers an opportunity to comment on the stories, seek answers and question content that has been published (Gleason, 2010).

Twitter enables users to personalise news stories and respond to the source of the news, express ideas, and concerns (Farhi, 2009). Farhi says this has consequently transformed the landscape of newspapers. The involvement of audiences is a significant advantage of adopting innovative technologies, which make readers feel valued. The technologies give readers a certain degree of power (Bly, 2010). Bly says interaction on social media platforms is newspapers' industry new big thing.

With the management making efforts to cash in on the social media craze, some print newspapers have been transformed into online newspapers (Frye, 2003) A good example is Nairobi News, a product of Nation Media Group in Kenya. However, many newspapers are losing out on additional

revenue and struggling because they are hesitant to spend money and time on latest technologies, something that should have been done like a decade ago (Morton, 2007).Wamunyu (2016) however argues that to attract high web traffic, some Kenyan websites publish content that appeals to readers but has no depth.

Print newspapers cannot shun technologies such as mobile phones and Internet but must combine all news outlets available (Mckenna, 1993). In the article "The Ever-Evolving Newspaper", text messages and mobile apps are gaining traction in media houses because they send information instantly to various audiences (Frye, 2006). Embracing the new phenomena will keep audiences engaged. As such, blogs will in future contribute to the growth of online newspapers (Yahr, 2008). Consumers feel more connected and will keep visiting the sites because interaction with the content makes them feel part of an intellectual conversation being carried out. Blog editors will also be tasked with the role of monitoring online conversations, which complements news-related websites.

What if the steady decline of print journalism in Western nations continues (Crosbie, 2004, Lauf, 2001)? Online newspapers readership would therefore replace printed newspapers, especially among youths who are not usually attracted to printed dailies (Morris & Mogan, 1996). Online newspapers have a better prospect, which is why all printed dailies abroad (Peng et al, 1999) and even locally have online versions.

Online newspapers are usually free of charge and are constantly updated as a story develops, even four times a day. Any tech-savvy person can access them and one can visit news websites while working on their PC. More than a decade ago, about 23 per cent of US web users visited online publications at least once a week (Runett, 2002). Online newspapers provide links to internal archives, and rarely do they direct web users to external content (Jankowski and van Selm, 2000). This means users do not encounter other unrelated stories and variety of information published on any platform, which may drift their attention; they select stories that interest them (Cameron and Curtin, 1995; Peng et al, 1999, d'Haenens et al, 2004; Tewksbury and Althaus, 2000). However, designing web content takes more effort, and so is coming up with the right structure of the website (Van Oostendorp & Van Nimwegen, 1998; Eveland & Dunwoody, 2000).

Digital publications come in handy as 'alarm medium' for breaking news (Sparks, 2000). Print newspapers are today being used to disseminate information that does not necessarily interest readers, but offer news that may surprise audiences (Schoenbach and Lauf, 2004). Kaigwa, Madung and Costello (2015) state Kenyan media routinely share updates and stories through social platforms to drive conversations. They further remarked social media users tip journalists on new leads, stories, and potential follow-ups.

Print newspaper readers, as opposed to online audiences, come across a variety of information, which they read without much effort. Therefore, newspaper readers are likely to remember more public affairs stories with public agenda, than their online news counterparts (Tewsbury and Althaus, 2000). Online users do not expand the agenda of the perceived topics, but rather get more awareness of the most important events. Most online audiences may spend more time surfing to do an in-depth research of the published information or for greater orientation (Eveland and Dunwoody, 2000). Print newspapers therefore still set agenda and help to expand it (Schoenbach and Lauf, 2004).

In setting agenda, print newspapers filter and select salient features of a story and place it higher up in the story. The linear structure employed by traditional newspapers has an effect on eye-movement, as they act as cues (Garcia and Stark, 1991). The cues include features such as pictures, graphs, bold font, fancy fonts or pull quotes and headlines. This means conventional dailies draw readers' attention to stories being given prominence and not necessarily because they are attracted by the headline (Schoenbach, 1995).

But there are online cues, but to a lesser extent compared to print dailies. However, web users are rarely distracted by cues and usually pursue their aims, because they usually do not follow the cues of producers or news editors (Tewksbury, 2003). The chances of online users being confronted by information that they feel lacks news value are therefore minimal (Sunstein, 2002). Online platforms carry more brief stories on the home pages as compared to their counterparts. Even though the stories are more, they are not detailed hence easy to digest (D'Haenens et al, 2004). Online configuration allows the users to sieve through the stories and control the flow of information thereby settling a specific one (Cameron and Curtin, 1995

2.1.8 Future of technology

With so many technological channels springing up every now and then, it is not easy to tell what the future holds for online newspapers. But past research and unfolding events will play a big role in making new strategies for future print media. People have attributed the decline in newspaper readership with the rise of online sources of news, but there is no connection between the two ventures, as many people would want us to believe (Palser, 2007).

The situation has made readers to cancel subscriptions in anticipation for further decline. But the type of journalism is not to blame, neither is the form causing newspaper struggles, but rather emerging customer demands, and need for content that is tangible and convenient. However, authenticity of online news is being questioned and readers do not always trust what they read until it is published on print newspapers. This is because anyone can write a story and publish it on numerous news sites, further eroding credibility of online news (Baetke, 2006).

Newspapers must therefore increase trust to attract more readers who will in turn boost revenue. However, online newspapers are trying to regain trust by deleting comments on news websites likely to incite society or are defamatory in nature. Digital orders are also restricting audiences to appropriate posts related to the story published. Good news is digital reporting has created jobs, with more social media journalists being hired to manage outpouring opinions. Keeping track of comments reduces unwarranted ones (Gsell, 2009). If newspapers keep up with the same trend, the business will pick.

The fact that we are increasingly living in an era of media convergence, distinctions among traditional mainstream mass media and the new media such as the Internet are getting more and more blurred (Banerjee, 2008). Despite these distinctions, there are still complementarities between the new media and conventional media. They will continue to coexist and reinforce each other. However, in exploring the distinctions and complementariness between the new media and print media, editors must understand the technical distinctions between these various media forms (Brydon, 2011)

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts, which may not necessarily be well worked-out. It guides a researcher in determining variables to measure, and statistical relationships to look for. The researcher will use Rogers Diffusion of Innovations theory (2003). Rogers says diffusion is the process by which new inventions are communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. According to the theory, users decide to adopt innovations through processes which include knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and adoption. This theory is relevant because it helps to explain the uptake of new media in understanding the gradual evolution of print media occasioned by the newer technology and the pace at which it is being adopted. Diffusion research entails technological inventions. Rogers (2003) uses "innovation" and "technology" as synonyms. He defines technology as a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the cause-effect relationships involved in achieving a desired outcome" (p. 13). This theory will therefore help to establish the complementary relationship between online and print news. For Rogers (2003), an innovation is a cluster comprised of one or more distinguishable elements of technology perceived as being closely interrelated" (p. 14).

The second factor, knowledge, involves communication channels. It is "a process in which users create and share knowledge to reach a mutual understanding" (p. 5). In light of the interactivity nature of online content, the theory will help the researcher to understand the advantages of online news vis-a-vis print newspapers, and why audiences today prefer channels of information that empower them, making them feel valued because they can express opinions about content they read and receive immediate feedback. This communication takes place through channels between sources.

Rogers says "a source is the person or an organisation that originates a message. A channel is the means by which information travels to the receiver from the source (p. 204). The print newspaper and digital channels such as websites, Facebook or Twitter are both means through news is conveyed. But while online papers allow a two-way communication, dailies do not have room for that.

According to Rogers (2003), the time when technology is implemented is of essence. The time aspect is ignored in most behavioral research. He argues the innovation-diffusion process, rate of

adoptions and adopter categorisation include a time dimension. For example, despite the fact that media revolution began more than a decade ago, some media organisations are yet to adopt the new technologies, while others are acquiring them at a slow pace. *The Star* is yet to go full digital, a decision that will be informed by timing. *Huffington Post* and *Buzzfeed* are exclusively online newspapers and are generating enough revenue. The decisions depend on the level of technological growth and the rate of adoption.

The rate of adoption, according to Rogers (2003), depends on four elements of the DOI theory. They include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Relative advantage is the extent to which a technology appears to be better than others. It encompasses superior features of a given innovation. For example, ways in which online news supersedes newspapers. In view of this, it can be argued that users are attracted to advantages of new media such as interactivity (ability to comment on stories published and facilitating open communication), encryption (enhances privacy), or portability (digital devices can be carried around).

Rogers (2003) says compatibility refers to the extent to which a technology is seen to be consistent to values, experiences and needs of adopters. Rogers further says complexity refers to ease of using technology. Adopters prefer user-friendly gadgets. Roger points out triability has to do with degree to which a new idea can be experimented. Observability, on the other hand, refers to visible results after using a given technology, which influences others to adopt it. That diffusion is a social process means there is a strong tendency to share ideas with people who are largely homophilus, and as such little or no change can occur because communication sources appear to be the same. Only change agents can contribute new knowledge.

According to Rogers, in diffusion, most members in a social setup make innovation -decision depending on the decisions of the other users. The theory will therefore help to understand why readers would prefer online content to print dailies. The innovation-decision process is therefore "an information-seeking and information-processing activity". People are motivated to reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of an innovation (p. 172).

However, this theory as (Ayodele, 2012) points out, underestimates the role of media in spreading communication on new innovations. It focuses so much on the network and suggests that media influences innovators or early adopters, who influence opinion leaders and eventually influence

everybody else to adopt a new technology. But media alone can influence people by stimulating debate triggered by change agents. Ayodele (2012) further says DOI theory is linear and source-dominated because it assumes the elite begin the communication process, and assigns central roles to different people at different stages yet the media plays a central role in diffusion of new ideas.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Social media   │
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                             │
          ┌──────────────────┤
          │  the Star        │
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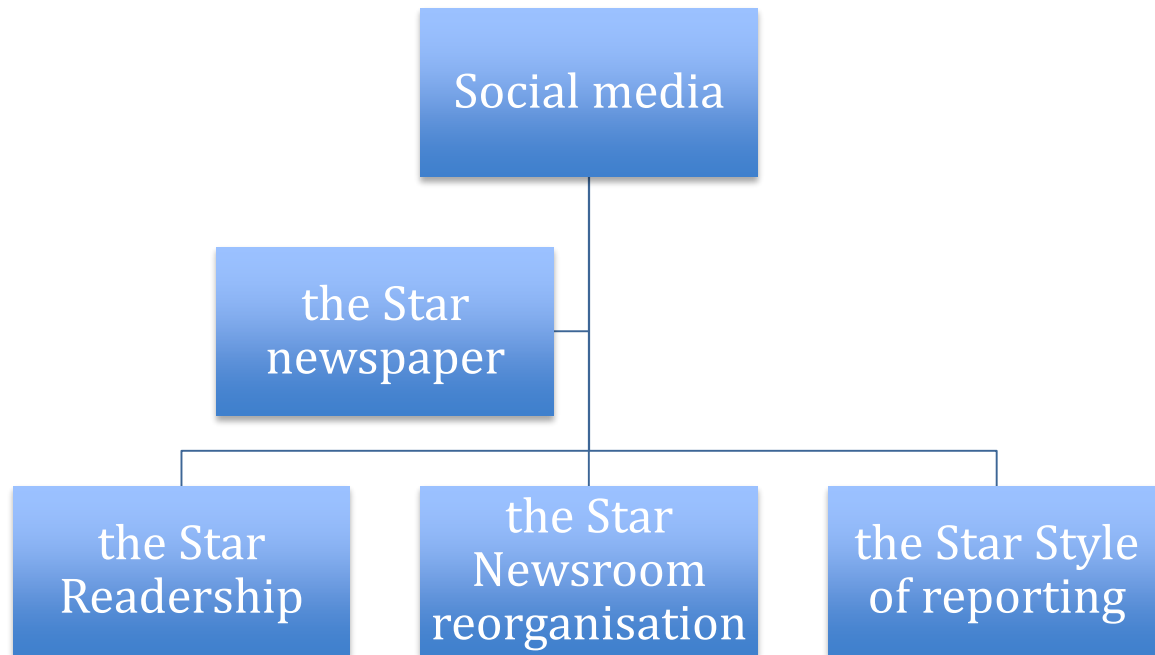
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

The above conceptual framework shows how various variables under study are interconnected. The conceptual framework synthesises researcher's literature in attributing changes in *the Star* readership, newsroom reorganisation, and style of reporting to influx of social media platforms. By identifying variables under research investigation, it provides a map to the researcher in pursuing the investigation based on her previous knowledge in the subject matter, viewpoints and observations.

Business dictionary defines conceptual framework as theoretical structure of principles, assumptions, and rules that glue together ideas comprising a much broader concept.

McGaghie *et al*. (2001) states that a conceptual framework "sets the stage" for the researcher to present research questions that drive the study based on the problem statement. The conceptual framework lies within a broader framework known as theoretical framework. The latter is pegged on tested theories that support findings of researchers in explaining how a given phenomenon occurs. For example, Boardman (2013) attributed dwindling revenue to declining newspaper circulation whereas others such as Palsey (2007) hold that readership is on the decline as more and more people turn to online news.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The researcher employed qualitative research approaches to collect data. This is because the study analysed news consumption habits and how it affects *Star* newspaper readership and *Star Digital* readership owing to new media influx.

3.1 Research Site

Being a case study, the research was carried out in a newsroom. The researcher reviewed the *Star* newspapers and *Star* online to generate data, and TV shows that discuss media issues including respondents comprised of the company's senior reporters and editors. The setting was also virtual given that millions of users of social media platforms are widely spread across the globe and hence the researcher relied on Google Analytics and social media hits to support the study.

3.2 Research approach

The study used qualitative methods and procedures in the study to collect, analyse, and present data. Qualitative research is defined as a naturalistic search that seeks multiple interpretations, relativity in meanings, detail, flexibility and particularity while studying a phenomenon or aspects that a researcher focuses on (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2011). In qualitative research, a researcher seeks broad understanding and possible meanings of the phenomena under study in its natural setting where it is not prone to manipulation. This approach does not focus solely on general characteristics but comes up with alternative interpretations and detailed explanations by deploying numerous interconnected interpretive practices (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2011).

In this light, qualitative research can be described as a field of study in its own right in that qualitative researchers focus on constructing social reality, the circumstances and challenges that shape inquiry and the intimate relationship that exists between researcher and subject of study Denzin and Lincoln (2005). Bird et al (1993) observes that qualitative approaches were introduced due to inadequacies' of quantitative studies. He argued that despite statistical evidence produced by quantitative research, and the fact that it appears to be authoritative; there are doubts whether it accurately represents its claims.

Freebody (2003) posits that qualitative approach arose out of the concern in the ways in which qualitative research from the natural sciences was being applied in social sciences.

In this study, data collected was presented in a narrative form using heavy descriptions that incorporated respondents' voices. The advantage of this approach is it helped to interpret and enrich accounts of the researcher's experiences seeing that she works in a newsroom. Additionally, respondents' viewpoints regarding growth of online sources and how they have been affected, challenges and solutions facing the Star newspaper, added new knowledge to the researcher. In addition, the approach helped to explore the subject under study in depth and construct the world from respondents' opinions.

3.3 Research method

The researcher employed case study method because it helped explain the process and outcome of the variables under investigation through observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases (Tellis, 1997).

Stake (2005) describes case as an entity or a specific bounded system where a researcher is able to point out some characteristics within a case and those outside but which are important to the case. In this study, case is The Star Publications. Gillham (2000) says a case can be an institution, office, family or class. Yin (2003) says case study is an empirical inquiry that seeks to understand a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, and moreso when there is a blurry line between the phenomenon and the context.

In qualitative research, case study stresses on the experiential knowledge of the case through investigations that deploy multiple information sources (Gillham, 2000).

The study used ethnographic research. Ethnography is the study of people in their own time and space, in their own everyday lives (Burawoy et al. 1991). This is because she is also a staffer at *The Star Publications,* and was able to study the behaviour of fellow journalists and establish how they have been affected by convergence and advent of new media, and corroborate their data with her experiences.

Hammersley (2006) says ethnography is viewed as a specific form of qualitative research that can be contrasted or compared with others, for instance, with life history. Creswell (2007) is of the view that as a process, it involves participant observation whereby the researcher is involved in the day-to-day business of the case under study and interviews participants.

This study helped the researcher understand perspectives of subjects being studied because they were able to explain and describe accurately their views and actions *The Star* has taken in response to social media influx.

3.4 Population of study

Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) describes research population or population of study as a set of all the units, subjects or objects, elements in the universe that a researcher is interested in in a given investigation. A research population is well-defined and individuals or objects of study have similar characteristics or traits. For example, respondents interviewed in this study had a career spanning decades in conventional journalism; have witnessed gradual shift from newspaper readership to online papers, and were employees of *The Star Publications* drawn from newsroom staff. The choice depends on researcher's experience and the evolutionary nature of the investigation process.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The researcher used non-probability sampling technique because inclusion criterion is quicker, easier, and cheaper when compared to probability sampling. In non-probability sampling researchers use sampling techniques such as purposive sampling to select individuals from research population that are of interest to the study. Collectively, the units or individuals form the sample to be studied by the researcher.

Researchers who use a qualitative research design tend to focus on intricacies of the sample being studied. In this study for example, inasmuch as respondents share characteristics their viewpoints on why *the Star* newspaper readership has been dismal, they had different viewpoints on why this was the case which arose from unique experiences. In this case, purposive sampling provided the researcher with strong theoretical reasons for her choice of individuals for the study.

A major characteristic of non-probability sampling is that researchers make the selection based on subjective judgement, rather than random selection (a probabilistic method), a pillar of probability

sampling techniques which seeks to achieve objectivity in selection of samples. Researchers draw on theories and practice to make generalisations.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, also referred to as selective or judgmental sampling, represents a group of sampling techniques that rely on the researcher's judgement in selecting subjects of study such as people, organisations, events, cases and pieces of data that are to be studied (Alvi, 2016). This technique can be used for general population category and study population that is precisely defined.

Purposive sampling technique is highly relevant in ethnographic research where specific knowledge is sought. This is because the researcher will decide what information she is seeking, and engage people who will provide the information from the point of knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002, Lewis &Sheppard 2006). The researcher selected specific staff to collect data from. The method is specific and not random (Tashakkori &Teddlie, 2003). Silverman (2005) argues purposive sampling demands critical thinking in selecting population and features to be studied, and in choosing sample case the researcher is interested.

In this study, the researcher picked experienced editors and reporters knowledgeable in the case being studied, with at least 10 years of experience in a newsroom.

3.6 Sampling Frame

Sampling frame refers to a set of source materials from which a researcher draws information from (Turner, 2003). It provides the means for selecting individuals of interest to the researcher's study so that she settles on only those who will provide deep insight required for the investigation being undertaken. For the purposes of this study, the researcher's sampling frame was drawn from the employees' database provided by *The Star's* Human Resource office to help generate data for key informant interviews. Other critical sources of information included *Star* website and online articles.

3.6.1 Inclusion criteria

The researcher employed selection criteria in the study based on the respondent's experience, position, and day-to-day activities. This was to ensure only relevant data is collected and provide the researcher with credible and reliable information.

Ong'ondo and Jwan (2011) define credibility as the extent to which a given study investigates what it claims to investigate and generates accurate reports of what happened in the field. This criterion enhances validity of the case being studied and aspects of dependability in qualitative research, trustworthiness, confirmability and transferability.

Yin (2003) and Mason (2002) describe transferability as the extent to which findings of a study can be generalised. Yin (2003), Mason (2002) and Nunan (1990) say dependability refers to extent to which the research procedure can be replicated for other studies, whereas confirmability as Gillham (2000) argues, stresses on neutrality of the researcher.

3.7 Sampling size

The size of the sample that was studied was based on the sample frame. According to Kumar (2005), the size of the frame is determined by the level of confidence the researcher has in a given sample to generate credible results; and accuracy of data that will be gathered, and the extent to which the data will be representative of the larger population.

The respondents comprised five experienced editors who have served as reporters in the past, and Chief Operations Officer who has served in a number of media organisations and hence were critical in shedding light on *The Star* newspaper circulation, style of reporting and readership. Most of the respondents have worked for *The Star* since the paper was rolled out. Data was therefore obtained from Chief, Political, Depth Content, Digital and Business editors, and Chief Operations Officer.

3.8 Research Instruments

3.8.1 Observation

Observation is a key instrument in generating data in qualitative research. It involves gathering data by watching participants closely while going about their normal duties with an aim of gaining in-depth understanding of the activities subjects under study engage in (Cohen et al., 2007). Observing enables a researcher to obtain data first hand because it focuses on what participants do

and not what they say they will do. Besides observing, the researcher gets to listen to participants and sometimes seek clarity by asking questions (Gillham, 2000). This involves application of analytic and conceptual skills, hence it is demanding.

Stake (1995) states that through observation the researcher develops "a relatively incontestable description" which can be analysed further. In this technique, the researcher used an observation guide to help her gather data from non-verbal cues in the newsroom. She was a participant observer. As The *Star's* copy editor, she shared in the experiences of journalists in the newsroom, and their body language helped in generating relevant data. An observation guide (see appendix II) helped plan, record, and organise data for analysis. It enabled the researcher to assess frequency of specific behaviour and its quality.

3.8.2 Review of secondary data

Researchers use various types of documents to mine data or get background information regarding research topic under study. Part of the information is usually included in literature review and conceptual framework, which helps in analysing data and triggers new discussions (Ong'ondo and Jwan, 2011). Information contained in documents, especially raw documents, is therefore powerful in qualitative studies. Raw documents refer to those which have not been processed or subjected to further analysis (Ong'ondo, 2010). Yin (2003) says secondary data aid in corroborating data derived from multiple sources. He, however, cautions that secondary information should not be treated as being factual always.

This study used raw documents such as 'Black Book' which captures jobs assigned to journalists. Other informational sources included Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report, which was handy in providing background information; newspaper articles, academic journals, past research projects and textbooks to gain insight into social media visa viz print media. The sources provided qualitative data which enhanced credibility of research. Though the researcher could interpret information contained in the documents, she was careful to maintain accuracy of the literature. The researcher used a document guide (see appendix III) in collecting data.

3.8.3 Key informant interviews

Cohen et al. (2007), citing Cannell and Khan (1968) describe interview as a tool of gathering data through verbal interaction between people. This method is intended to get into the mind of a participant to understand what he or she thinks, the person's attitude, and why an individual thinks the way he or she thinks. Interviews are the most important tools in collecting data in qualitative research. These types of interviews offer qualitative and in-depth analysis of the topic under study because participants report their experiences and thoughts thereby providing important insights.

Stake (1995) says qualitative approach rarely uses similar questions for each respondent in a survey. Each interview is viewed as having special stories and unique experiences to share. Further, interviews allow researchers flexibility in pursuing important leads (Yin, 2003; Roberts, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Nunan, 1992).

The purpose of employing key informant interviews was to collect information from a wide range of experts, who included editors, senior reporters, and media professionals who have first-hand knowledge about the subject. This is because they are in a position to provide insights into print media challenges, and can suggest solutions to the problems. Burns (1999) says interviews are common in collecting qualitative data. The researcher used an interview guide (see appendix I) to help in data collection.

3.9 Data collection procedure

The face-to-face open-ended interviews took 20 minutes and were carried out in two months, and recorded on phone. All respondents were contacted orally to set the date for the semi-structured interviews and were reminded via a text message.

Nunan (1992) says in semi-structured interviews the interview has an idea of the direction the conversation should take and expected outcome, but does not conduct an interview with pre-determined questions. This allows deeper interrogation of responses by respondents and enables the researcher to probe new dimensions as they emerge in an interview (Chen et al., 2007; Richards, 2003; Nunan, 1992).

Open-ended questions in interviews generate more elaborate data which is qualitatively richer (Anderson and Burns, 1989), but deny researcher sensitive material which can be generated by a questionnaire, which guarantees anonymity to respondents.

The researcher used interview guides or a schedule (appendix I) to enable them prepare adequately. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, for example to further investigate their responses (McNamara, 1999). Interview schedules and observation guides were prepared before the set date.

3.10 Data analysis and presentation

3.10.1 Thematic Analysis

The study analysed data thematically. Thematic analysis (TA) is a widely used analysis in qualitative research. It focuses on identifying patterned meaning in a dataset by examining, pinpointing and recording patterns (or themes) within given data. Themes are patterns within dataset and are vital in describing a phenomenon associated to specific research question, for example, the gradual decline in newspaper readership. As (Guest et al, 2012; Joffe 2011) points out, the process demarcates TA as a phenomenological method. This is because it is theoretically flexible and a reliable analytic method rather than just a methodology, which most qualitative approaches are.

Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis should be the first qualitative method a researcher should acquaint himself or herself with because it provides core skills that are necessary in many other types of analyses. It is a research method rather than a methodology (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke and Braun 2013). Unlike numerous qualitative methodologies, it is not tied to a theoretical or particular epistemological perspective.

Thematic analysis can be approached in many ways (Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998; Javadi & Zarea, 2016)

Given that the researcher relied on qualitative data to come up with findings of this study, thematic analysis allowed flexibility in narrative descriptions which provided detailed, rich and complex description and analysis of data. For example, use of direct quotes from respondents helped in establishing patterns in responses and draw valid conclusions.

3.10.2 Priori and Posteriori Analyses

A priori and a posteriori denote how or basis upon which a proposition might be known. Generally, a priori is something that is known independent of experience. The method relies on non-empirical knowledge, pure logic, thought and reason. A posteriori is known based on verifiable experience usually by observation; hence it depends on empirical knowledge to deduce the truth. Priori and posteriori terms were popularised by Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

The difference between a priori and a posteriori knowledge is a superficial one, and of little theoretical significance. In both cases, however, experience plays a critical role that is more than purely enabling but less than strictly evidential (Albert & Joshua, 2013). They further argue that the cases at issue are not usually special, but are representative of a wide range of others, including knowledge of axioms of elementary logical truths and set theories.

Priori estimates current position, whereas posteriori estimates where a researcher is after incorporating all data in a given study.

For example, it is a fact that *the Star* newspaper circulation has declined drastically, and it is a well-known fact that online platforms have invaded the space previously occupied by print media. By using priori and posteriori analyses, the researcher was able to verify the assumption that social media was largely to blame for dwindling revenues from the Star and identify other factors that emanated from key informant interviews.

3.11 Validity and Reliability of research instruments

3.11.1 Validity of research instruments

Validity refers to accuracy in measuring data. It is the extent to which analysis of the data is warranted. This depends on the role of research tools selected to conduct the study and why the researcher settled on them. Validity shows whether the study is believable and true, and whether it has tested what it was supposed to evaluate (Burns, 1999). The quality of instruments used is therefore critical (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

In this research, internal validity was used, focusing on the congruence of the findings with the reality. This type of validity test also deals with the extent to which the researcher observes and measures variables under study. To improve the internal validity of data and instruments, the

researcher might apply participatory, collaborative modes of study, researcher's bias and peer examination Merriam (1998).

3.11.2 Reliability of research instruments

Any research process must present data and findings that are reliable (Nunan, 1999). However, in qualitative data, it is fairly demanding and difficult to come up with identical results. It is because the data are in narrative form and subjective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) say researcher is better off thinking about consistency and dependability of the data. To increase the reliability of the findings, the researcher should explain explicitly various processes and inquiry phases. Every aspect of the study should be elaborated, the rationale, design of the study and the subjects.

The study used internal reliability as it deals with the consistency of collecting, analysing and evaluating data. Internal reliability may be obtained when the researcher on reanalyzing the data achieves similar findings as the original investigator. The question is whether other researchers employing the same analysis (Burns (1999) would produce similar results

3.11.3 Reflexivity

The researcher is a copy editor at *The Star* and therefore made inferences based on daily routines. Malterud (2001) says reflexity denotes an attitude of a researcher where he or she systematically reconstructs knowledge at every stage of a study. His or her perspective then shapes all research approaches. However, there is an assumption that the researcher in this position might be biased. But she will indicate all preconceptions in the research process. As Malterud (2001) points out, preconceptions are not biases if the researcher mentions them. Different researchers approach a given study from varied perspectives and positions. And while some people may look at it as a validity and reliability problem, others believe different perspectives provide a broader and more developed way of understanding and describing complex phenomena.

3.12 Ethical considerations

The research project was carried out in a professional and in an academic manner. All respondents who did not wish to be named were assured anonymity. It was defended before a panel, and upon successful completion of defense, the researcher was issued with a Certificate of Fieldwork (See Appendix IV) and proceeded to collect data. Observation, interview, and document guides have

been attached. The researcher defended the final study before a Board of Examiners and was issued with a Certificate of Correction, (See Appendix V). After amending the corrections as suggested by the board, the work was tested for originality and she was issued with a Certificate of Originality (See Appendix VI).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Overview

This chapter details the findings of the study and analysis that arose from the results. It begins with an overview of the results and provides brief explanations of the important issues that emerged from the study. These include comparison of social media readership with print newspaper, newsroom reorganisation in response to the advent of new media, newspaper circulation and how social media has changed the style of reporting in *The Star*. The chapter will analyse issues that arose from research questions.

4.1 Background of the findings

Characteristics of analysed content was based on *the Star* website readership using Google Analytics, KBNS statistics on newspaper circulation, the extent to which newsroom has converged its operations, and comparison of styles of reporting for the stories on print newspaper and social media platforms. The information was collected from *Star's* website www.the-star.co.ke, Twitter handle @TheStarKenya and Facebook page The Star, Kenya, as well as comments from respondents. The focus of the study was to find out how social media platforms have impacted on print newspaper.

On newspaper readership, for example, all respondents said most readers prefer social media content because it is interactive and audiences like platforms which allow them to comment on the issues reported. The findings revealed a blurry line between news consumers and news sources because some comments gave rise to a story. From such results, related issues were analysed and how they relate to the theory in Chapter Two. Other emanating themes included convergence, brevity, plagiarism, armchair journalism, yellow journalism, and censorship of readers' comments on various social media platforms.

Table 4.1: Summary of content areas covered by the Star

4.1.1 Star's reporting style

Scope of coverage	Topics covered
National	Politics, Commentaries/OpEds, Crime, Health, Sports, Environment, Education and Business
County	Politics, Education and Health
Others	Entertainment/Lifestyle and Foreign

Table 4.1 highlights sections covered by *The Star* and the analysis examines how reporting of various news has changed significantly since the advent of new media.

4.1.1.1 Big stories first break on Star Digital

Star's business editor (Peter Kiragu) says unlike in the past when big stories were given priority in print, today top stories are first published on *the Star's* social media platforms and website. Stories that have a political angle, including business articles, are given priority since the paper rebranded as "Kenya's leading political newspaper".

> *Stories on other topics listed above are not usually given prominence*
> *unless they take a political angle. Star digital readership influences*
> *the types of stories to publish and how to frame them (Kiragu)*

4.1.1.2 Production of several editions

According to Editor in Chief Charles Kerich, who is also the Head of Content, Kenya is a highly political society and *The Star* has taken a direction that conforms to readers' needs and preferences and what sells the paper. Web traffic on political stories, he says, informed rebranding of *The Star*. For example, *The Star* produces at least two editions of the daily – one with a national appeal and others that target regional politics for instance at the Coast or in Nyanza.

4.1.1.3 Use of dramatic photos on print and videos for online stories

Editor in Chief Mr Charles Kerich says web stories are today illustrated with dramatic photos and videos, a decision which has been attributed to readers' affinity to 'flavoured' stories. Further, *The*

Star was the first full colour daily and the paper intends to stay ahead of the game to compete with social media content, Kerich says a story that is accompanied by a video attracts higher readership. For example the story titled "Drama as Babu Owino, Jaguar fight in Parliament" reported on October 10, 2017, in which the two first-time MPs exchanged blows drove traffic to the web traffic when a video of the scene was posted on *The Star's* website. Further, all tweets are illustrated with a photo.

4.1.1.4 Brevity

Depth Content Editor Francis Openda said stories being published in the *Star* are today shorter because most readers scan through social media content given the volume of information posted on various sites. For example, in the county section, some pages carry up to seven stories, with some having illustrations. Figure 4.1 and figure 4.2 show screenshots of excerpts of stories reported on the website.
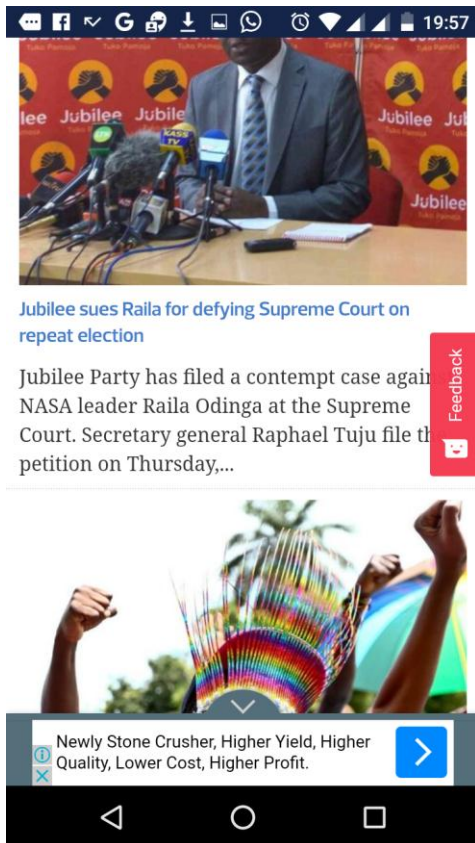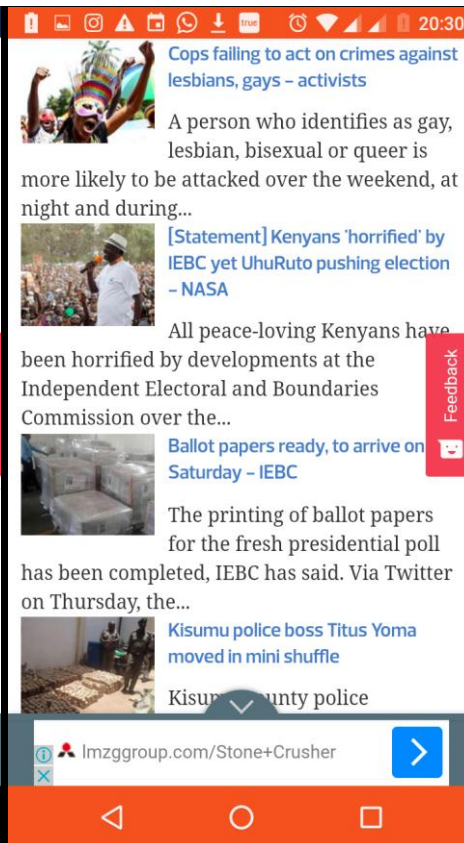

Figure 4.1: Source, Star website   *Figure 4.2: Source, Star website*

4.1.1.5 Focus on Day-Two Journalism

According to Star Political Editor Paul Ilado, the paper has adopted Day-Two journalism perspective, usually a follow up on news that first break on social media. He says to complement social media's content, articles in print are more analytical and give rise to exclusive stories.

He said feedback received on the website and other social media platforms gives editors an idea of readers' take on their content, which helps them to improve stories in print. He therefore sees social media as complementary and not a threat to print journalism.

> *Online journalist is the modern day journalist and must ride on conventional and digital journalism. It enables us to continuously innovate and improve the overall content of the paper (Ilado)*

4.1.1.6 Use of Facebook and Twitter as news sources

A senior reporter cum Editor Felix Olick said The *Star* journalists use Twitter and Facebook because most prominent personalities are an important source of information and usually break news on their social media pages. This has compelled journalists to be more critical to avoid selling stale news, while being cautious of fake news which may find itself on print. Although a tweet has 140 characters, the reporter says, it has taken the place of a newspaper and news conferences in breaking news.

> *I mostly use Twitter and Facebook to generate news which has made it easier to access content and write for all platforms (Olick)*

This, the respondent says, has made news gathering easier, less costly and he gets to post it on highly interactive forums. *The Star* news consumers therefore get news in real time.

> *There has been an increase in the content being reported as journalists report for multiple platforms and source for news from Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and WhatsApp (Kerich)*

4.1.1.7 Publication of analytical content on print

Olick says the print, through *Siasa* pullout, focuses on providing more details on the consequences of what has already been reported. For example, an analysis on October 7, 2017, authored by Joe Adama titled 'Nasa's one-tribe demos and Judiciary-EACC standoff' went beyond reporting on the event of the day to having a deeper insight into the political crises facing Kenya.

*Due to news generated by tweets, the newspaper reporting has
therefore moved from covering the 5Ws and H to 'so what' (Olick)*

The respondent also said social media is a threat to journalism ethics and fairness in reporting, which are cardinal values in conventional journalism. Graphic images posted on social media are lifted from other sources and put on the print version, which disturb readers. For example, photos of teachers executed by suspected al Shabaab militias in Mandera in November 2014 were put on the front page of *The Star*.

4.1.1.8 Publication of sideshows

The use of smartphones, the online editors say, enables journalists to report news from the comfort of their homes, with information trickling in real time. Olick, however, expressed fears that it has led to armchair journalism and reporters sometimes file reports of sideshows. For example, during former US President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya, the main reason for his tour, which was to attend the Global Business Summit was not given prominence. He said reporters concentrated on his official limousine the 'Beast' and his security team.

The reporter attributed this to armchair journalism and focus on sideshows.

4.1.2 Star's Digital Readership

The Star website uses Google Analytics to track its web traffic, according to the diagram below,

	Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
		4,681,421 % of Total: 100.00% (4,681,421)	3,750,497 % of Total: 100.00% (3,750,497)	00:03:11 Avg for View: 00:03:11 (0.00%)	2,091,095 % of Total: 100.00% (2,091,095)	54.68% Avg for View: 54.68% (0.00%)	44.67% Avg for View: 44.67% (0.00%)	$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% ($0.00)
11.	/news/2017/10/13/you-will-know-kenya-has-its-owners-after-october-26-election-mandago_c1651673	25,959 (0.55%)	23,406 (0.62%)	00:04:23	16,585 (0.79%)	77.21%	66.27%	$0.00 (0.00%)
12.	/news/2017/10/16/flying-squad-raids-billionaire-jimmy-wanjigis-muthaiga-home_c1653552	24,579 (0.53%)	21,814 (0.58%)	00:03:29	10,809 (0.52%)	68.45%	48.94%	$0.00 (0.00%)
13.	/news/2017/10/10/who-when-where-mwilu-and-muite-trade-words-over-iebc-case_c1649536	23,546 (0.50%)	21,356 (0.57%)	00:05:03	10,845 (0.52%)	66.42%	52.83%	$0.00 (0.00%)
14.	/news/2017/10/11/raila-dares-iebc-to-declare-uhuru-president-says-kenyans-will-resist_c1650782	22,857 (0.49%)	20,749 (0.55%)	00:04:38	4,928 (0.24%)	65.56%	42.53%	$0.00 (0.00%)
15.	/news/2017/10/12/ekuru-aukot-court-ruling-scuttles-raila-odinga-plan_c1651113	22,778 (0.49%)	20,642 (0.55%)	00:06:11	7,307 (0.35%)	70.92%	52.03%	$0.00 (0.00%)
16.	/news/2017/10/14/raila-kneeling-before-europeans-kofi-annan-not-welcome-says-uhuru_c1652435	21,461 (0.46%)	19,285 (0.51%)	00:04:23	7,833 (0.37%)	66.68%	46.51%	$0.00 (0.00%)
17.	/news/2017/10/11/nasa-demos-well-wisher-to-give-bread-and-sodas-daily-antonios-looted_c1650901	20,908 (0.45%)	19,260 (0.51%)	00:03:54	8,029 (0.38%)	69.88%	48.02%	$0.00 (0.00%)
18.	/news/2017/10/14/2-kq-staff-in-drug-ring-nabbed-by-multi-agency-police-at-jkia_c1652504	20,882 (0.45%)	18,477 (0.49%)	00:03:54	10,732 (0.51%)	75.98%	59.09%	$0.00 (0.00%)
19.	/news/2017/10/13/corridors-of-power_c1651499	20,311 (0.43%)	18,713 (0.50%)	00:03:55	9,228 (0.44%)	75.85%	57.83%	$0.00 (0.00%)

Figure 4.3 Source, Google Analytics

there is a fairly high traffic on the website, and this was replicated for all sensational political stories, according to Online Editor Joseph Kariuki.

4.1.2.1 Regular news updates

According to the online editor, while newspaper readership was stagnant during the day, social media audience readership fluctuated. He attributed this to feedback posted on the web by readers and updating existing stories as more additional information trickled in.

4.1.2.2 Easy-on-the-eye website

The online editor Joseph Kariuki also noted the website appeals more to young readers and the secret is keeping the design simple and easy-on-the-eye to attract young readers and those advanced in age, which has given it a competitive edge against other news sites. In the figure above, for example, the top political story number 11 attracted more than 4 million viewers.

> *News breaks first on the Internet, told on social media platforms before*
> *being discussed and analysed on other platforms (Kariuki)*

The print newspaper targets audiences between 20 and 50 years and the website plus all its social media sites must appeal to this age bracket. Star Editor in Chief said digital readership is growing and newspaper readership is on a gradual decline owing to the uptake of online news.

> *However, newspaper will not die completely but hard copies will*
> *be fewer in years to come, and as such the dailies may become*
> *a premium product targeting a few readers. The future is digital (Kariuki)*

Political Editor Paul Ilado said some readers believe in physical newspapers and that will not change. But he added that majority of readers prefer online news and as editors there is need to think about digital readers first. See figure 4.3 above.

4.1.3 Newspaper circulation
4.1.3.1 Dwindling revenue

According to Chief Operations Officer Agnes Kalekye, *The Star* circulation has declined, though she adds all print dailies world over have been adversely affected by social media. She says Internet users have eaten into the *Star's* share in the market.

...but an increased fleet of vehicles would boost circulation, as it would enhance accessibility to remote areas. Decline in circulation is also worsened by the high price (Sh60) of a newspaper and most readers say they would rather read online content for free (Kalekye)

Kerich says print newspaper circulation has also been affected by the circulation of online version of print, which discourages readers from buying the hard copy.

Despite the uptake of online news, online advertisements are still not a major source of revenue and most readers skip YouTube ads and go directly to a story (Kerich)

This means revenues remain flat or decline. Editor in Chief says the decline has led to dwindling revenues, and the little amount digital platforms generate is not enough to supplement income from newspaper adverts. Additionally, existence of social media influencers such as Caroline Mutoko of Radio Africa Group and Larry Madowo of Nation Media Group, who have over a million followers, has also affected newspaper circulation as more readers turn to the media personalities for updates.

4.1.3.2 Inadequate compelling content

Circulation as Ilado says has also declined due to publication of inadequate compelling content which does not appeal to target audiences, and fails to give the paper a competitive advantage against other online news.

Slow transition to reality of social media, and inability of some editors to transform themselves to reality of the day is a contributing factor (Ilado).

According to the Political Editor, *The Star* rebranded early in 2016 to attract readership. And because strong brands are needed to compete effectively with content from other social media platforms. He, however, says the rebranding is yet to translate into profits.

4.1.3.3 Poor strategies

The Political Editor said lack of new strategies of selling newspaper, unattractive newspaper designs, and poor strategy on how to acquire new markets is hurting newspaper circulation. He says newspapers have to continuously innovate to stay afloat.

4.1.4 Newsroom reorganisation

4.1.4.1 Convergence

According to the political editor, social media has become an integral part in news reporting and this calls editors to redo the way they organise news. Ilado says reporters can no longer report for one entity.

Ilado added that convergence is inevitable. Social media has forced media organisations to converge operations to get a lean team that is efficient, owing to declining newspaper revenues. He says it enables newsrooms to leverage on the few resources they have to deliver for all platforms.

> *Due to declining revenues, it does not make economic sense to*
> *send reporters from various entities of Radio Africa Group to cover*
> *the same function (Ilado)*

Online Editor said no one understands online space 100%, and hence there is need for a new avenue that requires able leadership, which should be cascaded all the way down, citing the new designation of the Star's CEO William Pike as Director of Online Content.

Olick said since the advent of social media, reporters are expected to produce content that fit into all platforms. Despite being a print journalist, he says he records video for all Radio Africa Group's websites and writes stories for the *Star*, XFM, Kiss TV, KISS 100, and Radio Jambo.

> *Working for print, audio, online or television means the multimedia*
> *digital environment has brought down the wall separating broadcast and*
> *print journalism (Olick)*

The reporter acknowledges his work as a journalist has been affected although in a positive way, and he has benefited from social media platforms. He says reporters have had to adapt to remain relevant to survive in the dynamic news gathering and dissemination trade by embracing social media. The respondent adds that unlike in the past when reporters were moving from one place to another looking for news.

> *Today they can know what is trending at the click of a button or share*
> *news and ideas in a converged newsroom (Olick)*

Depth Content Editor said there is change of mindset and operations in a converged newsroom because readers have changed the way they consume information though some journalists of yester years are still resistant to change. He, however, said convergence has led to massive resignation with reporters who have been redeployed to serve other departments quitting their jobs. The online editor says social media has revolutionised the mode of covering news, reporting and how it is treated on different platforms, and hence the need to report for multiple entities, adding it has contributed to publishing of vibrant content in both print and website.

4.1.5 Change in editors' gatekeeping role
4.1.5.1 Tighter control of publishable content

The Editor in Chief said editor's gatekeeping roles as far as *Star* newspaper content is concerned has not changed much and social media has not eroded his role as an editor. He said although editors do not dictate what the reader should read or set agenda, they decide which content will appear on *The Star's* print newspaper, website and its social media platforms. Kerich said more than ever before, editors verify accuracy of all stories before they go online or in the newspaper.

He attributed the increased responsibilities to plagiarism of published content, and the measure is therefore part of the efforts to block stories that have partisan views.

Due to rising cases of fake news, for example, a post that indicated NEMA officials are stopping individuals and illegally searching them to recover outlawed plastic bags in September, 2017, editors are today more aware and cautious and treat stories received from reporters with a pinch of salt, Kiragu (2017) says. Editors more than before sift through stories to curtail spread of hate messages, ensure balanced coverage of news and objectivity of stories, especially in OPe-ds, which are in most cases authored by politicians and commentators with political leanings.

> *Our major assignment is to confirm whether what we are receiving*
> *is genuine or fake news. We verify the accuracy of the content (Kiragu)*

4.1.5.2 Rise of plagiarism

The Editor in Chief said social media users lift stories from *The Star's* online platforms and publish them on their social media pages without attribution, which waters down the content published in print newspaper. The online editor says there are rising cases of plagiarised news, often picked from social media, and he attributed the situation to laziness and the rise of untrained charlatans masquerading as social media journalists. The situation has gotten worse due to the scoop mentality and the competition among journalists over who breaks news first.

> *Some tweets are full of grammatical errors because some social journalists' priority is being the first to break news (Kerich)*

4.2 Further observations

4.2.1 Interactive online content

The study revealed in readership, for example, most readers prefer social media content because it is highly interactive and audiences go for platforms which allow them to contribute and make comments on a particular story. Ability to access multiple news platform influences the choice of readers. The number of pages for *the Star* has remained the same (48 pages), which could be a pointer that newspaper readership is not improving. Reporters also search for news by Googling and paraphrase news stories posted on other websites, further entrenching armchair journalism.

4.2.2 Newspaper apps and online newspapers

Newspaper apps have removed the need to buy hard copies, which has further hurt circulation. Further, *The Star* mails newsletters to their audiences through emails upon subscription (See Fig 4.4).
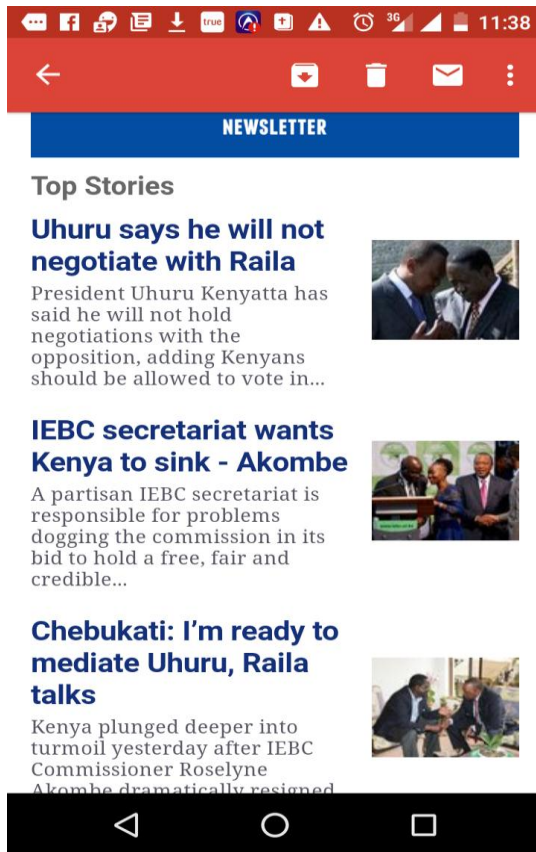
Figure 4.4, Source Star website

Readers who have been buying newspapers for years have not stopped doing so, which means social media uptake is higher among the younger generation. The findings showed there is a blurry line between news consumers and news producers because readers' comments in most cases form important basis for news generation. Despite social media wave, all editors said readers who have for years read print newspaper are not likely to stop buying hard copies, but the current and future generation is likely to fully embrace social media.

4.2.3 Influence from entertainment websites

All respondents in general said only political stories and *The Star's* gossip column *Word Is*, drive web traffic to social media owing to the sensational reporting, as well as stories on *Mpasho* website, an entertainment platform. Journalists usually source for *Mpasho* stories on Instagram and some of the stories find their way to *The Star*.

4.2.4 Little effect in placement of stories

The advent of social media has minimised the need to make last-minute changes on stories to be carried on print because breaking news is first posted on the web. Social media therefore has reduced the importance of placement.

4.3 Conclusion

In line with the objectives of the study, the findings show social media has greatly affected the *Star* in terms of reporting style, content, circulation and the paper's readership both print and digital platforms. The results further showed social media complements print newspaper, and if media managers leverage on new media tools, newspaper content will improve, become more compelling, and go beyond the 5Ws and H, to answer the "so what question."

From the findings, it is obvious that they relate to Innovations and Diffusion theory discussed in Chapter 2, whereby users are more inclined to use new technology owing to its compatibility and high rate of adoption. It helped to explain the need for media managers to come up with more innovative products that resonate well with the needs of readers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarises findings, draws conclusions and provides recommendations on further areas of research in line with the objectives of this study. The main objective of the study was to establish the impact of social media on print journalism, a case study of *The Star* Publications. The research found that *The Star* capitalises on its social media platforms to sell the newspaper. The rebranding of the paper to a political newspaper is part of the efforts being made to enhance *The Star's* competitiveness with online content, coupled with publication of short articles with compelling or hard-hitting headlines. There is also the general feeling that digital technology is the future, and news organisations must adjust accordingly to the reality of the day to remain relevant to the readers. However, there is a gap in that editors overly publish sensational news to sell the paper at the expense of informative articles that can educate the masses and transform lives. The *Star* gives prominence to political content and important news on business and environment take a back seat. Numbers alone cannot sustain a newspaper but rather compelling and quality content that can withstand the test of time.

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Objectives

The findings established that social media has had an impact on *The Star*. Based on interviews and observations made, it revealed the *Star's* style of reporting has changed to accommodate audiences' diversified needs brought about by ease of social media technology. The results further revealed the media organisation is alive to the fact that social media is indispensable and responded by reorganising its newsroom by converging departments to leverage new opportunities to improve its content and boost readership. Additionally, the study found that digital readership has overtaken print and the trend will continue given the high rate of uptake of social media and readers' affinity to interactive platforms. Further observations revealed a thin line between news producers and consumers.

5.1.2 Methodology

The study employed a purely qualitative approach and the findings were analysed using thematic analysis by establishing themes and patterns of data collected. It used purposive sampling and relied on data collected from experienced reporters, editors and the chief operating officer all who have worked in the newspaper industry for many years and witnessed the gradual shift from print to digital news. The respondents thus gave indepth analysis of the questions under study.

5.1.3 Findings

5.1.3.1 Digitisation influence on consumption habits

The research established digitisation and use of smartphones have changed news consumption habits. The fact that people can access Twitter, Facebook, among other social media sites, for news, has removed the need to buy newspapers. However, overreliance on social media exposes audiences to fake news, unbalanced coverage, content that lacks objectivity and hate speech. The use of gory images to hype a story to drive web traffic has eroded the roles of the media which, among others, is to inform and educate, due to increased appetite for profits. However, print newspapers are guided by cardinal journalistic values namely accuracy, fairness and objectivity, and editors verify social media stories before running them on print. This means traditional newspaper has retained its credibility in terms of its content because it is subjected to thorough checks before going to press.

5.1.3.2 Decline in newspaper revenue

The study has further established social media platforms have eaten into the revenue of print newspapers as more and more readers consume *Star Digital* news and circulation dips. Despite the uptake of social media, adverts on YouTube have not been able to generate enough money to supplement newspaper's dwindling revenue because audiences hardly click on ads and skip them most of the time. But despite the setback, new media is viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat due to its flexibility and accessibility. *The Star* hopes to leverage on modern technology to improve its content and boost readership. To meet this objective, *The Star* upgraded its website by simplifying its design to attract larger audience and increase its market share. Editors have been working to generate sharper and hard-hitting headlines to drive traffic to its website.

5.1.3.3 Newsroom reorganisation

Further, the research revealed the impact social media has had on *the Star* newspaper has led to newsroom reorganisation to leverage multiple platforms to deliver more to the audience at lower costs. *The Star* has embraced convergence with journalists required to deliver news for the Group's TV channel, radio stations and newspaper which has helped *the Star* to improve its content. The fact that one journalist can take photos, videos and write stories at the same event for various platforms means the paper is making efforts to survive even with dwindling resources, because reporters work for the same pay or less. That almost all reporters are required to be multi-skilled is a win not only for employees but for *the Star*. Further, videos taken and posted on relevant online platforms make the content more vibrant and drive web traffic, which increases chances of attracting more readers.

5.1.3.4 Rise in plagiarism

The advent of social media has given rise to plagiarism, spread of fake news, half-baked news, and this has changed the role of editors to that of verifying each and every story that lands on their desk. According to Kerich, their gatekeeping role has not been eroded. Inasmuch as editors have little control over what readers read on social media platforms, they still select stories to be published on *the Star* and reject those laden with hate speech or heavily loaded with partisan views. Plagiarism, especially, he says has been a major challenge because given the fast pace of the newsroom, there is usually no time to run the stories through a plagiarism checker.

This has been worsened by scoop mentality where journalists compete on who will break the news first. Additionally, social media journalists bypass the rigorous gatekeeping process of the newsroom and post news on their digital platforms. This competition for social media space has led some reporters to gradually abandon their journalistic ethics of verifying stories to ensure balance and good taste. In their gatekeeping role, Kerich opined social media tools have made their work easier as reporters can form a WhatsApp group and be assigned work digitally instead of using a 'black book' which was commonly used in the years gone by. This means social media enables editors to follow up on stories filed by reporters.

5.1.3.5 Rise to day-two journalism

The study has also established that the advent of social media has given rise to day-two journalism. In this scenario, while *Star* website concentrates on breaking news, the newspaper provides more detailed and analytical articles. The newspaper content focuses on the way forward and does not carry reports of press conferences, which according to Depth Content editor Francis Openda adds depth to stories published. Social media content provides the basis for pursuing exclusive stories, as opined by the political editor, because Twitter and Facebook posts from prominent personalities, who are usually major sources of news, provide significant leads. The editor says since the advent of new media, the print carries more exclusive and investigative stories than ever before.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been given to enable *The Star* leverage more on social media platforms**.**

5.2.1 Rise in plagiarism

In this era of social media revolution, plagiarism was found to be a major challenge that could easily affect credibility of the entire media organisation. It was therefore recommended that through the Media Council of Kenya, editors should champion for laws that regulate social media journalists and provide guidelines on how to share online information with local news organisations. This, it was suggested, will reduce hours editors and subeditors spend verifying and crosschecking content of a news story.

5.2.2 Multiple delivery of news

The requirement that reporters should deliver for multiple platforms has put a lot of pressure on journalists. For professionalism to be maintained and to avoid compromising on the quality of content, reporters should be trained before taking up new roles to enhance efficiency, and more so on content generation. Some employees quit because they failed to find their place in a converged newsroom, and hence the need to ensure *The Star* retains talent to achieve more growth.

5.2.3 Newspaper branding

To minimise massive losses incurred by print newspaper, there is need to position newspapers as brand products, especially in a country where papers have been labelled 'meat wrappers'. Maybe it is time newspaper industry sourced the services of a communications expert to change the perception, which may boost readership.

5.2.4 Convergence

There is need to carry out further research to establish if newsroom convergence has been successful in managing the impact social media has had on print journalism

5.3 Overall conclusions of the study

The findings show that social media plays a key role in print newspaper performance. Today, it is almost impossible for any journalist to work effectively without reference to Facebook and Twitter among other online platforms. It is obvious from the results that *The Star* uses social media to complement her newspaper content. There is a gradual transition, especially among the youths, from buying newspapers to reliance on social media news. This shows new innovations that live up to the expectations of users have higher uptake. From the findings, it is obvious that today's readers want to comment and voice their opinion on the content they read and hence the reason why majority prefers online news where they can give feedback. The impact of social media is undeniable going by the efforts *The Star* has made to remain relevant and increase profits. This includes rebranding the paper and embracing convergence.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

This research was based on thematic analysis and employed a small sample of employees working for *The Star*. The study may therefore not provide conclusive findings bearing in mind news consumers were not interviewed. However, the findings are a preview of the larger picture. There is therefore need for a longitudinal study which will employ a larger sample to bring out views of readers and their perception of today's newspaper content.

In addition, respondents interviewed gave their opinions on issues raised and therefore the responses cannot be wholly relied upon, bearing in mind they are employees of *The Star* and would therefore give answers that are convenient for them and their employer. There is, therefore, a need to assess the extent to which the responses can be relied on.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Key Informant Interview Guide

1. Do you use social media to gather news? If so, how? Which platforms do you use and how have they impacted on your work?

2. How has social media affected your work?

3. How would you describe the impact social media has had on Star's journalism ethics?

4. How would you describe *the Star* newspaper performance in the face of new media?

5. Are you aware social media has affected Star's newspaper circulation?

6. In what ways would you say Star's newsroom has been reorganised to respond to social media wave?

7. How has convergence changed the style of reporting for the Star newspaper and its digital content? Describe the changes

Appendix II: Observation Guide

1. The quality of content filed by reporters for publishing in a converged newsroom

2. The relations between reporters and editors in the newsroom

3. The attitude of reporters towards multi-delivery of news

Appendix III: Document Guide

1. Documents with relevant and recent information related to variables of the study
2. Text books and other secondary materials that have adequate facts and figures and relevant context
3. Research papers that provide comparative analysis of related studies

Appendix IV: Certificate of Fieldwork

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi
Telephone: 254-02-3318262, Ext. 28080, 28061
Director's Office: +254-204913208 (Direct Line)
Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-245566
Email: director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke

P.O. Box 30197-00100
Nairobi, GPO
Kenya

REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on ___18/7/2017___ in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: _____K50/80666/2015_____

Name: _____Jane Wairimu Kgute_____

Title: _____The Impact of Social Media on Print Journalism: A case study of the Star Newspaper_____

Dr Samuel Siringi
SUPERVISOR   SIGNATURE   10/7/2017 DATE

Dr Samuel Siringi
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR SIGNATURE   10/7/2017 DATE

Dr. Ndeti Ndati
DIRECTOR   SIGNATURE   10.7.17 DATE

(University of Nairobi stamp: DIRECTOR — 14 NOV 2018 — SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION)

Appendix V: Certificate of Corrections

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on _16/02/2018_ in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project/thesis can be allowed to proceed for binding.

Reg. No: _K50/80666/2015_

Name: _JANE KIGUTA_

Title: _The Impact of Social Media on Print Journalism: A case study of the Star Newspaper_

Dr Samuel Siringi
SUPERVISOR   SIGNATURE   14/12/18 DATE

Dr Samuel Siringi
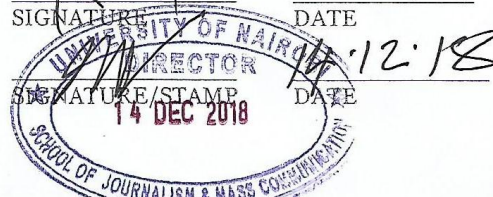ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR   SIGNATURE   14/12/18 DATE

Dr. Ndeti Ndati
DIRECTOR   SIGNATURE/STAMP   14.12.18 DATE

14 DEC 2018
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