



How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e

An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news
into the traditional news cycle

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DECLARATION

I, Sheetal Cross, hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted previously for examination toward any degree or diploma qualification at any other University. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Durban University of Technology.

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DEDICATION

This research is in honour of all those who have dedicated themselves to the service of journalism, worldwide. This study was conducted in anticipation of understanding the new media digital trends that are influencing or affecting the media industry globally. It is the hope of the researcher that any insight herein will assist media entities all over the world towards building a new, more collaborative, ethically founded model of incorporation on the role of traditional and non-traditional reporting.

I would like to thank my Durban University of Technology (DUT) Supervisor, Professor. Surendra Colin Thakur, my DUT Co-Supervisor, Ayesha Mall, and Tarryn Frankish (DUT MJOURN Coordinator) for their continued encouragement, knowledge, extensive wisdom, experience and guidance during the arduous process entailed in the completion of the DUT MJOURN course. I would also like to acknowledge and thank independent academic editor, Hilmar Klaus Luckhoff, for his qualified assistance with the editing of this dissertation. His dedication, consideration and guidance propelled my own efforts tenfold, nearer to the point of submission. I would also like to thank Professor Annelie Jordaan who worked tirelessly with me to ensure that I produced an impactful research model which would encourage future research and development in the field.

My gratitude also goes to the members of the organisation Health-e, their management, staff and citizen camera-witnesses, and associates/citizen journalists. Allowing me to study their organisation's media model has helped inform my research. Their assistance with access to information and interviews has also provided me with insight into the development of media collaboration and an evolved media reporting model.

Finally, I wish to thank and acknowledge Durban University of Technology (DUT), whose amazing, educational resources have led to the success and completion of this project.

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ABSTRACT

Recent rapid technological development has driven mass communication growth through the use of digital and social media platforms. Easier global new access has resulted in a multitude of changes within the media industry. These extend to include the influence of traditional media houses over the communication agenda as well as the manner in which news is produced, disseminated, and consumed.

The historic relationship between news media and its audience was a one-way communication stream. However, evolving trends in technology and digital influence has prompted a paradigm shift in favour of a more interactive communication model. In this context, the audience is provided with the opportunity to respond to news information in real-time in an online space. The rise of mobile journalism has also promoted greater access to information with a shorter turnaround time for exposure. This expedition of media sharing has led to an influx of information access not previously afforded to the ordinary citizen. Through the influence of information and communications technologies (ICTs), the audience is no longer merely a consumer of news, but participates actively in the process of news gathering, dissemination, promotion, and consumption. The rise of technologies that support audience participation ushered in the emergence of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing as a phenomenon that challenges several conventions inherent to traditional methods of media reporting.

However, little is known about how such developments have affected the manner in which news is produced and consumed in the South African setting. Therefore, a need has arisen to understand how citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing have been incorporated as part of the news reporting cycle in the local environment. In response to this research challenge, a qualitative interpretivist study was undertaken to explore how citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing have been incorporated by Health-e as part of the news cycle in South Africa. Toward this end, thematic analysis, guided by the Media Synchronicity Theory as a theoretical lens, was performed on the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with management and staff members at a local organisation named Health-e News.

In conclusion, this study provided novel evidence on how (such) changes have been incorporated into a more formal setting within the media industry, where traditional journalists and citizen journalists are employed in a more collaborative partnership. In addition, this study observed the news media watchdog element regarding government regulations where health is concerned, and regarding some of the challenges that arose when news coverage on serious health crises were left uncovered.

KEYWORDS: Traditional media, Non-traditional Media, Media Convergence, Citizen Journalism, Citizen Camera-Witnesses, Mobile Technologies, Wi-Fi, Media Synchronicity Theory, Media Richness Theory, Information and Communications Technologies, Mobile Journalism (MOJO)

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Offline Examples

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
DTP	Desktop Publisher
MOJO	Mobile Journalism
MST	Media Synchronicity Theory
MRT	Media Richness Theory
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NHI	National Health Insurance
ICTs	Information and Communications Technologies
TMSA	Titanium Media South Africa (Pty) LTD
SIC	Sic erat scriptum – “Thus was it written”
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is important to note that there was no conflict of interest from the researcher during this research. The researcher is a former part-time lecturer at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), where she is currently a student registered for the MJOURN programme. There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and the participants, who were not related to, or otherwise connected with the researcher.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The development of novel technologies and social media platforms is changing the manner in which news media is produced, disseminated, distributed, and consumed. In particular, there has been a shift in favour of non-traditional and online media sources, which has important influence on journalism as a profession and the media industry as a whole. Faster communication and greater collective access to information at a lower cost fortuitously realised the latent potential of citizens, without formal training in journalism, to be involved as crucial role-players in the production of news media. This concept has become known as citizen journalism, citizen camera-witnessing or, as stated by Jurrat (2011), participatory, open source, street, networked or guerrilla journalism, as well as self-generated and user-generated content. Andén-Papadopoulos (2013: 756) describes this participation as “citizen camera-witnessing”. Other forms of participation journalism from non-traditional media have also been referred to in the media industry as citizen journalism. For this study, the terms ‘citizen camera-witness’ and ‘citizen journalist’ have been used interchangeably.

The rise of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing is challenging conventional reporting through the use of technology that enables instantaneous recording and distribution of unregulated or self-generated content. According to Motylska (2014), two main types of citizen journalism can be distinguished, namely non-institutional and institutional citizen journalism. This study looks at both forms.

The diversification of new reporting formats is also leading to significant changes, particularly where technology is involved and public consumption through those means increases (Mythen, 2010). In contrast to traditional news reporting, citizen journalism appears to present the advantage of obtaining eyewitness footage. Important concerns have been raised over the ethics of citizen journalism. In this context, some considerations beckon to indicate whether traditional journalists and citizen journalists may any longer be distinguishable if deliberate ethical guidelines are thrust upon both groups of journalists in a formal setting. Despite the promise and potential benefits of citizen journalists compared to conventional media

platforms, a lack of quality control measures often limits the reliable use of user-generated content (Banda, 2010).

Bearing in mind that journalism has evolved over centuries, there is a need to examine the use of emerging technologies to expand access to information within the parameters of ethical reporting. Allan (2010) observes that there were other significant contributing factors leading to the emergence of newspapers, and although not specific in his elaboration, Allan claims that these changes began around the 15th century. Since then, the model of journalism has evolved by leaps and bounds. In more recent accounts and observations of industry changes through technology (which is explored further through this study), it is often unclear whether there is a public participation model capable of harmonising traditional journalism and citizen journalism reporting.

1.2 Problem statement and study rationale

In the quest to understand how technological developments and the rise of social media have challenged traditional media reporting practices in the South African setting, several knowledge gaps have been identified. One gap is that global norms may not be contextual in relation to the changes in the media industry and the way citizen camera-witnessing is being adopted. This is explored in Chapter Two of this thesis. Prior to citizen camera-witnessing and related technologies, reporters had limited resources and means of investigating or gathering information. In particular, traditional reports limited access to eyewitness footage, i.e., in their own absence or the absence of another traditional media's coverage of an event or story. Thus, a need has arisen to understand the effect of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing on the South African media industry, as well as to what extent such reporting is similar or different to traditional media methods.

In particular, more research is needed to define how South African News agencies have integrated or rejected citizen camera-witnessing, participatory journalism, or non-media and user-generated content. It is also necessary to understand how the news gathering process has evolved alongside recent technological developments, and how this may facilitate and even nurture citizen camera-witnessing.

1.3 Primary and secondary research questions

The primary research question for this study has been formulated as follows:

How has citizen generated news, through citizen camera-witnessing, influenced the traditional news cycle?

The secondary research questions formulated to answer the primary research question are as follows:

- i) What technology is being used to aid citizen camera-witnessing?
- ii) How does the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) inform citizen camera-witnessing at Health-e News?
- iii) How has technology enhanced synchronicity and richness in the integration of non-traditional reporting and traditional reporting through the OurHealth programme of the Health-e News case study?
- iv) What model can be developed and proposed to explain the contributions of citizen camera-witnesses and their use of technology for media practice, as a possible new collaborative model for media synchronicity and media convergence?

1.4 Aims and objectives

Patterson and Domingo (2008: 17, citing Deuze, 1998) add to the plea to scholars by requesting them to explore all new theoretical and methodology models relative to the evolution and new forms of news production, which was already significant in the late 1990's and unfolding. In respect, adding to the scientific pool of knowledge since then, the overarching aim of this study was to explore the value, benefits, and ethical concerns of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing, as well the methods used to recruit, train, and employ citizens to document multimedia footage (data) as witness accounts involved in the production of news stories for this emerging platform. Health-e News (in short, Health-e), a community health organisation with a strong media advocacy component to highlight health issues through news, was selected for the study because it combined, in the researcher's view, citizen journalism, citizen camera-witnessing and traditional journalism. In light of the United Nations' (UN) Declaration of Journalism being a human right

(Hartley, 2008: 12), the current study also sought to explore the evolution of the basic model of a traditional print/printed newsroom hierarchy for news production, dissemination and distribution into a new or integrated model of traditional and non-traditional media, observing any potential influences such as technological advancements that lead to intentional or unintentional industry changes. The researcher explored a case study to unearth what technological tools or media capturing devices are being used at Health-e News (2020), if any, to enable larger local media distribution and accessibility in the context of citizen camera-witnessing. The current study therefore also investigated how the possible emergence of ICTs could enable large-scale data sharing in the context of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing. The ultimate goal of the research was to develop a novel model that explains the contributions of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing, through the use of such technologies, for media practice and audience consumption.

In particular, emphasis was placed on the need to understand how citizen journalists have been incorporated as part of conventional media reporting and traditional news cycles, as well as the objectives, which are outlined below:

- i) To determine what technology is being used to aid citizen camera-witnessing.
- ii) To explore how the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) informs citizen camera-witnessing at Health-e News.
- iii) To explain how technology has allowed for enhanced synchronicity and richness in the integration of non-traditional reporting and traditional reporting through the OurHealth programme of the Health-e News case study.
- iv) To develop a model that explains the contributions of citizen camera-witnesses and their use of technology for media practice, as a possible new collaborative model for media synchronicity and media convergence.

1.5 Research design

In response to the knowledge gaps identified by the researcher indicated in section 1.3, the researcher explored the use of technology and camera-witnessing by

citizen journalists in the South African setting. The focus was placed on changes in the traditional news reporting model across public media and mass media communication platforms, with the emergence of citizen camera-witnessing. The research also investigated how the news gathering process has evolved to support citizen journalism and the incorporation of citizen camera-witnessing, as well as the emergence of social media platforms and associated technologies, thus enabling large-scale data sharing. The study furthermore sought to explore the unique approach that Health-e News has taken, through their OurHealth programme, towards integrating both traditional and non-traditional news reporting methodologies.

The research design is summarised in the following sub-sections.

1.5.1 Theoretical lens

An interpretivist study was undertaken, applying the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) (section 2.11) as theoretical lens pertaining to citizen camera-witnessing in the South African context, which informed the research methodology. MST specifically alludes to new media conveyance and convergence. Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008: 581, citing Robert and Dennis, 2005) indicate that “*conveyance* focuses on the transmission of large amounts of raw information and subsequent retrospective analysis”, which suggests that “individuals will have less of a need to transmit and process information at the same time”. The authors also inform that “*convergence* focuses on the transmission of higher-level abstractions of information and negotiations of these abstractions to existing mental models, suggesting that individuals will have a greater need to quickly transmit and process smaller volumes of information to develop a shared understanding” (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008: 581, citing Robert and Dennis, 2005).

MST furthermore alludes to an understanding of the need to improve communication performance, which can be applied in this case to Health-e’s news reporting model. In short, the researcher sought to explore, through the lens of MST, the convergence of traditional and non-traditional media using technology (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008).

1.5.2 Data collection

The primary data were collected using a survey in the form of semi-structured interviews. The secondary data were gathered through investigating the literature as well as examining documentation provided by the case (Health-e News) that was studied.

1.5.2.1 Pilot study

Initially, the researcher made contact with the help of management via telephone. Later, in April 2019, a pilot study was conducted with a Health-e employee via Skype to further understand how Health-e's OurHealth programme operated. This informed the researcher on how to develop the semi-structured interviews and the bio-sheets that were presented to the interviewees during the interview and data collection process.

All data were collected directly by the researcher, including the use of a validated interviewee biography. The researcher visited the Health-e facilities in Johannesburg, South Africa, to verify any research into the organisation's news reporting models. This included first-hand documentation of the citizen camera-witnessing process entailed in the dissemination of news, through communication technology platforms and ICTs, obtained with the express permission of the organisation's managers who are the gatekeepers and have access to the citizen camera-witnessing participants.

1.5.2.2 Selection process and research saturation

Further to the information arising from the pilot study and following the provision of gateway permission from Health-e, the researcher identified nine (9) suitable Health-e interviewees from various departments within the organisation, to ensure a diverse sample of interviewees. However, to avoid saturation of data during the data collection process, the researcher specifically targeted the following quantities from various backgrounds to adequately inform the research:

- i) Three (3) Health-e News Organisation managers
- ii) Three (3) Health-e News Organisation journalists
- iii) Three (3) Health-e News Organisation citizen camera-witnesses

People from each of the above categories were interviewed to ascertain a diverse collection of data, and to understand how the process of first-hand accounts from citizen journalists or citizen camera-witnesses at a traditional media outlet (Health-e), incorporates citizen camera-witnessing contributions to expand its coverage in rural communities. Health-e was selected because to the researcher's knowledge, it is the only South African organisation currently active with this unique operating model.

Interviews were conducted with Health-e management, staff, and citizen journalists. Health-e News is a company based in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Head Office), South Africa. It has television, online and print presence, as well as a nationwide network of citizen camera-witnesses or citizen journalists, who operate through the company's programme called OurHealth. This programme contributes to news articles, videos and television documentaries reaching a large magnitude of South Africans each month. Through the incorporation of the OurHealth project, the informal media agents are, to a major extent, based in rural villages and small towns, away from the centralised Health-e office. The interviews were conducted to understand the news gathering and potential integration model of the organisation. The interviews also provided insight into the experiences individuals had in their respective roles within the OurHealth programme, towards the goal of news reporting.

1.5.3 Data analysis

A cross-sectional evaluation and qualitative assessments of perception among qualified print and broadcast journalists (who understand and participate in traditional news reporting) were conducted at the Health-e organisation.

1.5.3.1 Deductive approach

The researcher followed a deductive approach using thematic analysis to guide data interpretation (Braun, Clarke and Gray, 2017). The deductive approach allowed the researcher to create a research strategy to scientifically investigate the topic and the best approach to explore the topic, beginning with an in-depth literature review and reference to other theories to better understand the

phenomena and changes that are possibly occurring in the subject field, and then progressing to the thematic analysis in order to derive categories, and eventually, emerging themes. “If a deductive content analysis is chosen, the next step is to ... code the data according to the categories...” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008: 111).

1.5.3.2 Incorporating citizen camera-witnessing at Health-e

The research investigated how Health-e has specifically incorporated ordinary citizens to record multimedia data and their own personal witness accounts of news stories through a guided process. The anticipated information gathered and analysed as a result of the proposed research, may provide insight into the negative and positive effects of citizen camera-witnessing on the South African media industry and how such reporting is similar and different to traditional media. It may also document the different ways in which South African News agencies have integrated or rejected citizen camera-witnessing, public/participatory journalism and non-media, user-generated content.

1.5.4 New evolved Citizen Witness Inclusion Model

The new evolved model, proposed by the researcher, was refined through ongoing data collection and the literature review. Comparisons were made between the traditional model of news gathering, dissemination and distribution, and the evolved solution, taking into consideration the vast technological changes which have influenced the evolution of the traditional reporting model over the last decade or so. The researcher gained insight into a possible new form of reporting, utilising the benefits of the Traditional Journalism Model (Figure 2.2) and citizen camera-witnessing to develop the Citizen Witness Inclusion Model. The proposed new model is a culmination of the old and the new, taking into consideration methodologies that align with a more cohesive and symbiotic relationship in order to provide beneficial outcomes to all role players involved.

1.6 Ethics

All ethical considerations were obtained through the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and applied prior, during and post the research data collection.

All necessary gateway permissions were obtained from the Health-e management and consequently from their staff, citizen journalists and other relevant interviewees, before commencing.

All individuals were invited to participate and informed about the ethical guidelines of participation, including, but not limited to, their right to withdraw from the project at any time, without saying why and without negative consequences. A pseudonym was used to conceal their identities and titles, so as to not reveal their true identities and/or where at Health-e they work. Any identifying information was removed. Participants were not known to each other. There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and the participants, who were not related to or otherwise connected with the researcher. No harmful procedures were administered to participants. The study included letters of informed consent and gatekeepers' permission, as well as ethical clearance from DUT, prior to commencing with the interviews (Appendix D).

1.6.1 Interviewee anonymity

As aforementioned, for ethical considerations, corporate consent was requested from the Health-e management. This allowed the researcher to spend extended periods at the media organisation's offices, observing and interviewing staff. Participants were advised of their right to informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. For this reason, and especially considering the commitment of anonymity, participants agreed to be interviewed. The researcher, furthermore, reiterated that no identifying traits of the interviewees would be expressed in the research and that participants would be allowed to withdraw from the project at any time, without saying why and without negative consequences.

1.7 Thesis synopsis

This thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter One: A concise review of the academic literature is provided, followed by the research problem statement, rationale and aims of the research, the objectives

and a brief outline of the research design, which includes the theoretical lens, data collection, data analysis, and the proposed new collaborative model.

Chapter Two: In this chapter, the literature review is outlined. An interpretation of the Traditional Journalism Model is provided, and the Media Synchronicity Theory, as interpreted by Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008) and applied as the theoretical lens of this research, is discussed.

Chapter Three: The Research methodology is systematically outlined in this chapter. The primary data were collected using semi-structured interviews, while the secondary data included scientific literature as well as documentation provided by the case (Health-e News) that was studied.

Chapter Four: The research results are provided and discussed, with the themes and sub-themes emerging from the data analysis.

Chapter Five: The themes that merged from the data analysis are interpreted, and the new Citizen Witness Inclusion Model for reporting news is proposed and explained. Furthermore, the Traditional Journalism Model is compared to the Citizen Witness Inclusion Model. In closing, the main research insights are outlined.

Chapter Six: The final chapter explains how the objectives of this research were achieved, and an overall conclusion is provided.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the rise of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing, as well as how this challenges conventional news reporting through the use of technology, were discussed. The primary and secondary research questions were formulated, main aim of the research, namely to explore how citizen generated news through citizen camera-witnessing has influenced the traditional news cycle, was explained. The four primary objectives of the research were stated, and the research design process as well as the research ethics that the researcher adhered to, were summarised.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a concise overview of the research topic is presented. In particular, emphasis is placed on different reporting processes used in traditional models compared to non-traditional models, while bearing in mind that the two types of models intersect. The role of technological developments on citizen journalism and camera-witnessing in the era of globalisation is also discussed. A simple newsroom model is presented, followed by a detailed diagram and explanation of the simple model, named the Traditional Journalism Model.

Ethical aspects relevant to news gathering and dissemination in the age of citizen journalism are highlighted, and the legal resources and judicial oversight of journalism, the role of the Press Ombudsman, and press freedom are reviewed. Next, international media models of attempted collaboration between traditional and non-traditional media reportage are presented, followed by a discussion on new technologies and its influence on media coverage and news consumption. Finally, Weaver's Need for Orientation Model is presented, and the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST), used as the theoretical lens underpinning this research, is outlined.

2.2 Background to journalism

Traditional media and the emergence or origins of journalism, can be traced back to the 1400s, but it only became truly recognised around the 20th century, when the need to present information for public consumption based on interviews, research, quotations, and other methods, increased.

“The term journalism history is of relatively recent coinage, more recent than the term journalism, of course. But the discourse now called journalism history has a longer history, one that tracks the rise of news culture as a realm of first print culture and later media culture. As each new formation of news culture appeared, new genres of doing the history of news developed. Throughout this history of journalism history, the

boundary separating it from other forms of media history has been porous and blurry. Since the 1970s, journalism history has been wrestling with an identity crisis, one that in many ways anticipates the broader crisis in the identity of journalism today” (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009: 17).

According to Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, printed newspapers first appeared at the beginning of the 17th century in Europe.

“Early newspapers aimed at specific readers (business proprietors, landed gentry, Calvinists). By the middle of the seventeenth century, such newspapers were common in the capital cities of Western Europe. Amsterdam, a leading city in both commerce and religious independence, was a particularly important location; in fact, the first English-language newspapers (weekly news – books called Corantos) were published in Amsterdam in 1620” (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009: 18).

Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009) furthermore drew on the study of journalism as a new phenomenon. The presentation of information or reporting may vary depending on the angle of the story and intended to be presented in an unbiased manner.

As news media, journalism and reporting have evolved over the centuries, it has brought with it other changes, ignited by the introduction and consequent influence of technologies. In this regard, ICTs have given rise to different forms of informal reportage, such as citizen journalism. Bruns and Highfield (2012: 1-25) argue that “the role and relevance of citizen journalism has existed since the 1990s”, but given the “corporatisation and politicisation of journalistic activities in democratic and non-democratic countries alike”, as well as other influential elements, citizen journalists have made “incredible inroads” into traditional journalism and reporting.

“...these shortcomings of industrial journalism combined with the opportunities inherent in new Internet-based media forms and platforms

to give rise to the new models which have been described as ‘citizen journalism’” (Bruns and Highfield, 2012: 1-25).

This term is, to some degree, incongruent, because it suggests that journalists in a professional capacity are not also perceived to be citizens, i.e., these journalists are not committed to the future of the society and politics of the country they live in,

“and it equates the news-related activities of ‘citizen journalists’ with the journalism committed by professional staff in the news industry – strictly speaking, both these assumptions are incorrect” (Bruns and Highfield, 2012: 1-25).

The ongoing development of new sharing platforms such as social media (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook. etc.) have also encouraged and enabled the introduction of new role-players in the news reporting and information sharing space. This disruption in information sharing has likewise challenged the media industry and propelled a deliberate introspection of its own operational model to either keep up with informal platforms of breaking news or to use such platforms in order to gain an upper hand in news gathering, dissemination production or to keep up with market trends, affecting its brand, sales and entity value.

“Whether reporting live from the caves of Tora Bora, the war front in Iraq, or from the rubble of an earthquake in Turkey, videophones and other mobile transmission technologies leave their signatures on the stories they transmit” (Livingston and Bennet, 2003: 371).

In the South African setting, Banjac, Lohner and Neverla (2016: 20) claim that the South African media landscape has changed during the post-apartheid era, citing declining news quality and lack of investment into journalism as contributing factors. However, Bruns and Highfield (2012: 1) share the opinion that technology has played a significant part as “disruptor and enabler” in growth and developments:

“...even if – of course – it has not determined their eventual course. First, the rise of the Internet as a popular medium has led to a substantial increase in available channels for information and entertainment, among

other purposes. One such further purpose, indeed, has fundamentally undermined the existing business model of conventional newspaper publishing; with specialist Web sites and generalist search engines providing a more effective and easily searchable platform for job, real estate, car and other advertisements, and with the subsequent shift of such advertising to new and independent online platforms, much of the financial foundation of newspaper journalism has been eroded beyond recall. Coupled with broader economic trends, this shift alone has led to the decline of many once well-established newspapers” (Bruns and Highfield, 2012: 25-26).

Carvajal, García-Avilés and González (2012: 1, citing Picard and Van Weezel, 2008) also claim that the environment in which the newspapers were actually established, no longer exists. They add that the introduction of technological platforms which quicken the process of information sharing has also increased competition for traditional platforms, exhilarating their survival strategies. The authors note that the digital market is extremely disruptive.

Likewise, the emergence of camera-witnessing in the first decade of the new millennium has solidified the need for first-hand news accounts and its dissemination to a global audience. Indeed, citizen journalism and the rise of social media brought about radical changes to the conventional processes of new gathering, dissemination, and distribution (Mhamdi, 2016). Simultaneously, the use of mobile technology in particular has also influenced the media industry through an influx of user-generated content whereby mobile technology is used to produce and edit footage. As citizens access mobile technology to report witnessing moments of tragedy or moments of interests, the concept of mobile journalism (MOJO) has formed. According to Sidiropoulos, Vryzas, Vrysis, Avraam and Dimoulas (2019), MOJO is the unambiguous use of mobile phones for creating news reporting content. They further state that this has led to high performance functionality and connectivity being offered “anywhere, anytime” (Sidiropoulos et al., 2019: 2).

2.3 Traditional and non-traditional reporting – similarities and differences

It is important to emphasise both the similarities and differences between traditional news reporting and citizen journalism. Journalism has been fundamentally known as a job entailing news reporting, fact checking, broadcasting, and distributing factual information through traditionally recognised outlets such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio reporting. These traditional forms of reporting through verified media houses have also been known by its audiences (readership and listenership) to be associated with aspects of trustworthiness, honesty, and factuality. However, Broersma (2010: 22) argues that this is changing, claiming that reduced news circulation is affecting the overall ability of journalists following the traditional format of newsgathering, fact checking and exposing information of public interest. Instead, journalists are more concerned with the churning copy, failing to accurately gather news. Erdal (2007: 7, citing Deuze, 2002) acknowledges that the World Wide Web (WWW) has impacted the profession of journalism and its new media culture, but that such changes are not entirely recognised when redefining reporting.

Stemming from this, the current study illuminates how news production as a business model is also known to be profit-based. The traditional news reporting model includes the need for sustainable income through advertising revenue, thus increasing the need to attract advertising investment and offset the operational costs of print and printed media. Nel (1998: 11) refers to newspapers as “profit making institutes”, with significant differences varying from traditional business models (entrepreneurship), such as the “separation” between departments. Nel (1998: 11) further argues that some aspects of news gathering may diverge from the management in the organisation, whereby management are able to prevent stories from being published, in contrast to the advertising department which functions independently from operational newsgathering or where the two departments (Editorial and Advertorial) are run independently. Nel concludes by saying that “most of a newspaper’s revenue is generated by the advertising department” (Nel, 1998: 11).

In more recent years, the allocation of valuable reporting space to product placement, as well as the often-preferred coverage, has been the subject of much

controversy. A similar debate around the related issue of “brand mentions” (Connor, 2010: 6) in relation to traditional advertising, as well as their effects on whether associated news is considered credible, has also emerged. The ongoing development of ICTs promises to further challenge how the business aims of traditional media could interact with costly media operational models in a more nuanced fashion.

In the conventional print/printed news gathering and reporting process, a traditional journalist, through media formalities, may be guided by their superiors on the requirements of the story. This may be received in the form of the advice of a sub-editor or editor during a daily, weekly or monthly briefing and discussion, which forms part of that platform’s agenda setting for content. The journalist may have days, weeks or months to prepare the story, dependent on the type of story being written or composed to research information, fact checking, applying ethical considerations, using traditional and referring to sources for ongoing information to populate the story, and then, finally, going through the revision process before it is published for public consumption. Technology is challenging this process.

2.4 Technological advancement and journalism

In brief, technological advancement has permeated all aspects of journalism and news reporting, including its dissemination through online platforms, leading to a differentiation between print, printed and non-print media. Djerf-Pierre, Ghersetti and Hedman (2016: 1) indicate that the use of social media by journalists has been scrutinised by professionals in the past years, with the understanding that social networking and micro-blogging contribute to changes in journalistic norms.

The development of other technologies, including mobile phones, cameras and social media, have allowed citizens to upload media freely in real-time as events unfold. These developments have fuelled the creation of new media and reporting models, as outlined and discussed further in Figure 5.1. In addition, Carpenter (2008) points out one notable change between traditional journalists and citizen journalists, namely that the traditional journalists are not likely to include their opinions. However, according to Carpenter, in a recent survey it was revealed that online journalists interpret how the issues affect the community. The author also

argues, through their own research, that critics have maintained their opinion that standardised reporting limits journalism to 'just facts'. Carpenter further argues that deadline pressures introduce a lack of creativity and may lead to the inability of a journalist to interpret complex events. It is therefore apparent that a more in-depth analysis of the news reporting model is needed to further identify the ongoing industrial changes.

2.5 A simple newsroom model

In a study conducted by Clampitt, Crevcoure and Hansen (1983: 5), the authors present a very small model of the editorial structure, observing that "employee publications can most appropriately be viewed from three distinct perspectives: management, editor, editorial staff and employees".

Figure 2.1 depicts a simple model of the traditional newsroom chain of command.

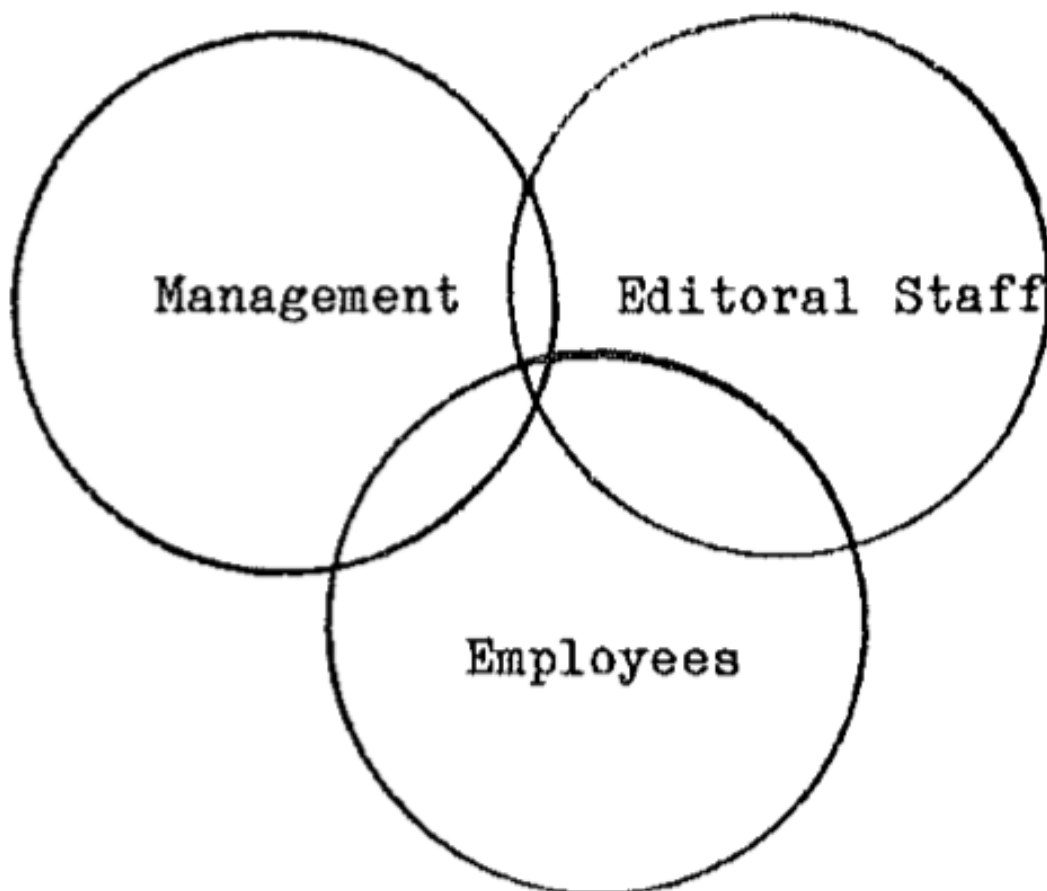


Figure 2.1: A simple model showing the newsroom chain of command (Source: Clampitt, Crevcoure, Hansen, 1983: 5)

The Traditional Journalism Model in figure 2.2 is a more detailed model of newsroom hierarchy, created by the researcher, which explains the chain of command, in retrospect to convergence, following from figure 2.1.

2.6 Traditional Journalism Model

Figure 2.2 is a graphical depiction of the journalism model of a traditional print/printed newsroom hierarchy for news production, dissemination, and distribution. For the purpose of this research, the researcher defines and differentiates between *print media* and *printed media*, where print media refers to written form or electronic media, while printed media refers to physical hard copies, which can include newspapers and magazines, among others.

In the Traditional Journalism Model (Figure 2.2), the business aspect of the news reporting cycle is more apparent, which will be discussed next (section 2.6.1). The researcher has created a visual representation of the traditional newsroom model, which differs from the simple newsroom model (figure 2.1) in that figure 2.2 is far more detailed, particularly reflecting the decision makers and how they affect news output. The Traditional Journalism Model furthermore represents the hierarchal command structures within a traditional newsroom, starting with the actual asset owner and the business management team who are responsible for the daily business activities, which govern the profitability and sustainability of the business. The model also elaborates on how decision making at the top of the hierarchal structure and management filters through to the editorial team, who have to align with the aims and objectives of the publication in terms of profit, brand and sales, among others, through both an input and output model of communication.

In addition, this Traditional Journalism Model indicates how stringent structures regulate the newsroom in terms of gatekeeping, content management, content control, and overall publicity of information. In this setting, journalists are instructed and guided in their roles and responsibilities, which also inevitably feeds into the company's aims and objectives toward profitability, brand and sustainability, as much as it is overarching a pivotal role.

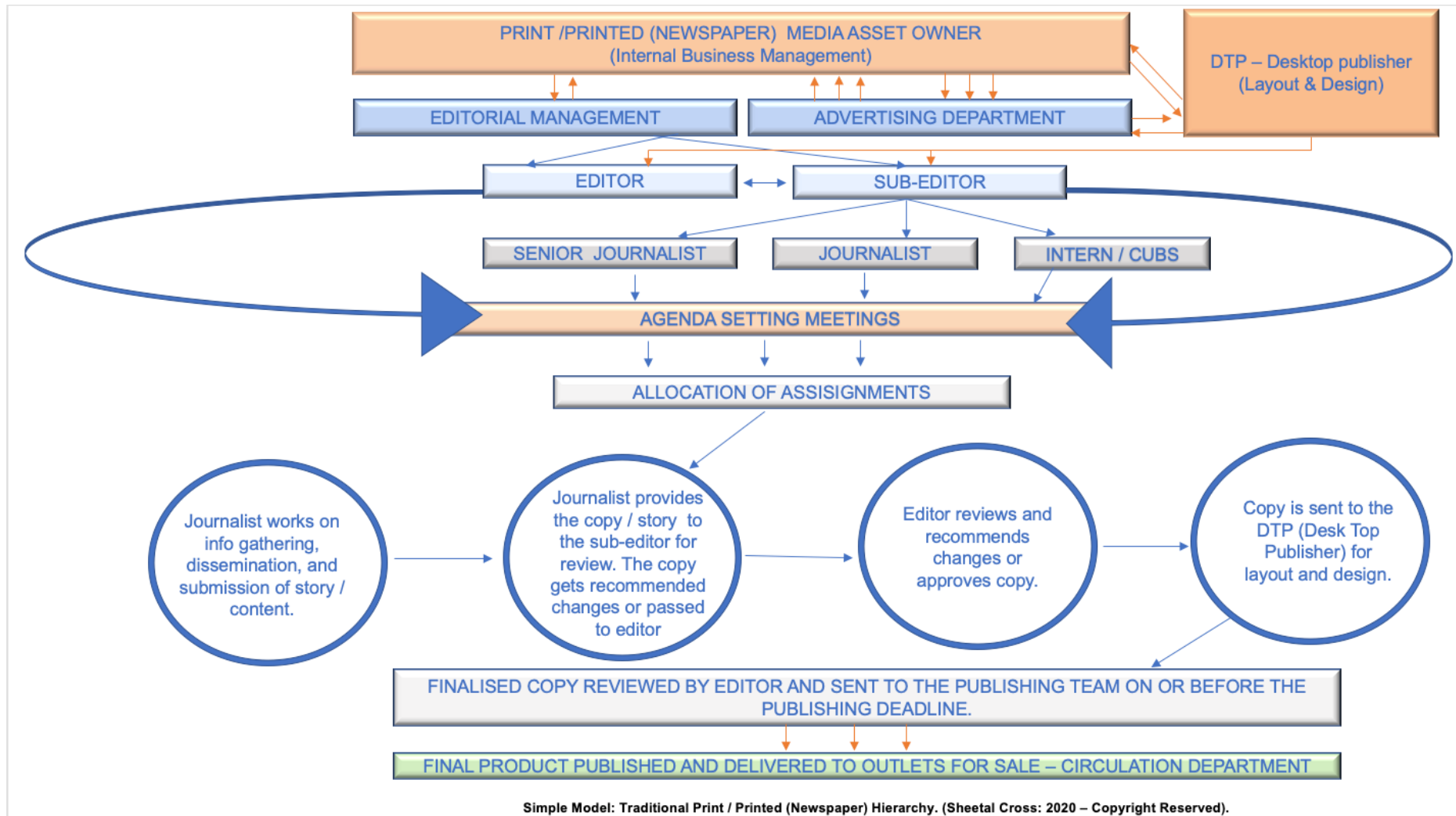


Figure 2.2: Traditional Journalism Model – traditional print/printed newsroom hierarchy for new production, dissemination and distribution (Source: Researcher)

2.6.1 Traditional Journalism Model explained

2.6.1.1 Media asset owner – Business Management

At managerial level, the entrepreneurial, business and financial decisions of the media entity are discussed internally. This may include the input of the editor and sub-editors, as they are directly responsible for ensuring that all the media guidelines are followed when creating the news product (newspaper, magazine, book, etc.) and maintaining audience input through editorial decisions.

“From the reporter’s point of view, this department’s most important function is handling the payroll, benefits and insurance. The business with the administration department also handles billing, accounts and related functions” (Nel, 1998: 11).

2.6.1.2 Management to editorial team – input and output

Management instruct the editors, sub-editors and stakeholders of the necessary target sale and income, monitoring the growth and development of the platform and vice versa. There is input from the editorial management team on how to enhance the product, which may include layout and design suggestions, content, request for resources, request for project funding, travel costs for journalists and image procurement, among others.

“First, the publication is funded and supported by management. Hence the purpose of the publication must be consistent with the goals and philosophy of the organisation. The responsibility is to the well-being of the organisation first, the audience second, and society at large, third” (Nel, 1998: 219).

2.6.1.3 Management to editorial team and advertorial team – input and output

The asset owner’s business management team convey their needs to the editorial team and vice versa. The asset owner and management team also discuss advertising revenue with the advertising department, which is attained through advertising sales, discussed, and provided to the desktop publisher (DTP). The

DTP department will then assemble the layout and design of the product, providing the editorial team with the necessary space it needs for the content. This leads to the editorial team's gatekeeping responsibilities, deciding which stories to accept during their routine agenda setting meeting.

"The method by which news is processed through the news organisation has been the subject of a number of studies. The filtration of information is sometimes called, 'gatekeeping' or 'blocking', and accounts for 'specific points' or 'gates' in the newsroom, to which given news items may or may not be admitted. An editor who 'opens' and 'closes' the gate, choosing some news stories, but rejecting others, makes an 'either/or' or 'yes/no' set of choices" (Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, 1987: 26).

2.6.1.4 Editorial team – communication with the journalists

The editorial team filter content requirements to the journalists. During the weekly, monthly, or general agenda setting meetings, discussions around content development becomes pertinent. The agenda for the content is then set and confirmed with the journalists, who execute the tasks to meet editorial deadlines in terms of newsgathering and news reporting.

2.6.1.5 Final product and circulation

The journalist supplies the copy/story to the sub-editor for review. The sub-editor then recommends changes or forwards the copy to the editor. The editor reviews and recommends changes or approves the copy. The copy is sent to the DTP department for layout and design. A finalised copy is reviewed by the editor and sent to the publishing team on or before the publishing deadline. Once approved, a final product is published and delivered to various outlets for sale by the circulation department.

The Traditional Journalism Model presents a traditional editorial model with traditional operational methods. Deuze and Witschge (2017: 115) challenge this model in a chapter contribution to *"Rethinking journalism again – societal role and public relevance in a digital age"* (Peters and Broersma, 2017: 115). Deuze and Witschge (2017: 115) furthermore claim that journalism is transforming on a

worldwide scale, from what they describe as “structured working conditions” to “lived experiences”. Deuze and Witschge continue by stating the following:

“In the current media environment, we need an understanding of not only how destruction functions at each level of influence on the work, but also – and perhaps more importantly – how journalist as individuals and groups enact agency within the system. Where the institution was once dominant in organising journalistic work in facilitating (and constraining) communication about journalism, this is no longer sufficient to understand journalism as it is practiced in so many new places by so many more actors under such widely differing circumstances” (Deuze and Witschge, 2017: 115).

2.7 Legal and ethical considerations for journalism

This section demonstrates the range and depth of legal, oversight and ethical considerations that traditional journalists as well as media houses have to observe and comply.

2.7.1 Legal resources and judicial oversight of journalism

Legal recognition of traditional journalism is supported by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). It is relevant to note that traditional media globally have, at some point or another, experienced similar types of persecution. However, the notable difference between citizen journalism and traditional journalism is the legal recognition of the journalism profession, its role in society, and the accommodation for such consequences written into the Constitution. In the South African context, media oversight is provided by ICASA. This is an independent regulatory body of the South African government, established in 2000 by the ICASA Act, to regulate both the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors in the public interest. This agency is a watchdog over the media and communications within the country, monitoring and upholding the “Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 108 of 1996” which guarantees the right to communicate. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) is another imperative national institution, established to support

constitutional democracy and has been outspoken about press freedom. In a media statement published online through the SAHRC website in 2018, the institute was specific in their support of press freedom and “the right to freedom of expression” (Smith and Brooks, 2018).

2.7.2 The role of the Press Ombudsman

In a case where media agencies and traditional journalists have a constitutional dilemma, problem, or challenge with any traditional news reporting or editorial content, other regulatory bodies or avenues of relief, i.e. a Press Ombudsman, may be approached to manage the unfolding crises and potential consequence for resolution of media disputes. It is the role of the Press Ombudsman to act within ‘good journalistic practice’ or within the South African context, within the Press Code of South Africa. It is also the duty of the Ombudsman to receive and investigate complaints against media agencies or media agents who transgress against these guidelines.

The Press Council, the Appeals Panel and the Press Ombudsman are an “independent co-regulatory mechanism” formed by the print and online media to provide unbiased, cost-effective and prompt adjudication. This is to resolve or reconcile disputes between printed media such as magazines, newspapers and online publications on the one hand, and public citizens, on the other hand, over the “editorial content of publications” (Press Council, 2020). The Council has adopted the South African Press Code as guideline for journalists to apply in their daily practice of collecting and disseminating news, and to provide guidance to the Appeals Panel and the Press Ombudsman to reach conclusions on grievances from the public. Member publications subscribe to the “Press Council's Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media”. Such resources are readily available for traditional media, including in-house legal counsel through the regulated media agency, where a journalist has access to the same, at no additional cost, in most cases.

2.7.3 Press freedom, citizen journalism and traditional journalism

Citizen journalists may not enjoy the same assistance, which could be the difference between rightfully enacting their freedom of expression, alternative forms of reporting and achieving reportage through unregulated disbursement of self-regulated content and information, where such witness accounts are imperative. A notable example of such imperative informal reporting is blogging. Smudde (2005) informs that the etymology of the word blog derives from two words: 'web', referring to WWW, and 'log', referring to logging on, logging in or logging of information. Smudde therefore says that the two words joined together form the word 'weblog' which was shortened to 'blog'. The author also defines the platform as a place for self-expression, opinions, and information sharing, among others. Blogging has also contributed to the ongoing evolutionary observations within journalism.

Reflecting on the Digitally Networked Technology in Kenya's 2007–2008 Post-Election Crisis, Goldstein and Rotich (2008) state clearly that blogs had begun to fill the coverage gap left by media who, at the time of such extreme crises, was not reporting the Kenyan violence or deaths due to government pressure. This is one more notable difference between the operational methods of citizen journalism, compared to traditional journalists, which have been developed to ensure the maximum value of exposure, gaining and sustaining an audience's attention, but furthermore, toward a greater goal of a higher viewership and listenership ratings. In this setting, it is acknowledged that traditional journalism and traditional media platforms that seek to report within the aforementioned media guidelines, do so for ethical reasons, but additionally with consideration of brand enhancement, sales and profit, offering competitive alternatives to other news sites and platforms, with the objective of growth and development of its own profitable business model.

A citizen journalist or camera witness may, however, be at an advantage in recording events as they unfold. However, such opportunities may ignore the traditional checks and balances of a news story, when raw, unedited audio and video footage is received in real-time. In this setting, Chouliaraki (2015: 4, citing Fuchs, 2011) presents the argument that "digital witnessing" is a "right to look", but those using their digital devices for surveillance can turn that footage in to a powerful voice. In recognising the opportunity for information sharing within the

media industry and the effectiveness of crowdsourcing using digital tools, digital platforms, and online access avenues, there have been global efforts to harness both traditional and non-traditional media sources. The ongoing effort to collaborate or merge the two has led to emerging models of news media communication in recent years.

2.7.4 Ethical considerations of citizen journalism and camera-witnessing

Allan and Thorsen (2009) argue that consideration should be given to the role of citizen journalism when considering the limited press freedom of certain countries, and bearing in mind, public interest. This recognition provides a new global perspective on the need for citizen journalism to draw attention to life-altering events that are now always presented to the public via conventional approaches to news and media reporting. In addition, a need exists to identify and critically appraise the role of traditional journalism versus citizen journalism (which is often dissimilar), in approaching a model for media reporting and distribution.

Traditional journalism occurs within the constitutional frame of ethics and legal guidelines in order to achieve the relevant objectives of reporting news. In contrast, a citizen journalist often reports incidents that bring attention to political, social and economic challenges without the implicit adherence to such ethico-legal parameters. The citizen journalist often needs to draw on relevant aspects of the mainstream media model of communication between the news agency and target audience in order to create change and support awareness around fundamental issues where there is a perceived lack of government intervention or public participation.

Traditional journalism also draws on the relevant checks and balances that govern the publishing of imperative news within mainstream media platforms or where they are distributed. Irrespective of the platform being a print, printed or online space, these checks and balances provide the necessary oversight into information, which is lawfully obtained, disseminated and distributed in the public space. The mainstream nature of this method also contributes to the verification of information, facts, truth, and other elements, which prevents the spread of fake news.

The burden of such a regulated system also gives rise to the need of preventing the spread of misinformation and to continue in the traditional path of correctly informing society, so that such information may bear meaning on the decision-making process of the target audience. The alignment of citizen journalism and its engagement toward public interest also has bearing in challenging the norms of systemic problems, when such challenges are perceived to be overlooked by the mainstream media, in presenting an alternative form of reporting. In such cases, oppressive governments have been known to negate the democratic and constitutional rights of mainstream media agencies and likewise, disregard the freedom of speech or democratic rights of bloggers, citizen journalists and camera-witnesses, thus restraining the voices that want to effect change. The reporting of first-hand witness accounts being war, natural disasters, crises, and the need for social justice, among others, through quicker forms of information dissemination and distribution has seen a rapid rise in citizen journalists, camera witnesses and informal non-mainstream media reporting and self-regulated content through the Internet and social media platforms, but not without consequence.

Allan and Thorsen (2009: 5) refer to an incident that occurred in Malaysia in 2008, when the “best-known political blogger” (Raja Petra Kamaruddin) in the country was imprisoned based on allegations of “spreading confusion” and “insulting the purity of Islam”. This was the second time the blogger had been arrested or detained for publishing controversial comments online. Due to Kamaruddin’s ongoing fight against the Malaysian government, he was held for two years, together with other bloggers, for the same reason and with a renewable sentence that was indefinite. Although the detention was found to be unjust in a court of law, this example demonstrates the unreasonable extent of restriction placed on the free speech of citizen journalists and their progressive effort to highlight their opposing view of certain government policies. The consequences of these actions led to an attempt by the Malaysian government trying to unsuccessfully block his website. Kamaruddin would later in 2017 be investigated again for more controversial comments and media coverage on his website platform.

2.8 Media models of (attempted) collaboration between traditional and non-traditional media reportage

Ethical concerns have also been raised over the unfair financial advantage of traditional media houses that could benefit from the contributions of citizen journalists and camera witnesses, without adequate compensation (Kperogi, 2011). In 2006, Cable News Network (CNN) launched iReport.com, an experiment that gives ordinary people the opportunity to create and contribute uncensored user-generated media. It is unfortunate that iReport.com often takes advantage of free creative labour. The iReport.com also has a section called Assignment Desk, where CNN producers list topics for iReporters to investigate and report. Most of these reports end up being used on CNN, which in a way suggests that CNN, in fact, sets the agenda for citizen journalists. In addition to these specific concerns, other notable challenges have also arisen in the collaboration between traditional and non-traditional media reportage over this collaborative model.

For example, in October 2008, a citizen journalist used this platform to post that Steve Jobs, then Chief Executive Officer of Apple, had been rushed to the hospital after a heart attack, citing an unnamed source. However, this turned out to be false, and the report was removed from the platform. The report had major financial implications, and in part contributed to Apple stock taking a major hit during the turbulent 2008 financial year (Alejandro, 2010).

Since citizen journalists and camera witnesses are often raised in the communities they are reporting on, they have an opportune perspective and vantage point regarding the innermost turmoil and issues arising from these communities. Such individuals are well-placed to be privy to information that a general journalist would not be. In addition, the language barrier that prevents strictly English-speaking journalists from communicating with community members is often overcome by the citizen journalists or citizen camera-witnesses that are able to speak both English and the language of the communities.

Real-time data capturing has led to the ability of immortalising an incident in history beyond print capabilities and is critical in supporting widespread media participation of citizens who possess a device capable of securing such footage. For example,

on July 7, 2005 within six hours of the London bombings, the BBC received more than 1,000 photographs, 20 pieces of amateur video, 4,000 text messages and 20,000 emails. According to the former head of global news for the BBC, Richard Sambrook, that year people were participating in news coverage in a way we had never seen before. By the next day, the BBC's main evening TV newscast began with a package edited entirely from video sent in by viewers (Alejandro, 2010). Lindner (2016: 2) refers to the vital role that citizen journalists and citizen camera witnesses played during the 2005 London bombings, as some of the most vivid examples of the power and radicalism of informal information sharing brought to the news cycle.

2.8.1 Traditional journalist and citizen journalist reporting on common issues (examples)

It is acknowledged that the medical system in South Africa has a distinct bias towards the middle class employed citizens who have medical aid, which further nurtures an unequal world when viewed from a national health perspective. The government adopted the Freedom Charter as a guiding policy, which demands "Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children" (Freedom Charter, 1955). This is the philosophy which informs the National Health Insurance (NHI).

It was therefore illuminating to consider the respective views of NHI by traditional journalists as well as citizen journalists as expressed on the Health-e platform. The traditional journalists focused on macro-policies, implementation and national articles such as:

- i) The Finance Minister's budget who, when reporting on the 2020 Budget, indicated that despite budget cuts, the planned NHI pilot projects will be safeguarded.
- ii) A White paper.
- iii) Contextual examining of the perceived new role of pharmacists in the NHI era (Molelekwa, 2019). An important point on this article is that citizen journalists can transition to traditional journalist, as Thabo Molelekwa did.

- iv) A range of reports on the public hearings at each of the provinces under the hashtag #NHIPublicHearings.
- v) A report on staff shortages (Green, 2017).

The citizen journalists' efforts however focused on distinctly regional, community-driven and local news. The following examples were curated from the OurHealth tab of the Health-e website:

- i) Gauteng citizens saying they want the NHI, but they also want the government to admit and confront serious healthcare system challenges the province faces (Molelekwa and Seboholi, 2020).
- ii) A perspective of Soweto residents citing challenges such as medicine stock outs, missing medical files, and poor attitudes from medical and administration staff at public health facilities weighing against a successful NHI (Modjadji and Zali, 2019).
- iii) People, policy and politics: Soweto residents weigh in on the NHI, and a report on Tzaneen getting its first Down Syndrome Centre through the proactive efforts of a community member (Mojela, 2020).
- iv) The successful opening of the Lusikisiki Village Clinic after a lengthy seven-year campaign for a permanent clinic ends (Zikali, 2019).

2.8.2 New technologies and the need for an evolved model

The emergence of new technologies has seen a deviation from traditional reporting models, as it encourages the production and distribution of raw, user-generated content. Technological advancements have therefore propelled the model of citizen camera-witnessing, thereby increasing human rights awareness and greater exposure of corruption. Banda (2010) alludes to free will as reasoning to which people deploy technology in the service of different human needs and uses, claiming that technology shapes, and becomes shaped, by human motivations and actions. Citizen journalists are therefore both technologically driven and socially inspired.

The evolution of ICTs and social media sharing platforms has benefited society in creating further awareness of information at a faster, more accessible pace. An evolved journalism model that includes the concept of citizen camera-witnessing can be highly effective in producing immediate news coverage in war-torn countries. Citizen camera-witnesses may, therefore, be empowered in cases where a traditional journalist may not be present. When such content is harnessed with traditional news reporting, it appears to become enhanced, more powerful and impactful. Kolodzy (2013) adds that technological convergence has changed the way traditional journalists use blogs to supplement their formal work on informal platforms, and likewise, ordinary citizens now use blogs to supplement news about their communities, which have been overlooked. In both instances, for traditional and non-traditional reporting using blogs, it should be noted that blogging forms part of informal publishing platforms that are easily accessible for self-regulated content. In both cases, the opportunity to communicate a message between the sender and receiver can include a local or global reach.

In summary, when people work together in real-time with a shared pattern of coordinated behaviour, there is a greater level of interaction and shared focus between message senders and the recipients than when they do not communicate in real-time (Ballard and Seibold, 2004; Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008).

2.9 News consumption in the era of citizen journalism

Habermas (2006) indicates that the dynamics of mass communication is driven by the power of media to strategically use (in part) political and social power and agenda setting, triggering public awareness of issues. However, as the consumption and reception of news has evolved, along with the intended audience, it is worth noting that journalism is also evolving through the convergence of traditional and non-traditional media. In some cases, where geographical limitations prevent travel, journalists may find a more cost-effective way to achieve their information gathering, dissemination and distribution of news. The solution in this case would often entail a quick scouring of the Internet for user-generated content, which journalists can verify and use to accelerate their own information gathering, dissemination and distribution of news. In this instance, citizen

journalism influences the dynamics of mass communication, especially during breaking news, notable events, or moments where urgent coverage is needed.

“The advent of new media technologies and the proliferation of social media networks... certainly had an impact on traditional news routines and practices. The Internet and more readily and accessible mobile technology mean that larger numbers of the public are able to participate in online forums and share opinions and experiences. This has fundamentally changed the way in which news media interact with their audiences and gather information and the role a news media plays in a democracy” (Rodny-Gumede and Hyde-Clarke, 2014: 104).

During breaking news, notable events or moments where urgent coverage is needed, journalists may find themselves hurrying to the scene, equipped to capture audio and visual material, photography, comments, and interviews, among others. They may also be accompanied by a colleague with technical expertise to assist them; however, the news may have already been citizen camera-witnessed and ‘broken’ online through social media.

Andén-Papadopoulos (2013: 754) termed the phrase citizen camera-witnessing, distinguishing between everyday camera wielding and the deliberate act of publishing powerful multimedia footage toward political activism. Bearing in mind the legal ramifications this process often entails, a traditional journalist may use his or her discretion to gather information. In contrast, citizen journalists who have some media background may express reservation within ethical concerns or utilise their access to information and disseminate it together with their superiors at a later stage. In a completely informal setting, however, a person who has no media background, no formal training, and no introduction to the media industry or its processes, will most likely ignore mainstream media guidelines through ignorance of its existence to capture footage as it unfolds. They may then use self-regulated platforms such as social media to publish and share the same information instantaneously. In such instances, the person may be compelled to share what they have witnessed or caught on camera, using personal devices which have the capability of audio and visual recording. Such instances have allowed insight into the observation that technology has enabled ordinary people to capture horrifying

events and post it online moments after it occurred. This turning point in both digital and journalism history helped to reshape the Traditional Journalism Model of media and reporting.

Most journalists have been formally trained to be dispassionately impartial when documenting what they see and hear under such circumstances, recognising as they do, that the truth-value of their chosen rendering of the facts will be at stake. There is a comparison to be drawn between the mindset of a traditional journalist and that of a citizen camera-witness for the ordinary individual, as any sense of journalism is likely to be far removed from the mind of the citizen camera-witness, should they find themselves unexpectedly caught up in disturbing events rapidly unfolding around them. Nevertheless, they may well strive to engage in a formal eyewitness reportage, perhaps using their mobile telephone to capture an image, generate a video, or craft a tweet in order to record and share their personal experience of what is happening in front of them (Allan, 2013).

The ongoing evolution of the media landscape is quickening the changes within global media concepts and output at a faster pace. For example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported that audiences between 16 and 34 years of age had decreased by more than seven percent between 2003 and 2008 (Mhamdi, 2016). The generation of online-based content by citizen journalists and camera witnesses also fosters participation and engagement with the news cycle. In this context, citizen journalists do not operate with the intention to increase profit or media ratings. In contrast, such individuals may be participating in the process of news distribution to enhance public awareness.

Antony and Thomas (2010) reiterate the value of citizen camera-witnessing combining news reporting and citizen witnessing by referring to the 2009 alleged incident of police brutality pertaining to Oscar Grant III. Almost a decade ago, this particular incident highlighted the use of a mobile device to capture the shooting of an unarmed man. The story is also significant in that police apparently tried to confiscate the mobile recording devices from witnesses and prevent the sharing of the incident. Irrespective of their attempts, citizen camera-witnesses managed to upload the footage to the popular social media platform known as YouTube, creating widespread reactions amongst policymakers. In addition, powerful

Internet-based responses revealed the social injustice that had occurred, and furthermore prompted public awareness around the single incident, as well as other incidences which speak to the larger systematic issue of alleged police brutality in the United States of America (Antony and Thomas, 2010).

Citizen camera-witnesses may thus be empowered in cases where a traditional journalist is not present. There appears to be urgency in the digital era to combine user-generated content, first-person accounts, and content produced by ordinary citizens through citizen camera-witnessing. This combination provides a myriad of reporting opportunities, especially during traumatic events. When such content is harnessed and coupled with traditional news reporting, it becomes more powerful and effective, thereby filling the gap of immediacy and data capturing in the absence of traditional journalists.

Kolodzy (2006) writes about convergence journalism, and, consequently, the practice of convergence journalism. The author starts by looking at cross media storytelling, recognising that the modern multimedia journalist needs significant technological tools to open up choices for his or her audience, as the introduction of technology into the new cycle has also changed the way news consumption works. Kolodzy (2006: 7) then claims that audiences have developed more “sophisticated” and “specific demands” or “taste for news delivery”, which means a need for multiplatform publishing becomes significantly apparent in this study.

In summary, the emergence of ICTs and social media sharing platforms has thus benefited society in creating political and general awareness, promoting information sharing by different parties on a local and global scale. Such a communication model may be highly effective in producing news coverage in war-torn countries or providing immediate coverage of an event through the use of multimedia mobile technologies. Beckett and Mansell (2008) argue that traditional models of reporting, which involve deadlines and a top down structure, are expensive to produce. Beckett and Mansell (2008: 2) further claim that profitability is therefore achievable through a new form and “networked journalism”, relying on new media platforms specifically using technology as the key element for newsgathering.

2.10 Media convergence – traditional journalism and citizen journalism

While it is critical for digital news organisations to understand the news data and respond in a timely fashion (Grueskin, Seave and Graves, 2011), the new proposed model (Figure 5.1) complicates the process of compensating journalists, as it appears to differ vastly from the applied methodologies of citizen journalists, camera witnesses and bloggers, who often act independently of larger agencies, with limited resources, and utilising basic and free online tools to meet their publishing objectives. Lewis (2012: 11) argues that journalism, especially in the United States, does not hold monopoly over training certification of its workforce or has any means of preventing other role players from participating in the act of journalism. Instead, the author argues further, the reporting model is one that has self-policing mechanisms and ethical codes which are internally enforced.

Hence, citizen camera-witnessing is seen to be without oversight, compared to the various stages of traditional checks and balances within a newsroom. This is further explored using the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997). It has been more than twenty years since McCombs, Shaw and Weaver originated the agenda setting hypothesis. The theory examines the influence of the media on the public as well as their perception of information generated through the news reporting cycle.

The Agenda Setting Theory is significantly used and applied in newsrooms worldwide as part of the execution of operational processes. The idea of agenda setting begins with the hierarchal structures of the news, discussing the agenda of news or content for the media platform relevant to its contributors (traditional journalists, editors, etc.), and gatekeeping the information that is produced. Gatekeeping is explained as decision making by relevant persons to limit or share information with the public via their media traditional media platform.

Lack of concern with profitability, when publishing a story or eye witness account is also noted, especially in instances of crises-based reporting or public awareness of news. Also, with greater access to technological and online tools, as well as the use of ICTs, the rise in informal reporting has also led to the concept of 'cyber-

activism', online activism or participatory activism through the use of the World Wide Web.

An example of this lies in the rising mobilisation of activists in a historic protest, during the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, known as the Coalition for Change. The revolution, and consequently its achievements, evolved in an effort to achieve political change, which was supported by a "rise in social media usage in the Arab world followed by a rise in overall Internet and mobile phone penetration in the region" Douai and Moussa (2016: 6, citing Khamis and Vaughn, 2011). The real-time informal reporting led to a significant increase in self-regulated content through the use of accessible mobile and other technologies. These devices had internet access capabilities, including the ability to capture multimedia footage and then broadcast the same on social media platforms, allow Internet sharing and publish content to blogs.

2.10.1 Blogging

Blogger Elawady (2011) had the ability to publish devastating visuals of police brutality, among other footage, depicting the authorities' violent attempts to subdue the crowds. Through her own WordPress-based blog site, Egyptian blogger Nadia Elawady posted a significant amount of footage, which expressed her personal witness accounts of the ongoing Egyptian Revolution of 2011. Years later, the online site still features telling images and video accounts, which were uploaded on a daily basis, to demonstrate the harsh reality of the uprising, the struggle of the Egyptian people and their need to draw mainstream media and global attention to their plight. Elawady (2011) wrote a blog article that contained her eyewitness accounts of events that occurred between Tuesday the 25th of January and the following Saturday, the 29th of January. She then went on to provide daily and sometimes hourly updates with photographic and video evidence of her claims.

Among the various provisions, Elawady also includes two compelling photos of a gas canister, used for crowd control by the authorities on the local protestors. The first is an image of the used canister marked, '623 Riot CS Smoke', where the last digit after the '3' is not visible or rubbed out and captioned (Figure 2.3).

model and importantly the origin of the weapon used against the protestors during the revolution, compels the reader to question how the Egyptian government, armed forces and authorities gained access to such advanced weapons.

This type of uncensored, unregulated and unchecked, non-traditional reporting, in this setting, presents an example of how reporting of critical events become enhanced and empowered.

2.10.2 Social media, self-regulated communication and agenda setting

Another example is the popular social media website, YouTube, which consequently hosts hundreds, if not thousands of multimedia footage uploads, video footage and documentary style promotion of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, with millions of views from audiences worldwide. This is among a myriad of other topics featuring traumatising political events, caught on camera and shared globally. The uncensored videos, much like other content posted to alternative social media and online platforms, are often published by anonymous account holders and have become a treasure trove of content for traditional media agencies to access. In time of crises, blogging, capturing multimedia footage, as well as receiving and sharing of such footage and information, may help to create alternative insight, where news media agenda, based on traditional methods, have overlooked the story.

Underprivileged social groups gain the opportunity to express themselves and perhaps do so as a greater collective, creating impactful and meaningful dialogue leading to change and, sometimes, prompting an immediate call to action. However, traditional methods impact societies with information sharing in a different way, i.e. when traditional media follow the applications of the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997) or Need for Orientation (NFO) Model (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2014: 783), both defining a combination of *relevance* and *uncertainty* in regard to public consumption of news.

The authors unpacked the agenda setting function as “the press must include the relevant social and personal characteristics that mediates such an affect”. The traditional effects of orientation of communication research must be combined with

the information seeking or uses and gratifications approach. Such elements create low levels of NFO with low relevance, high NFO results when information is coupled with high relevance and high certainty, or low NFO, with low uncertainty. Referring to the Need for Orientation Model, (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2014, citing Camaj and Weaver, 2013: 787) the process of the NFO is summarised more clearly, enhancing the understanding of the agenda setting capabilities and influence.

The need for orientation is presented in figure 2.5, as demonstrated by Weaver's Need for Orientation Model.

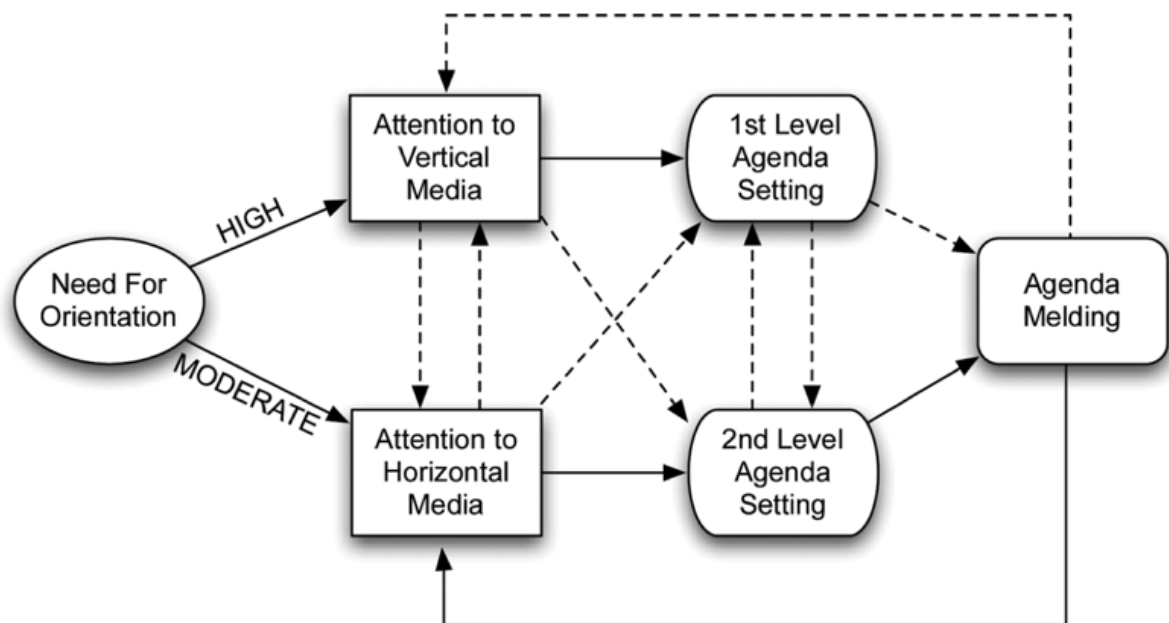


Figure 2.5: Weaver's Need for Orientation Model (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2014, citing Camaj and Weaver, 2013: 787)

Such theories are overlooked or unknown in informal reporting methods. Instead, the emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc., and other ICTs, allow for faster information sharing, with specific technical functions (like hashtags), which likewise promote crowdsourcing.

2.10.3 Twitter

Twitter is another social media platform which provides text and multimedia instant communication. It uses a hashtag # meta symbol to link conversations. This allows

conversations to be linked by the tag and not by contributors knowing each other. In addition, a conversation can have more than one tag. This has the benefit of aggregating conversations.

Consider the #FeesMustFall campaign. This was a campaign to fight for free education which was also promised by the Freedom Charter. Other aggregating tags in this campaign were #WitsMustFall and so on. Here students and activists rallied around the globe and particularly in South Africa. This campaign generated several million tweets. Baillie-Stewart (2017) qualitatively analysed the journalistic aspect of the campaign between 15 and 23 October 2015 while Khan and Thakur (2018) quantitatively studied 576 583 of these tweets between 15 October 2015 and 10 April 2017.

Khan and Thakur (2018) found that there were 90 783 unique users of which the top 2 users who generated the most volume of tweets were found to be bots or cyborgs. Khan (2019), further analysed the tweets in terms of sentiment and its relationship with real life incidents such as the burning of the UKZN library and UJ hall. It was found that the overall sentiment was neutral, and that sentiment of tweets were affected by real life incidents, particularly the negative sentiment which reflected significant changes prior and post certain events.

This shows that even user-generated news by citizens can in themselves become sources of new knowledge, which further evolve the news and information analysis and processes.

2.11 Theoretical lens – Media Synchronicity Theory

The current study is underpinned by the Media Synchronicity Theory, which is a newer, revised theory of Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008). Dennis and Valacich (1999) initially presented the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) and the Media Richness Theory (MRT) at the “32nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-32)”. Later, Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008) re-interpreted MST and MRT into one overarching theory – the Media Synchronicity Theory.

The Media Synchronicity Theory refers to the requirements of the conveyance and convergence processes, which enable a more effective communication within an organisation.

“These communication processes involve (in some degree) both the individual transmission of information and the individual processing of information ...” (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008: 581).

The authors highlight the difference between conveyance and convergence, indicating that the two processes “have different requirements for information transmission, information processing, and consequently, synchronicity” (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008: 581) (see section 1.5.1 and section 2.10).

Figure 2.6, extracted from the Media Synchronicity Theory (Martens, 2012: 6, citing Tntdj, 2011), explains how working together simultaneously in a synchronised manner with a shared focus may deliver higher synchronicity. The model refers to media capabilities ranging from transmission capabilities to processing capabilities, which, at the point of convergence with media synchronicity, affects the communication process as a whole.



Figure 2.6: Media Richness and Media Synchronicity Theory (Martens, 2012:14, citing Tntdj, 2011)

Figure 2.6's gap is that it does not include Social Media posts (such as Blogs and Tweets) in the unaddressed documents and Instant messaging (such as SMS, WhatsApp) in the addressed section. Additionally, the conveyance and convergence communication processes need to be actioned in order to create communication performance using appropriation factors such as familiarity and training, among others, in conjunction with communication performance to achieve task performance (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008).

For the purpose of the study, the researcher explored the collaboration between coordinated news reporting and uncoordinated news reporting, or differently stated, between traditional and non-traditional news platforms. Consequently, through the Media Synchronicity Theory (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008), which incorporates the Media Richness Theory (Dennis and Valacich, 1999), it is worth noting that a high synchronicity between the two models can influence a greater and more efficient system of sending and receiving information and, furthermore, at a faster pace. It is therefore apparent that individuals working with others in a function of production (news gathering, dissemination and distribution), create an environment more conducive to structured output, developing support to achieve the overall organisational goals.

Theoretically, the incorporation of the Health-e Model (Figure 5.1), which co-opts citizen journalists into the traditional newsroom model with the use of technology to transcend the geographical limitations of journalists, who are positioned nationally and away from the central newsroom office, may lead to significant problem solving. Through the Media Synchronicity Theory (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008), the study is alerted to the potential for increased performance from both traditional and non-traditional media players, at a point of convergence, using technology.

Figure 2.7 presents the Media Synchronicity Theory as re-interpreted by Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008).

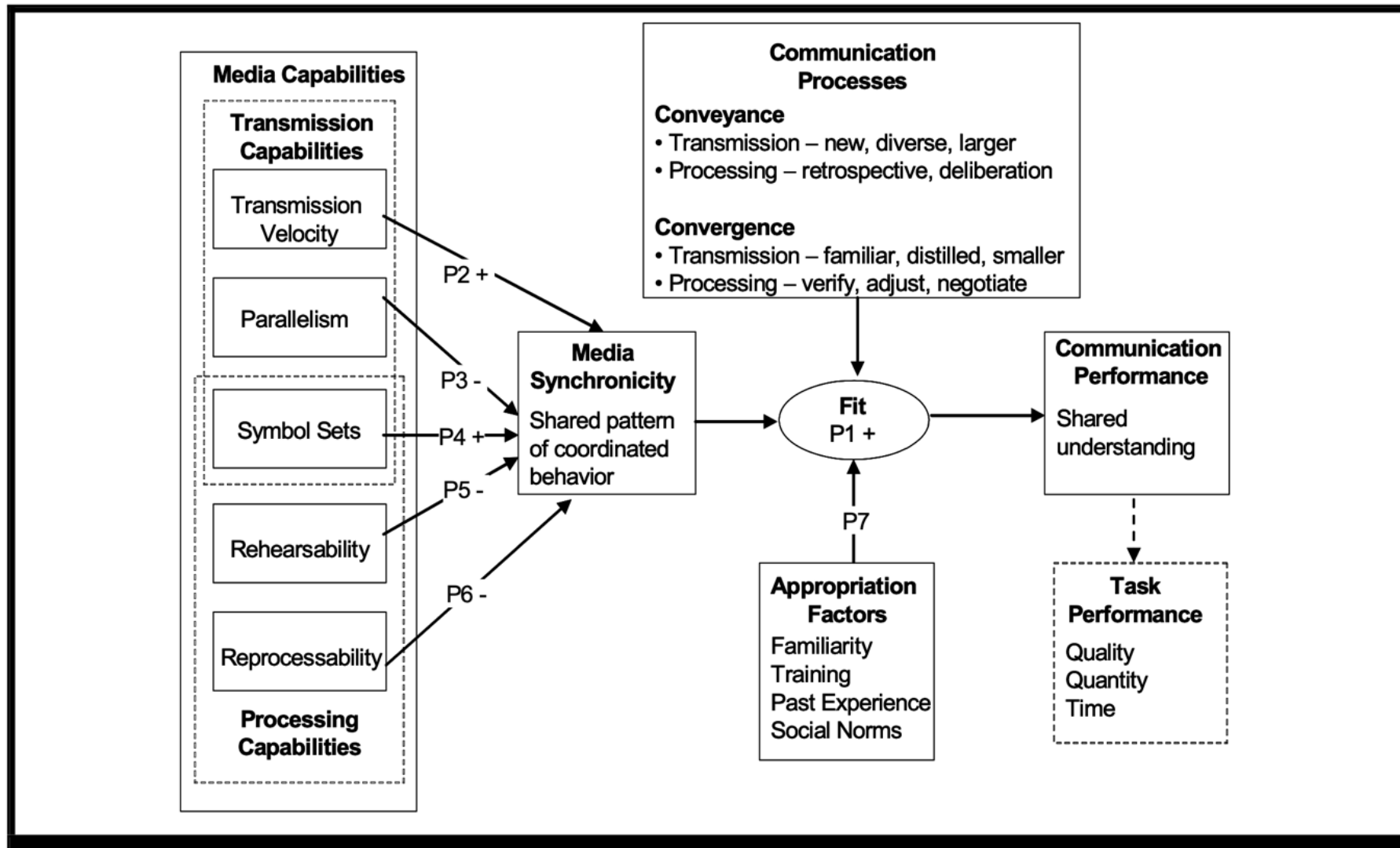


Figure 2.7: Media Synchronicity Theory (Source: Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008: 582)

2.12 Summary

In summary, the contributions of citizen journalists and citizen camera-witnesses have been significant and impactful on the media industry, expanding perspectives and providing real-time footage. To date, research has indicated that the activities of citizens, as producers of information, have started to affect news through the addition of new/different perspectives (Allan, 2006; Gillmor, 2004, 2006) and presenting new topics for national consideration (Carlson, 2007). Robinson (2009) proposed that a “second-order newsroom” or “cyber-newsroom” formed when the public reported on, created, disputed/refuted and mended the news content of journalists online. Research findings furthermore indicate that media workers keep traditional values in the midst of digital changes (O’Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008) and dynamically devalue content generated by users (Lewis, Kaufhold and Lasorsa, 2009). Still other scholars have suggested that blogs alter reporters’ conceptions of immediacy, interactivity and transparency (Bivens, 2008) and influence newsroom conversations and sourcing practices (Lowrey and Mackay, 2008; Robinson and DeShano, 2011). Carpenter (2010), Gillmor (2004, 2006) and Merritt and McCombs (2004) all agree that ‘social and technological forces’ are pushing the field of journalism to evolve.

The study, through this chapter, highlights the need for additional constitutional changes, which need to also evolve in order to extend recognition of the ‘freedom of expression, freedom of the press’ rights to those who wish to legitimately participate in the news reporting cycle, during times of crisis, political unrest, etc. It may also be worthwhile noting that any successful collaborative model that integrates the use of traditional reporting with non-traditional reporting may need additional laws and legislation to be passed, which recognises the contributions citizen journalists.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to research methodology

In brief, the researcher decided to first conduct pilot work through the Health-e case study, which informed the qualitative research described herein. The features of the topic for the current research necessitated the adoption of a qualitative approach to citizen camera-witnessing as part of the traditional news cycle. The decision to not include a quantitative component was motivated by the outcomes of the literature review, which informed and supported the data collection method. An interpretivist paradigm (observing individuals' experiences), which allowed for interpretation of the research findings, was adopted. A sequential process of thematic analysis, informed by the Media Synchronicity Theory (Figure 2.7), is discussed in section 2.11.

The pilot study commenced with an initial email and telephonic contact with the Health-e gatekeepers (Appendix D). This was followed by attaining permission to conduct a video call/digital face-to-face interview as part of a pilot study, to understand the organisational structure of Health-e and consequently their OurHealth programme. The interview for the pilot study in April 2019 was conducted using the Skype platform on the researcher's MacBook Pro computer. Information from this interview has led the researcher to selecting a qualitative methodology, thus allowing the researcher to interpret the phenomena of the proposed integrated collaborative model in a more natural setting.

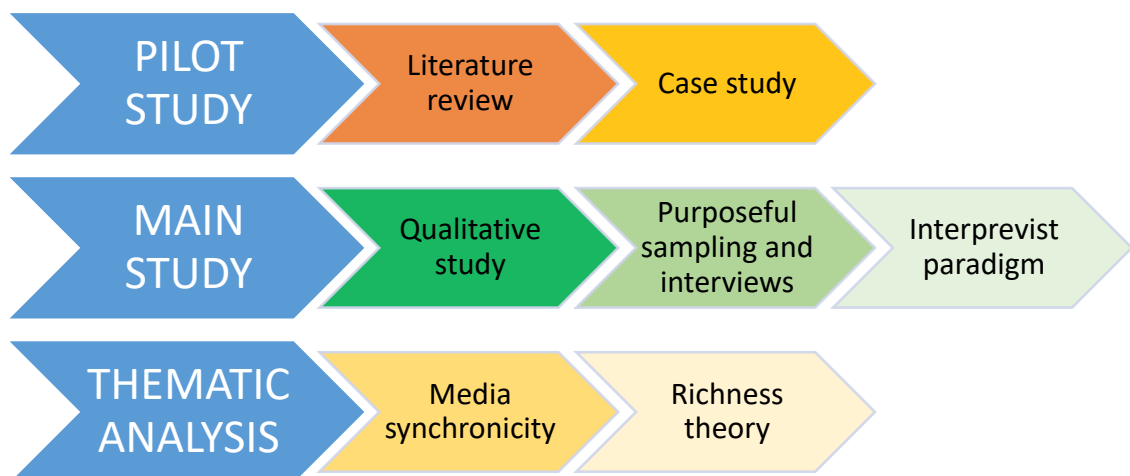


Figure 3.1: A visual representation of the Research Methodology (Source: Researcher)

3.2 Initial pilot work and case study

It is important for researchers to first conduct pilot work in order to build a sound foundation for future studies. This often takes the form of a case study (Yin, 1993), which here included small-scale inquiry and pilot interviews performed as part of an initial case study. In this context, it can be argued that focus on research within a single organisation or institution is sufficient and indeed preferable to provide insight into their internal dynamics (Yin, 1993). A criticism of case study methodology is its perceived dependence on a single case or organisation. Some researchers call this methodology microscopic, yet Yin (1993, 1994) disagrees by counter arguing that a larger number of case studies do not transform into a macroscopic study. The research therefore concurs with Yin (1993, 1994) and adds that this choice allowed the researcher to exercise more effort within the organisation and study its internal dynamics (Tellis, 1997).

The Health-e News model and consequently its OurHealth programme were particularly useful to the researcher, because it had the desired integrated model, which was a strong contributing factor to the decision taken by the researcher to specifically concentrate on one organisation as a case study.

Case studies help researchers and participants involved in a study to think through the cases they are likely to learn the most from and select those cases for study. Patton (1990) points to the example of people observing the reactions to watching someone binge eat in a restaurant and then interviewing people about what they saw. Their reaction would be an example of how to study a deviant sample. In a single program the same strategy may apply. Thus instead of studying a representative sample of people in a particular setting, the evaluator may focus on studying and understanding a few selected cases with special interest. An example here is the unexpected student dropouts or unexpected outstanding successes. In other evaluations, detailed information about special cases can be used to supplement statistical data about the statistical distribution of participants (Patton, 1990).

For the pilot phase of this research, the researcher decided to focus on the incorporation of citizen journalism and camera-witnessing as it applies to the

Health-e News organisation. The motivation for selecting this institution was in part its known credibility in the reporting of health-related news in the local setting. In addition, the selection of a single institution was a cost-effective one. Through the initial pilot interview conducted with an OurHealth employee (April 2020), information was obtained on the various staff members of Health-e News and how their citizen journalism programme is conducted. The need for the identification of representative samples was to avoid or reduce bias during data collection. In addition, other factors were considered in the quantification of interviewees to avoid saturation of data. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 1.6.1, in the interest of anonymity, the researcher has refrained from providing other bio-data elements, avoiding identifying factors such as race, gender, age and title, which was also discussed during the pilot study after referencing the Durban University of Technology's (DUT) ethical guidelines on data collection.

3.3 Other preliminary work for main study

A literature review consisting of ongoing research and current practice into the current media model was conducted globally, continentally and locally, which provided insight into the research subject. The review of other existing models, positive and negative elements, and ethical and an ethical behaviour were observed through the literature review. The researcher is a journalist and used her ethnographic experience. The researcher consequently alluded to areas of exploration, to identify the differences between traditional and non-traditional models, testing the hypothesis of future discoveries that may be more beneficial than the current ones.

3.4 Research methodology for main study

Guided by the literature review process and further informed by the pilot study, the researcher embarked on purposeful sampling through the Health-e case study (Patton, 2005). The main source of data included individuals involved at Health-e News through various contributing roles. Purposeful sampling was used to select a limited number of representative research participants subjected to in-depth assessment and to avoid saturation. This process informed the selection of managers, mainstream journalists and citizen journalists involved with Health-e

News. Patton (2005) informs that purposeful samples can be stratified or nested by selecting particular units or cases that vary according to a key dimension. This informed the researcher's choice of: (a) three managers; (b) three journalists; and (c) three citizen journalists.

A qualitative approach applied through conducting semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to collect the necessary data, which led to an ease of comparison between traditional and non-traditional news models, bearing in mind that Health-e management structures could have bearing and influence over their journalism and citizen journalism input and output. In addition, an interpretivist paradigm was selected based on the approach of the study in order to understand the experience of participants who were purposefully sampled. The term "interpretivism" refers to theories on how we may gain knowledge of the world, which loosely relies on "interpreting" or "understanding" the meanings that people ascribe to their actions (O'Reilly, 2009).

3.4.1 Study setting and design

This was a cross-sectional study that incorporated a qualitative approach. The researcher used semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) and biographical data (Appendix B) to explore the incorporation of citizen camera-witnessing at the Health-e News organisation.

3.4.2 Ethics approval

Ethics clearance and approval for the current study was obtained from Durban University of Technology (DUT) (Appendices E and F). In addition, corporate consent obtained through the management structures of Health-e News allowed the researcher to spend extended periods at the media offices to observe, interview and participate with staff. All individuals were invited to participate, and they were informed about the ethical guidelines of participation, including their right to withdraw from the project at any time, without saying why and without negative consequences. All participants had the right to informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. A pseudonym was used to conceal participants' identities and titles. Participants were not known to each other. There was no conflict of interest

between the researcher and the participants who are not related to or otherwise connected with the researcher. No harmful procedures were administered to the participants.

3.4.3 Data collection

3.4.3.1 Initial contact and scheduling interviews

Based on an initial pilot study, the decision was made to interview three Health-e News management personnel, three appointed journalism staff, and their appointed citizen camera-witnesses. Initial contact was made with Health-e management for data collection, which included telephonic contact, followed by extensive written contact via email. The Health-e News managers are the gatekeepers of access to the citizen camera-witnesses. The outcome of the request for data collection was granted after the DUT gatekeeper permission letter was provided and signed. Arrangements for individual face-to-face interviews with the selected participants were also confirmed and set up at the Health-e offices in September 2019, with the condition of interviews occurring on the premises because of the employee work hours and work schedules.

All data were collected directly by the researcher, including the use of a validated interviewee biography (Appendix B). In brief, the researcher visited the Health-e News facilities in Johannesburg to verify the research conducted into the organisation's news reporting models. This included first-hand documentation of citizen camera-witnessing processes entailed in the dissemination of news through communication technology platforms and ICTs. The travel requirements to attend the appointments included a flight between Durban and Johannesburg, followed by commuting to the Health-e offices. In order to maintain anonymity, the researcher refrained from providing other bio-data elements, avoiding identifying factors such as race, gender, age and title.

3.4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews was a key element in this study, as the verbal exchange of questions between the interviewer and interviewee enabled the researcher to become more familiar with the subject and the interviewees'

information. It also provided the researcher the opportunity to explore the information even further with the interviewee. The questions were formulated in alignment with the research topic, research aim and research objectives, which included (Appendix A), but were not limited to:

Table 3.1: Interview questions

Question 1: What does news coverage mean to you?
Question 2: How do you incorporate citizen camera-witnessing and traditional news at Health-e?
Question 3: What technology does Health-e use to achieve question 2?

Each interviewee was asked the exact same three questions, although each response from the various individuals proved vastly different. This created new perspectives to explore on the research topic and to better understand how the model works. Clifford, Cope, Gillespie and French (2016) as well as and Longhurst (2016) refer to the importance of semi-structured interviews, explaining that the verbal interchange between the interviewee and interviewer allows for the elicitation of information through additional questions. Although the interviewer prepared a list of predetermined questions, the semi-structured interview style caused the interview to be conducted in a conversational manner, which afforded participants the opportunity to explore issues they felt were important without too much impedance.

3.4.3.3 The interview process

At the Health-e offices, the management provided the boardroom for use. The square boardroom table ensured a pre-fixed interview position between each interviewee and the researcher. Each day started at 8:15 am, which allowed the interviewee to face the interviewer directly (on day 1 and day 2), sitting in close proximity to one and other for recording purposes and for the audibility and quality of recorded sets. Each interviewee was presented with a consent form (Appendix C), which was explained to them. All interviewees agreed and signed in person before the interview commenced. This can be heard at the beginning of each audio file that was created from the recording of the interview. However, on day 2 of the interviews at the Health-e News offices in Johannesburg, staff needed to use the

boardroom for internal matters. Some interviews would then move to a different location such as the coffee shop downstairs within the office building. Another interview occurred further down the road at a more private restaurant setting, where the external noise was less invasive. While awkward, this proved an educational experience to the researcher. Nonetheless, the unforeseen change of the setup still accorded for a face-to-face interview and clear audio recording was still possible. Handwritten notes were also taken in conjunction with the recording to ensure an accurate account of the information provided. Each participant was willing to speak openly and honestly about their experiences at the organisation. The only time any off-record comments were made was after the interview concluded and one of the interviewees wished to make an additional statement off the record (common journalism phrase – meaning do not repeat), which also provided valuable insight into the ongoing work at the organisation. Interviewees appeared calm and relaxed during all interviews. Each interview session yielded a substantial amount of information that further elucidated the inquiry and data collection needed to conclude the study.

During day 1 of the interviews, the interviewer was provided with hot refreshments only, such as coffee. The interviewer provided no refreshments to the interviewees. On day 2 of the interviews, however, when the interview location changed out of necessity, the interviewer provided refreshments for the two interviews that happened outside the boardroom at the researcher's own expense to make the process more relaxed and comfortable for both parties.

3.4.4 Data transcription

Two devices were used to digitally capture the interviews – an Apple iPhone X mobile device using the Voice Memos application, and a MacBook Pro computer with the application known as Simple Recorder. The interviews were recorded simultaneously, and these recordings are stored safely in a password protected file on the researcher's devices and mobile phone. Handwritten notes were also scribed at the time of the recordings. Once the interview processes and data collection were completed in Johannesburg, the raw interview data were provided to a professional transcriber, who agreed in advance, prior to transcribing the audio

files, to the non-disclosure of the contents of such files to any third parties, and to not keep a copy of the transcripts once they were provided to the researcher.

3.4.5 Thematic analysis

3.4.5.1 Definition

Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2014: 3-4, citing Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) define thematic analysis as follows:

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”.

3.4.5.2 Analytic purpose

Guest, MacQueen, Namey (2014) summarised the difference between exploratory and confirmatory data analysis in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Exploratory vs. confirmatory approaches to qualitative data analysis

Exploratory (“content-driven”)	Confirmatory (“hypothesis-driven”)
• For example, asks: “What do x people think about y?”	• For example, hypothesizes: “x people think z about y”
• Specific codes/analytic categories NOT predetermined	• Specific codes/analytic categories predetermined
• Codes derived from the data	• Codes generated from hypotheses
• Data usually generated	• Typically uses existing data
• Most often uses purposive sampling	• Generally employs random sampling
• More common approach	• Less common approach

3.4.5.3 Advantages of thematic analysis

The researcher explored several accredited research articles highlighting the advantages of using thematic analysis as a useful technique to methodically unpack data, as research becomes more ‘recognised’ and ‘valued’. In addition, the use of such methodologies can provide a clearer communication of the information to others, including how the analysis is conducted, which can further inform knowledge.

Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017: 2, citing Braun and Clarke, 2006; King, 2004) refer to the advantage of thematic analysis as:

“Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data... As thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of other qualitative approaches, it offers a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in their research career”.

The researcher specifically chose the Braun and Clarke method for the aforementioned reason, and, through this methodical process, was able to interpret the data collected and provide a further explanation toward imperative conclusions.

3.4.5.4 Disadvantages of thematic analysis

Nowell et al. (2017: 2) claim that a significant disadvantage of thematic analysis is insufficient or “lack of substantial literature on thematic analysis, compared to that of grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology, for example—may cause novice researchers to feel unsure of how to conduct a rigorous thematic analysis”. Furthermore, the authors opine that thematic analysis can be a disadvantage because the method is “flexible” and such flexibility can “lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data ...” (p. 2).

3.4.5.4 Braun, Clarke and Gray's (2017) 6-step method for this research

Considering the aforementioned, this study however, applied thematic analysis for the data analysis, as this method of analysis is aligned with the interpretivist stance. This approach is needed for the identification of implicit and explicit ideas within the data, and for the development of thematic code. Inductive thematic analysis was applied to the current research data to explore the experiential orientation of the data through the lens of a theoretical model (MST), assuming a knowable world (Braun, Clarke and Gray, 2017). A deductive approach, according to Braun, Clarke and Gray (2017) is essential to guiding the interpretation of data (Figure 3.2).

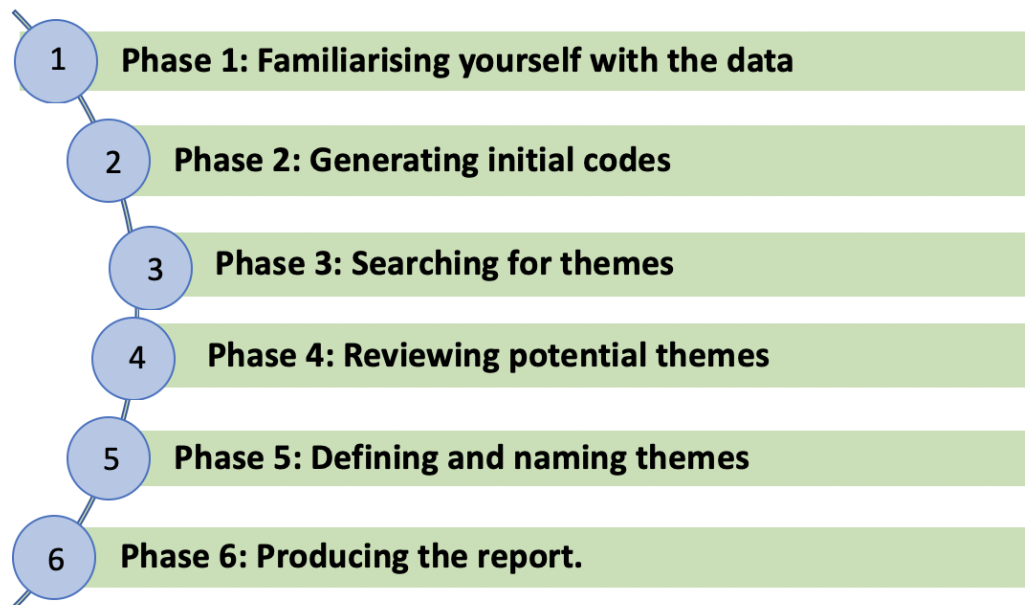


Figure 3.2: Adaptation from Braun, Clarke and Gray's (2017) 6-step method

First, the researcher familiarises him/herself with the data. Following this, initial codes are generated to begin categorising the data. The researcher then searches for and reviews potential themes that may emerge from the data, which are formally named and defined to produce a final report.

The data that emerged from the interview were coded inductively and thematically analysed. All analyses were performed using Nvivo version 11.

3.5 Media Synchronicity Theory combined with thematic analysis

During the interview process, the researcher considered the influential factors of the Media Synchronicity Theory (Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008), namely conveyance and convergence, as well as media richness and media synchronicity. This was achieved through the use of semi-structured interviews (section 3.4.3.2). Question 3, “*What technology does Health-e use to achieve question 2?*” related to the second question, “*How do you incorporate citizen camera-witnessing and traditional media news at Health-e?*” Both questions allowed the interviewees to consider the technological tools they use at Health-e as well as their collaborative model, probably because of the technological resources provided by Health-e through their OurHealth programme. In this research setting, exploration of the Media Synchronicity Theory of Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008), the use of selective thematic analysis enabled the researcher to unearth key elements relevant to both conveyance and convergence at Health-e, through the incorporation of citizen journalists, and vice versa.

The Media Synchronicity Theory focuses on the ability of media to support synchronicity, a shared pattern of coordinated behaviour among individuals as they work together. The researcher expanded on the original propositions of MST to argue that communication is composed of two primary processes: conveyance and convergence.

Media convergence is the merging of mass communication outlets – print, television, radio, the Internet, etc., along with portable and interactive technologies through various digital media platforms. Media convergence is the blending of multiple media forms into one platform for purposes of delivering a dynamic experience. The researcher furthermore argues that these communication processes (conveyance and convergence) have both interpersonal aspects and cognitive aspects (Robert and Dennis, 2005: 676, citing Miranda and Saunders, 2003; Zigurs and Buckland, 1998).

“In order to perform conveyance or convergence, an individual must engage in two individual processes: information transmission (preparing information for transmission, transmitting it through a medium, and

receiving information from a medium) and information processing (understanding the meaning of information and integrating it into a mental model). Generally speaking, convergence processes benefit from the use of media that facilitate synchronicity, the ability to support individuals working together at the same time with a shared pattern of coordinated behaviour, while conveyance processes have a lesser need for synchronicity” (Robert and Dennis, 2005: 676, citing Miranda and Saunders, 2003).

Conveyance processes are the transmission of a diversity of new information – as much new, relevant information as needed – to enable the receiver to create and revise a mental model of the situation. Individuals participating in conveyance processes engage in substantial information processing activities so that a potentially large, diverse set of information can be exchanged in a variety of information formats.

3.6 Summary

Through the aforementioned research methods, the researcher was able to conduct the data collection in an ethical manner. The consequent information received has led to a greater understanding of the study’s research into the topic. The face-to-face interviews created trust between the researcher and the interviewees, thereby allowing a two-way conversation around the interviewee’s experiences, insights and other valuable information which has informed this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and describes the main themes and sub-themes that emerged following the thematic analysis of qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with staff, management and citizen journalists at Health-e News, based on a deductive approach according to the Media Synchronicity Theory. These results are summarised in Table 4.1. In supporting the discussion on themes, relevant quotes from the data generated from the interviews were used. Data from semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and used as such during discussion. The names of interviewees have, however, been changed to ensure anonymity. For the purpose of this study, interviewees are referred to as I-1 (Interviewee 1) to I-9 (Interviewee 9), instead of stating their initials or names in order to maintain anonymity of the participants. Further, the notation adopted was I-1.1 to I-1.x, where 1 to x denotes the statements numbered 1 to statement numbered x for Interviewee 1. Similarly, I-2.1 to I-2.x denotes the statements numbered 1 to statement numbered x for Interviewee 2. This was done consistently for all nine interviewees.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with Health-e News staff

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1: Understanding of news coverage (refer to section 4.2)	-
Theme 2: Integrating citizen journalists into mainstream media – Health-e technology (refer to section 4.3)	Sub-theme 2.1: The training of citizen journalists
	Sub-theme 2.2: Collaboration between citizen journalists and mainstream journalists
Theme 3: The influence of citizen journalists in the traditional media setting (refer to section 4.4)	Sub-theme 3.1: Benefits of citizen journalism
	Sub-theme 3.2: Health-e News model challenges
Theme 4: Technology in citizen reporting (Refer to section 4.5)	Sub-theme 4.1: Types of technology use
	Sub-theme 4.2: Challenges using the technology
	Sub-theme 4.3: Solutions to the use of technology

The three questions asked during the interview along with a brief motivation are discussed next.

4.1.1 Question 1: What does news coverage mean to you?

In order to understand the media values of both the traditional and non-traditional news reporting models as explored in this research, it was imperative for the researcher to understand what news media coverage meant to both professional journalist and those who are seeking to enter the profession. In asking what media coverage means to the interviewee, a diverse range of answers were presented.

Nonetheless despite the perceived differences, a common theme presented itself for professional and non-professional reporters, which alluded to the essence and need for mass communication at every level. As journalists sought to meet the agenda setting needs of their traditional journalism outlets and news reporting objectives, citizen journalists seemed more inclined to create public awareness around essential issues that plague their communities (I-3.1, I-5.2, I-5.2), and which have not received mainstream media attention as expected, or at all.

4.1.2 Question 2: How do you incorporate citizen camera-witnessing and traditional media news at Health-e?

The main aim of the study was to unpack how citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated at Health-e. This particular question was specifically designed to receive information from various role players in terms of their perceptions on how this is achieved, i.e., what works and what does not work. In understanding this, the researcher sought to create a new model, which later took all of the elements into consideration.

4.1.3 Question 3: What technology does Health-e use to achieve question 2?

Furthermore, the study sought to explore how media synchronicity was achieved through the use of technology, by following a qualitative, interpretivist method of data collection through thematic analysis (section 3.4.5).

In doing so, it was imperative to ask the interviewees from both a traditional and non-traditional perspective, what technology was being used to achieve reportage. In the sense of traditional reporting, general technological resources are expected

as a provision of the news media environment. With regard to the integration of non-traditional media such as citizen journalism, considering the Health-e model of collaboration, the interviewer wanted to establish what technology was provided to citizen journalists through the news media organisation Health-e and their OurHealth programme. If so, how? Furthermore, how has the introduction of technology influenced conveyance or convergence in terms of mass communication, from both formal and informal reporting?

4.2 Theme 1: Understanding of news coverage

The first major theme that emerged concerned the understanding of news coverage. However, many television news outlets now feature political commentary broadcasts which often diverge from the ideal objective news source. Given this concern, it was critical to examine the perspectives of different participants on news coverage. From the interviews, it emerged that the purpose of news coverage should be to “interpret current events” (I-1.1) in a “simple, accurate and informational way” (I-1.2) that readers can easily understand. The need to facilitate “awareness to the public” in order to “create knowledge or educate [citizens]” (I-2.1) was also emphasised. However, it is important to caution that “news coverage means different things” (I-2.2), depending on both the reporter and the intended audience. Indeed, the media platform used often dictates the content of news coverage.

Thus, Health-e News citizen journalists and reporters understand that news coverage is different from that of more traditional media houses. In particular, this is driven by differences in intended audience, which for Health-e News includes a “major public health focus” (I-2.3), and thus a broad scope of coverage, including environmental and sexual health matters. The approach taken toward reporting at Health-e News includes the goal of providing a voice to the community in speaking out about their own health challenges. This would entail “ensuring that stories that are relevant and important to the public are covered” (I-3.1). The citizen journalist thus has a potential role in informing the public on “what their rights are when they go to public health facilities, what types of services they deserve and the treatment that they should be getting” (I-3.2).

This notion was iterated by another interviewee, who emphasised that the role of a health reporter should include giving a “voice to the voiceless [...] in the communities” (I-4.1). However, it emerged that, despite this important role in health empowerment facilitated by covering “stories of people that are usually left out and do not have the voice in our community” (I-5.1), citizen journalists are still often “overlooked by mass media and the mainstream media” (I-5.2).

Lastly, in addition to reporting news and educating the public on health-related issues, news coverage from the understanding of Health-e News journalists could also mean bringing relevant stakeholders in the Department of Health (I-6.1) up to date on critical matters. In summary, it can be drawn from the above that news coverage for Health-e is about exposing health-related issues in a marginalised community, thereby giving them voices to speak about the pressing issues that are being experienced by ordinary citizens.

4.3 Theme 2: Integrating citizen journalists into mainstream media

The second major theme that emerged concerned the integration of citizen journalists into mainstream media. According to Banda (2010), the media and communications landscape has changed in ways that make it possible to involve a more engaged citizen participation in journalism.

For Health-e News, it was found that the NHI, rollout by the Department of Health, instigated the co-opting of citizen journalists into the traditional news media (I-6.1). Moreover, it was revealed that there is a need for accurate and objective feedback on birth from citizen journalists at Health-e News. This is reflected in the statements below. Since 2012, the past seven years, Health-e News has identified very active members of certain communities, particularly in the nine NHI district pilot projects:

That's where the Department of Health had announced intentions to start the NHI process rollout, and we decided that for South Africans to be able to witness and see for themselves if indeed South Africa is ready to host, I mean, to implement the NHI, we needed accurate and

very – how do I say it – objective analysis of those developments in the NHI, and we couldn't rely on government to monitor it themselves and then give us objective feedback on the developments (I-6.1).

Expanding further, it was revealed that the selection of citizen eyewitness reporters was premised on finding citizens who are actively involved in youth activism within their various communities:

So, the first thing that Health-e did was identify NGOs (non-government organisations) that are operating in those areas and liaise with them and find out if they have any young activists who might be interested in what we call a citizen journalist. They will monitor and then compile news stories that Health-e can moderate, edit and then decide how it publishes and distributes them (I-6.2).

Similar views on how citizen journalists were recruited were also shared by another of the interviewees who disclosed:

...so, they recruit those people because these are the people who are in the communities and who are very close to the issues that are happening within the communities, because citizen journalism are all about reporting from your community, reporting stories that are untold, stories that you will never see anywhere, you understand (I-4.2).

From the successes recorded in the NHI pilot project, it was noted that Health-e News saw the importance of integrating, and the continuous corroboration with the identified citizen journalists in other areas of health service that are particularly newsworthy in the community. For example, it was noted that Health-e News dived into other general challenges of health failures within the communities through their citizen journalists:

We identified policy gaps in those areas in terms of health, service delivery in the country, and as time went on, we decided that there's really just a lot that is tied into the failure, I mean, healthy systems, and we decided to just go beyond just reporting, particularly on the project of the NHI, and just covered the general challenges the community faced,

particularly that have to do with health. We covered diseases, we covered shortages of water in those areas and how that impacts on people's health as well, we covered shortages of medicines (I-6.3).

4.3.1 Sub-theme 2.1: The training of citizen journalists

The formal training of citizen journalists emerged as an important sub-theme relevant to mainstream media integration. Banda (2010) indicates that professional journalists have come under fire in the deconstructive age, whereas the significant need to keep up with speedy news gathering and distribution cycles has promoted journalists to rethink their role into new media applications. Given this concern, Banda argues that professional journalism should be an exclusive practice reserved for those who would be admitted into it upon completion of a form of training or education programme. Given the recent co-opting of citizen journalists into journalism practice, it becomes highly critical to know from the participants if they identified and selected activists who are trained before engaging them in health news reporting in their communities. It was found that “Health-e ... trains [those] citizen journalists, and channels them on how to report about the issues from their communities” (I-4.3).

This empowers citizen journalists to “write stories from their communities and then they send them to Health-e” (I-4.4). This statement is also reaffirmed by another of the interviewees, who noted that, despite having previously worked as a journalist in another media house, she was made to undergo training in health reporting. Here, she was trained on:

How to report health issues... identify stories that could possibly be about health... with the training, I was able to... identify whether a story is... a Health-e type story... (I-3.3).

In terms of the training content, it was found that prospective citizen journalists were trained in the act of writing, videoing, and picture taking:

At the training, the citizen journalists are trained how to take good pictures, even taking the videos, on how to hold the phone when you are taking a video, how to hold the phone when you are taking a quality

picture that will go to the website. Because when you write a story and you are saying that there is a sewerage problem within a certain community, you must give us pictures that will go with the website (I-4.5).

The training provided at Health-e News thus included:

...how to write stories, how to take pictures, how to interview people, and just about the ethics of journalism, when you are dealing with people (I-3.4).

Equally important, it emerged from the interviews that citizen journalists are managed by a coordinator who oversees their affairs. It was made known that the citizen journalists are meant to correspond and report to one coordinator, who instructs, approves, and advises them on their story lines or scoops. As one of the interviewees noted:

There's a programmes manager who manages the citizen journalists. The person will take the stories and read them. Sometimes you have to try and understand, because some of them, you will try and read and find that this is actually not making sense (I-4.6).

Elaborating further, the same interviewee hinted that the purpose of the programme manager is to ensure that the stories are credible and of good quality, meeting the standard of the mainstream media:

So, Health-e, their job is to make sure that those stories from the community look good when they go to the media. And they come with stories that people thought was actually not a story (I-4.7).

4.3.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Collaboration between citizen journalists and mainstream journalists

The role of collaboration emerged as another important sub-theme relevant to the relationships between formal journalists and citizen journalists. Citizen journalists and citizen camera-witnesses often have little or no background in media, and

many have a poor understanding of the provisions of the law in relation to media and information dissemination (Banda, 2010). Bearing this mind, it becomes prudent to establish an inclusive model for the citizen journalist in the field and the mainstream, or rather experienced, journalist. It emerged that collaboration strongly complemented both the citizen and mainstream journalist, leading to a “win-win for everyone at the end of the day” (I-2.4). Hence, it was not surprising to hear another of the experienced journalists (I-7.1) being positive about the collaboration with the citizen journalists. The interviewee, reaffirming the importance of collaboration, voiced that both the citizen and experienced journalist are basically helping each other. The interviewee noted that the less experienced gets the stories from the field while the experienced in-house journalist helps in editing the stories into a quality standard. By so doing, the citizen journalist learns and improves their skills:

So it's a very nice thing to have, especially combining them, combining the two, because citizen journalists I don't think are as...they are still learning so they are not as experienced, from my understanding, so it's also nice to have us in-house with experience working together, because they are basically helping each other out. You will have the normal traditional investigative journalist who you were talking about, and you will have a citizen journalist who will write a story, bring it back. The experienced people can edit it and they can get a learning experience out of it as well (I-7.1).

From the above, one could draw the conclusion that citizen journalists need to learn from the experience of the mainstream journalist. This was noted to help improve the citizen journalist's reporting and coverage of news. More so, it was mentioned by another of the interviewees (I-6.2) that the experienced journalist tries to develop the skills of the citizen journalist by involving them in the journalism process:

...then sometimes, if the story is not good enough, we even just say, can you please just go back and do this, rather than just trying to change it too much ourselves within the organisation, without them. We really just involve them along the changes that we are trying to make as well (I-6.4).

Another essential area noted where collaboration has been beneficial to the citizen journalist is virtual reporting. It was assumed that by collaborating with experienced journalists, the citizen journalist can learn the right ways of virtual capturing to aid their stories:

I think it would help a lot. For basic things, like when they take photos in a portrait instead of landscape. Like the little things like that, just the basics, just to up them slightly would be great. And also, just getting them to send maybe at least three pictures or something per story that they write, if they can. I think that would build a lot to their story (I-7.2).

Of particular interest, and as an example of the importance of collaborative models between the citizen and the experienced journalist, a citizen journalist narrated:

I went to the Free State to cover the maternal health story and, surprisingly enough, that story won the Vodacom Original Journalist of the Year, in 2016 (I-4.8).

The interviewee (I-4) admitted that this would never have been possible without the input and contribution from the experienced journalist, who had helped guide the story in the right direction.

Apart from the benefits of improving the skills of citizen journalists, it emerged from the interviews that the collaborative model could also serve as a motivation for the inexperienced citizen journalist. As one of the interviewees indicated:

If I'm somewhere, in rural Limpopo, then I am talking about a story idea, say a senior journalist is listening and journalists have these visions. They visualise everything. The person would just say, 'You know what, maybe I need an office to book me accommodation. I'm going to Limpopo to work with the citizen journalists to do a bigger story, to help them to do the story'. That was going to be a motivation (I-4.9).

Despite the above benefits, it is worth noting that some of the interviewees disclosed to have experienced setbacks in their quest to collaborate with the citizen journalist in terms of reporting. One of the interviewees lamented the difficulty

encountered in trying to collaborate with the citizen journalist. This was blamed on poor office communication:

A lot of the time I hear about stories too late, where we could have actually partnered with them on something. So, there might be some big story breaking in the Eastern Cape, I have no idea that it's happening, because no one's communicated it. There's no sort of flow through communication, even in the Monday meeting, their stories aren't really communicated to us, so I have no idea what they are working on (I-2.5).

Reinforcing the concern of poor communication, another experienced journalist narrated an incident where the collaboration between citizen and experienced journalist failed to materialise. The interviewee's own account is as follows:

We had a case where Cutting Edge had actually asked me to look at doing something on people living on rubbish dumps and how they survive with the food and what they do with the food, and how they make sure that it's safe to eat, and all of that sort of stuff, not really of interest to their audience, and I hadn't gotten around to it yet, and the next thing I saw this article that [name deleted] had written, from Mpumalanga about exactly this issue. And if I'd known, I would have wanted to go with her and film it and tell the story, you know (I-2.6).

Due to this incident, the above interviewee allegedly claimed that the department operates in "different silos" (I-2.7) and "scooped [themselves] instead of collaborating" (I-2.8). Reflecting on the above, one could rightly assume that collaborating between the citizen and experienced journalist offers more advantageous benefits to both fields. However, poor communication and office bureaucracy may undermine effective collaboration between the citizen and experienced journalist. This assertion was also supported by one of the interviewees (I.2) who revealed the following:

I think that there's a resistance from the print department to work with the television department. And it's a couple of things. It's jealousy, to a certain degree. They don't want us to succeed, and I have a very real

sense of that, and also, I think that they influence the citizen journalists against us. And that's why I also think there has been a resistance to pay the citizen journalists for the work they do with us, because they want to keep them for themselves, you know. So instead of making it a more integrated environment, they are actually silo-in it, more and more and more (I-2.9).

4.4 Theme 3: The influence of citizen journalists in the traditional media setting

The third major theme that emerged was that of citizen journalists and their impact on media reporting in the traditional media setting. According to Banda (2010), most organisations are beginning to warm up to the concept of citizen journalism, with some seeing it as a necessary adjustment on how the media operates. On the other hand, some media organisations are still suspicious of citizen journalism. Moreover, some mainstream media reportedly have issues negotiating the credibility of citizen journalist reporting, as they argue that ordinary people cannot verify their news content.

As previously stated, news coverage has a profound impact on society. It gives voice to the voiceless and brings to the forefront pressing issues that are critical to the community. In this regard, citizen journalists play a vital role in getting first-hand news from the community where they live and thus witness its most pressing challenges. In one of the interviewees (I-6) own words:

Because human interest stories for us do very well, because we believe that people read what they are able to identify with, and we feel like because it's a community member writing this story, it would have more impact to a person that is reading it than if a journalist, e.g. myself, who didn't even go, who's done it telephonically, is writing it (I-6.5).

Drawing from the above assumptions, it becomes very important to outline the impact citizen journalist reporting had in the health sector and within the community. The impact is presented in terms of individual cases. This notion is exemplified by the case of citizen journalists who uncovered unhealthy parenting

practices within the local community, such as feeding babies Rooibos tea instead of baby formula or breast feeding. In this setting, the story may not have been uncovered by a traditional journalist, or exposed in the same manner, as deep community-based news and occurrences are often overlooked. It was assumed that due to poverty and misconception, local women feed their babies Rooibos in place of baby formula. According to the interviewee, this practice is common and has been widely accepted in townships and villages. In light of these reports, various clinics and hospitals started re-educating mothers on the dangers of such practice. The story and impact is captured below:

She wrote this story about mothers who are feeding their children Rooibos, because they get to a point where kids no longer want their baby formula, or maybe they can't afford it, they are just substituting milk for Rooibos. And it's a common thing. It's acceptable in townships and villages where maybe mothers are here in town and they leave their kids with their grandparents back in the villages and they are here for work. So, she wrote a story. We thought it was just a simple story, and the impact it had – it was shared by I think... Let me find that story. I don't know if I still have the original story, but I'm going to try and find that story, because the impact it had, it also even surprised me and one of the people wrote to us and said she was at a clinic and then they printed that article and they printed it on their wall, so the mothers can see. Because this is a common thing and sometimes the nurses can explain to you, but when it's coming from somebody who is able to go through the same experience who knows what you are going through, it makes a difference. You don't feel like they are talking down on you, they are speaking with you, you know, on the same level, saying these are the challenges I'm also having. That is the impact that I feel like it's making because I feel like if it had been written by any one of us here in the office, it would have been a completely different story (I-6.6).

Another relevant example lies in the case of citizen journalists uncovering and possibly identifying the unhealthy eating habits within the same community, and exposing the excessive consumption of processed foods and drinks among the

elderly. Furthermore, the potential detrimental impact on health and disease risk was uncovered. The story was captured by a citizen journalist who brought to light the high rate of sugary drinks the elderly consumed. It was noted that the story gained wide traction and was published by Daily Maverick. The story had a major impact on the community as many people could identify with the story. According to the citizen journalist who covered the story, a grandmother of the community was collecting and sorting her trash for recycling, and realised while putting the plastic in a bag, how many sugary drinks she was consuming in one day. It forced her to recognise and confront the potential adverse effects this practice could have on her overall health.

The story was widely shared, and a notable factor was that the story came from a community member speaking from experience. The perception is that the high readership or interest of the story, particularly from community members, is attributed to the fact that there is familiarity and trust, as compared to the local medical practitioners, who tell local community patients to change their eating habits for health reasons. This citizen journalist emphasised how writing the story of community members “sharing their experiences” showed her how she was “also guilty” of excessive sugary drink consumption. The researcher observed in this example that the citizen journalist has drawn a personal comparison to the subject of the story and expressed her opinion on the impact the story had on her. In a traditional media reporting role, the traditional journalist is unlikely to express a biased opinion or any opinion on their experiences, given the ethical concerns. The above case reinforces the positive impact citizen journalists make to pressing community needs. From the cases, it can be gathered that issues of particular concern to South Africans were brought to the attention of the community.

The positive impact or success of citizen journalists could in part be attributed to community closeness and implicit levels of trust. In another case, examining the positive impact of citizen journalism, a story emerged on how malpractice by a local doctor was exposed. The doctor was unmasked for performing illegal surgery that led to many deaths in his practice. After the story hit the mainstream media, the doctor’s practicing license was withdrawn, and he was subsequently banned from practicing medicine. He was recently banned from practising as a medic, because he used to perform surgeries at his consulting office that should be performed at

hospitals. Health-e facilitated a more guided process within the ethical model of reporting and up-skilled the citizen journalist with the know-how and tools of broadcast processes. In addition, Health-e provided the citizen journalist with the necessary undercover investigative equipment, such a hidden microphone and camera to efficiently gather evidence for the story. The story also exceeded the general print platform exposure and had a more impactful awareness through broadcast, and eventually social media. This translates to real-world implications, when viewing the integrated and collaborative model or interface between traditional and non-traditional reporting. The case illustrated how the platform at Health-e News could possibly bridge the gap between the two. This places the two entities and the community in an elevated and beneficial position, where the three role-players intersect. The impact in this scenario provides insight into how shortfalls in traditional and non-traditional processes are exceeded. A citizen journalist may thus be able to identify with the subject, in which case it may change the depth of information received and the way the story is written:

I feel like our stories have an impact in that they touch people and they are able to identify with the way that they are written and the people that write them. So, it's not uncaring journalists who are pursuing a story. It's members of the community who are aware of the challenges that you are facing, who have the same access to the same shops that you are having for food and things like that (I-6.7).

The empathic nature of the reporting as compared to the often-cold professionalism exhibited by trained journalists was heralded as a hallmark of citizen journalism. In addition, there are often “different ways of speaking in different parts of the country, and also the culture there is very different” (I-6.8). The abovementioned factors were hinted to be based on community trust, as noted by citizen journalists.

Importantly, there is often a perception of “distrust among journalists and ordinary citizens” (I-6.9). Interviewees might feel as if traditional journalists are “always tricking them” (I-6.10) just to “get the story” (I-6.11). Citizen journalists may rather have a trusted relationship and familiarity with the community, which, in many

cases, transcends this issue and exposes stories that may not necessarily be told to a traditional journalist:

At least they approach their sources knowing what they are dealing with, the areas of sensitivity, and they are able to work around that and get the person to open up and really speak about their experiences (I-6.12).

Echoing similar sentiments, another interviewee pointed out the importance of citizen journalism in exposing the truth when it comes to community issues. This is reflected in the notion that the community is also distrustful of government officials “who will just maybe do something for PR” (I-3.5), whereby a citizen journalist’s familiarity with the community and language creates a trust for stories to be exposed. This is indicative of personal accounts where the above notion applies. For example, lack of medical service delivery to foreigners compared to those who have citizenship included the case of:

...a mother who gave birth at a clinic and then she was transferred to hospital, but because she’s a foreigner, they told her that she must pay R621. Those are stories that you would hardly ever see (I-3.6).

The interviewee added that citizen journalists support exposing corrupt practices and abuses as the only way people can get fair treatment and/or justice. Health-e News gives voice and provides a verified platform to further authenticate and create trustworthy avenues for the story. This impact may influence and be seen to contribute to the necessary systematics changes at government level. It may furthermore contribute in a positive way to the misperception of the distrust between communities and traditional journalists, when the benefit of such endeavours is seen to materialise and be of assistance to them.

So, it’s one of those stories where you are able to see that having citizen journalists or journalists in those communities, then that’s the only way people will get fair treatment or justice for whatever is affecting them (I-3.7).

In summary, drawing from the above narrated impacts, citizen journalists can help expose pressing issues within the community and by doing so, gain the attention of the government, who seem to act immediately with media exposure of issues. The researcher thus recognises the increased exposure of permanent issues and stories when citizen journalists are empowered to report from within their own communities. Indeed, the “only way we can do that is to have people who are in those communities be trained and given that opportunity” (I-4). The above motivates the need for traditional media houses to take citizen journalists and their role in the community seriously.

4.4.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Benefits of citizen journalism

An important sub-theme which emerged in terms of citizen journalists lies in its potential benefits. Involvement in media reporting also has important benefits for citizen journalists themselves, including a means of employment, improvement in their academic and writing skills, and even eventual advancement to a fully-fledged journalist status. Other notable benefits included the privilege of interviewing the President of the Republic of South Africa. In terms of the benefits of creating jobs and giving opportunities to ordinary citizens, one of the interviewees reminded us that:

...It's not all about uplifting the community and making their issues being heard by the government, but it's also actually, that somehow you are giving back to the community by creating employment (I-4.10).

Another notable benefit of the Health-e News platform lies in its ability to support citizen journalists in the transition from an ordinary citizen to established journalist. On the one hand, it has been suggested that the potential of the recruited journalist is often not realised, and that they are merely tossed aside.

On the other hand, a suitable platform may assist in an eventual career path being developed. This creates a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship, especially as newsworthiness (which is a central component of any media platform) increases vastly with the input from citizen journalists. This has a valuable and sustainable long-term impact and benefit to Health-e News in terms of business and brand.

Because, if I look at where I come from, from 2013, from being a citizen journalist and now I'm one of the known reporters in the country, I'm an asset to Health-e that was actually a job creation. That's what they did, actually (I-4.11).

One could rightly assume that citizen journalism thus serves as the preparatory course toward a successful career and recognition as a professional journalist, as one citizen journalist highlighted that they have been “nominated several times” for a media award and although they were unsuccessful in winning it, they attributed their Health-e training as a contributing factor to the nominations. The nomination itself is recognition of a high standard of reporting and indicates benefits of the integrated model. In summary, from the above, it is sufficient to say that the benefit of citizen journalism to the journalism industry cannot be overestimated. The above narrative supports the integration of citizen journalism into the mainstream media. It not only empowers citizens to become critical ambassadors within their community, but also has a larger impactful role within the news cycles, newsgathering, dissemination and distribution of information, which leads to systematic changes within the community, society and the country as a whole.

4.4.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Health-e News model challenges

A second important sub-theme relevant to citizen journalism within the Health-e collaborative model regarding its impact lies in potential challenges involving different role-players and levels. These concepts could have important ethical implications. First, there are important potential ethical issues, which arise in terms of media hierarchy. Drawing from another interview perspective, a medical analogy was used to compare experience and education between qualified journalists and citizen journalists.

The remark referred to a:

...medical profession as an example, one of the interviewees argued that no one just enters into the surgical theatre and starts operating on patients without undergoing the necessary training (I-3.8).

From the interviews, it emerged that some of the experienced journalists did not support the concept of citizen journalism. From their words, it was gathered that it is not right to have someone with no qualification venture into an area where others have striven to acquire a professional qualification. In this setting, one of the interviewees emphasised the perception that often exists among professional journalists at Health-e, namely that citizen journalists had not “gone through the training” compared to their own qualifications. Also, where some journalists were unemployed, citizen journalists who were being co-opted and paid for stories were now “like they are working as journalists” (I-3.9). Second, there are concerns relevant to bureaucracy and financial compensation at Health-e News. In this setting, one could assume that citizen journalists are underpaid or perceive their contributions to have a certain level of value to the organisation, which deserves equal pay.

Kperogi (2011) warned that co-opting citizen journalism into traditional media houses may take financial advantage of contributors without appropriate compensation. This could cause challenges in the collaborative model, which could also hinder organisational objectives, decrease return on investment, and further inflame internal organisational conflict. In addition, perceived imbalances in financial compensation may allude to a certain level of distrust between citizen journalists and Health-e News management, staff and overall hierarchal authority. As one citizen journalist (I-2) indicated:

I suppose the other thing that's problematic currently is that the citizen journalists' work isn't getting the kind of exposure it used to, because the stories aren't right anymore, to the same degree. So, it goes out on our website, but one of the big complaints I've been hearing from them is that, 'Our stories aren't going into the newspapers anymore.' And I don't think there's enough of a push from the office (I-2.10).

Owing to the organisational structures within traditional media, there could be several reasons leading to stories being removed from the publishing list or main website. Without the complete understanding of how traditional media operate, especially from a managerial perspective, an ('outsider'), citizen journalist, citizen

camera-witness, non-traditional media agent may have different experiences in that environment, as explained in the Traditional Journalism Model (section 2.6).

The interviewee also spoke about their experience in relation to financial factors, issues related to copyright and lack of acknowledgements for creative contributions, which could be another source of ethical conflict. Accreditation in news reporting through 'by-lines' and 'shared-by-lines' are essential to writers and reporters, irrespective of whether it appears in print or broadcast. Sharing a by-line is a common practice in reporting practices. It should therefore not be uncommon in the Health-e collaborative model. The research, however, revealed this to not be the case, citing a 'gap' between the journalist and citizen journalist, questioning accreditation where a citizen journalist has done the main work and the journalist has overseen the final result:

The only gap I would see, generally, between the two journalists' is ownership of their work, because obviously the citizen journalists found this matter and found all the evidence and stuff like that, so he'll have to send out...the journalist from headquarters comes over to this story, does it fall under her name or does it fall under 'with help from the citizen journalists (I-7.3).

Equally significant in this sub-theme, it has been previously noted that citizen journalists are often allegedly underestimated and under-recognised. One of the interviewees narrated her ordeal in attempting to interview the South African President. According to her, she was initially denied entry into the venue, as security did not consider her a journalist, until she presented her Health-e (recognised) accreditation.

I noticed, especially about the people who organise media in those kinds of events, they don't take community media, or citizen journalists very seriously. Because there was, at some point we were with other representatives from other media houses, mainstream media – your SABC, Daily Dispatch and other media houses were all standing there waiting for the President to come inside the clinic. So, the guy who was organising the media called all media people to come inside and then

he asked each one of us which media house do we come from, and then when it was my turn to enter the gate, I had my accreditation for that on mine. He said I am not from a media house. So, I said, 'I am from Health-e News.' So just because the guy doesn't know Health-e News, I am not a journalist? (I-5.3).

In summary of this sub-theme, it must be noted that there are various forms of conflict that arise when considering the overarching dynamics between traditional and non-traditional reporting systems. It must also be noted that Health-e has incorporated citizen journalists with the aim of empowering them through upskilling, technology provision and financial compensation, but the systematic, mainstream media industry perception of citizen journalists needs to change.

4.5 Theme 4: Technology use in citizen reporting

The last major theme that emerged concerned the use of technology in citizen journalism. As noted by Banda (2010), technology has enabled citizens to have access to different news sources by means of satellite channels, the Internet, the computer, and mobile telephones. For example, Hamdy (2009) emphasised the role that continuous information sharing and online networking can play in actualising massive political change. Here, the example of Arab citizens and active bloggers with 'alternative viewpoints' was noted. It is important to relate the different types of available technologies used by the citizen journalist to one another in terms of indication, value, shortcomings, and potential impact. On the one hand, the term 'intangible technologies' is used to refer to Internet connections, Wi-Fi, domain platforms, stand-alone blogs, social media and self-regulated news platforms to achieve their goals. This is consistent with the independent manner of working characteristic of citizen journalists.

In contrast, a more structured form of collaboration between different role-players and media professionals at Health-e News can assist in providing citizen journalists access to internally available tangible technologies, including tablets, cell phones, broadcast equipment, undercover microphones, and similar recording devices. In these cases, the citizen journalist is deliberately trained by staff to find community-based stories for Health-e News. Importantly, these technologies do not need Wi-Fi

to capture photo or video media, although its availability is needed in order to upload such media. It is thus imperative that citizen journalists are assisted with the resources needed to act independently. Toward this goal, both tangible and intangible technologies are used to gather and disseminate news. Health-e News oversees the publishing process, which further strengthens the reporting and its potential real-world impact.

4.5.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Types of technology use

The first sub-theme that emerged related to the types of technology used at Health-e News. In brief, citizen journalists were mainly provided with “mobile devices or tablets whereby we write things down, or a laptop, and then we quote some of the interviews that we have with community members” (I-1.3). Indeed, the tablet served as the essential technological device used by citizen journalists for “phone [...], email, and videos, and pictures” (I-6.13). In addition, citizen journalists often communicated with management and their colleagues at Health-e News using the WhatsApp platform. The use of this modality was motivated by the fact that citizen journalists were often based in rural areas, where “network reception is really bad” (I-6.14). Nevertheless, the tablets issued by Health-e News came with 2G valid monthly mobile data to support communication between staff and management. Other platforms used by citizen journalists included Slack and WeTransfer.

4.5.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Challenges using the technology

The second sub-theme that emerged was the challenges faced by journalists when using technology for reporting. In brief, citizen journalists at Health-e News noted that the mobile data allocated was often insufficient for capturing digital media, leading to “poor-quality” photos and videos (I-2.11) being recorded using electronic tablets. This challenge mirrors that for poor mobile connectivity in rural areas. Indeed, issues around “communication...” and “data...” were noted by several interviewees (I-2, LS).

Nevertheless, it would appear that citizen journalists at Health-e News have rarely, if ever, requested additional data or airtime beyond the allocated limit in the past. It is however noted that “access to the Internet” (I-6.15) and “poor network coverage”

(I-6.16) remain important issues, which stand to hamper the capabilities of citizen journalists acting in rural areas. Importantly, citizen journalists often struggle to complete digital versions of their articles using the electronic tablets provided to them by Health-e News. Finally, the issue of reliable transport was noted as a similar challenge facing citizen journalists, which is often compounded by issues relating to poor connectivity and perceived limited data availability.

4.5.3 Sub-theme 4.3: Solutions to the use of technology

The third sub-theme that emerged concerned the solutions for using technology in a more fitting and appropriate way. In this setting, the quality of the videos and pictures from the tablets issued to citizen journalists at Health-e News was often poor. One of the interviewees argued that quality image is paramount in citizen journalism, since the media house is mostly far away from them. Indeed, if “there is some camera witness to the event” (I-2.17) the stories reported by citizen journalists are likely to have “a lot more credibility” (I-2.18).

However, the same interviewee admitted that citizen journalists at Health-e News were often not “given... the tools to make [this] possible” (I-2.19). In light of the above, a solution proposed by one interviewee (I-2.20) was to provide citizen journalists with a mobile device capable of taking quality photos and making good videos. In addition, the interviewee suggested that Health-e News “create an incentivised scheme” (I-2.21) to promote the capturing of high-quality images and media by citizen journalists. Furthermore, the interviewee emphasised the role that social media plays in citizen journalism, noting the need for “them to create social media posts to go with their stories” (I-2.22). In this context, posting in the “social media space” (I-2.23) can “empower citizen journalists” (I-2.24) in “telling their own stories” (I-2.25) more effectively.

4.6 Trends and patterns across interviewee responses (Word Cloud)

The Word Cloud in Figure 4.1 further subsumes the trends and patterns of responses that emerged from the interviews. At a glance, it is observed that words like *people*, *story*, *health*, *journalist*, and *citizen* were the most frequently use words among the participants.

of achieving the organisational goals. Through this Word Cloud, the common denominating words that stand out the most, in no particular order, per Figure 4.2, are:



Figure 4.2: Common words and values expressed by both citizen journalists and mainstream journalists during the data collection interviews (Source: Researcher)

There are other words also highlighted, but in contrast, the aforementioned seem most notable in retrospect of the interviews, interviews and responses. These words are also common language between citizen journalists and mainstream journalists, whose alignment to the common values of journalism and storytelling is more apparent.

In this chapter, the researcher also highlighted needs and benefits of media integration between traditional and non-traditional forms of reportage, where a symbiotic relationship between also emerged. As technology has become the central focus as the tool by which to accomplish the aims and objectives within a collaborative model, the researcher was able to identify how technology was introduced in a structured model by Health-e to achieve success, and, in addition, how the use of technology, training, communication and the resources from Health-e is more empowered when accessed by citizen journalists and vice versa.

It is also worth noting that to some degree, the introduction of citizen journalists in participation with traditional journalists has yielded some influence in the

newsroom, with agenda setting, awareness of community stories, wider coverage, accessibility to uncommon information and transcending language barriers, to rename a few. This chapter furthermore unearthed the sub-theme of potential benefits of citizen journalists from employment opportunities to upskilling individuals in writing skills (see section 4.4.1).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 The future of new media and new collaborations

The ongoing evolution of digital tools is encouraging the development of evolved methods and processes to expedite quicker movement of communication, whether online or offline. The continued exploration of accessing such tools provides the opportunity for media and non-media agents to crowdsource information on a global scale through technological convergence. Comparing the traditional and non-traditional models, specifically in the media industry, the study set out to observe, through the Health-e News case study, how citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing have been incorporated.

The central focus of this study, as mentioned in Chapter One, was to explore how citizen generated news through citizen camera-witnessing influenced the traditional news cycle. This was done by investigating how Health-e News, as the case study, has incorporated citizen camera-witnessing into its newsroom cycle by exploring the new collaborative model, thus, also examining the value, benefits and ethical concerns of citizen journalists and citizen camera-witnesses at Health-e News. Differentiating between print and printed media, the researcher looked at the online news platform used to publish or distribute disseminated information for public consumption, within the ethical considerations and journalism guidelines of the South African Constitution (section 2.7 – *Legal and ethical considerations for journalism*).

The study observed the technological tools that are used by Health-e to ensure a sustainable collaboration between their traditional newsroom and the contributions of the citizen journalists or citizen camera-witnesses who contribute to the programme. The literature review provided a global perspective on how international and local media in South African generally operate, and the various existing models that allow traditional media houses to use public participatory reporting, footage or information. In doing so, an observation stated in section 2.3 (*Traditional and non-traditional reporting: similarities and differences*), which provided insight into the practices of CNN who launched “iReport.com” (Kperogi, 2011, Ch. 2), argued the unethical nature of the news organisation’s use of public

footage, i.e., citizen camera-witness and citizen journalist footage, without compensation. Kperogi further debated the ethical consideration of CNN encouraging the public to actively go out and seek footage or participate in assignments or guided requests, focusing on the traditional values of journalism from pre-convergence and the notable changes emerging from the convergence era in media, which led to the observation of other significant changes. These changes include greater access to information and the global crowdsourcing of information (both verified and unverified), through online and digital tools. This also includes the rampant changes and dynamic shift in the global communication model, especially within the media industry where traditional guidelines on journalism and reporting are being challenged through the various emerging platforms that allow self-regulated communication and multimedia to expose events, political unrest, and other notable impactful social and economic changes.

5.2 The new collaborative Citizen Witness Inclusion Model

The proposed collaborative model of this research (Figure 5.1) is arguably more inclusive, literally extending an invite to citizen journalists to have a seat at the proverbial table. In this setting, the table is the newsroom agenda setting meetings (as discussed in section 2.10.2 – *Social media, self-regulated communication and agenda setting*), which, in the traditional newsroom model, negates outside influence, input or third-party participation.

In this new Citizen Witness Inclusion Model, there is a flow of inclusion or inclusivity which allows management to engage citizen journalists and vice versa. There is also an opportunity for journalists to knowledge share, skill share and upskill citizen journalists, while allowing citizen journalists to introduce the organisation's brand and platform into the community. In one particular example, a mainstream journalist and a citizen journalist worked jointly on an undercover story, exposing a corrupt medical practitioner in the community, which had allegedly killed four people, but was still being allowed to practice medicine and conduct informal surgeries. Without the knowledge, resources and expertise of the seasoned journalist equipping the citizen journalist with hidden cameras and microphones, the evidence against the doctor may not have been so compelling. Without the resources of the citizen journalist knowing who to contact and interview in the

community, the journalist may not have uncovered this vital lead. Through mutual collaboration, both the Health-e journalist and the citizen journalist were able to document their findings in an ethical and legally attained manner, with multimedia footage to evidence their claims. Furthermore, the study also revealed another element to the model, which is *trust exchange* between the community and Health-e, which had brought positive change, considering the news had not made it into mainstream media coverage. Outing (2005) suggests that a story can become enhanced when citizen journalist input is added. The author however refers to the non-traditional journalist contributors as 'add-ons'. Outing further suggests that, by co-opting public participation, a story may also receive greater traction, become more newsworthy or gain more interest.

“Here's an example: A series of car break-ins is occurring at trailhead parking lots in your area. A reporter writes a short article about the problem, identifying some of the locations of the vandalism. As a sidebar to the conventionally written story, trail users are invited to post their experiences of having their cars broken into, including submitting photos. This approach turns a standard 10-inch minor article into an ongoing story, with victims or witnesses to the crimes contributing information and news over a longer time period (until the culprit is caught and the story fades.) The information from the public serves as a warning to other trail users about which parking lots have had break-in problems. The public-submitted information could even be crafted by the news staff into an online map of crime reports, featuring victims' self-reports and photos” (Outing, 2005: 3).

The downfall of this suggestion, especially when asking for blog contributors in a digital space or publishing platform, is the willingness of the public to participate in the process on a long term basis.

“One word of caution, however: Citizen bloggers, because they're usually volunteers, can't be counted on to keep a blog filled with content consistently or for very long” (Outing, 2005: 6).

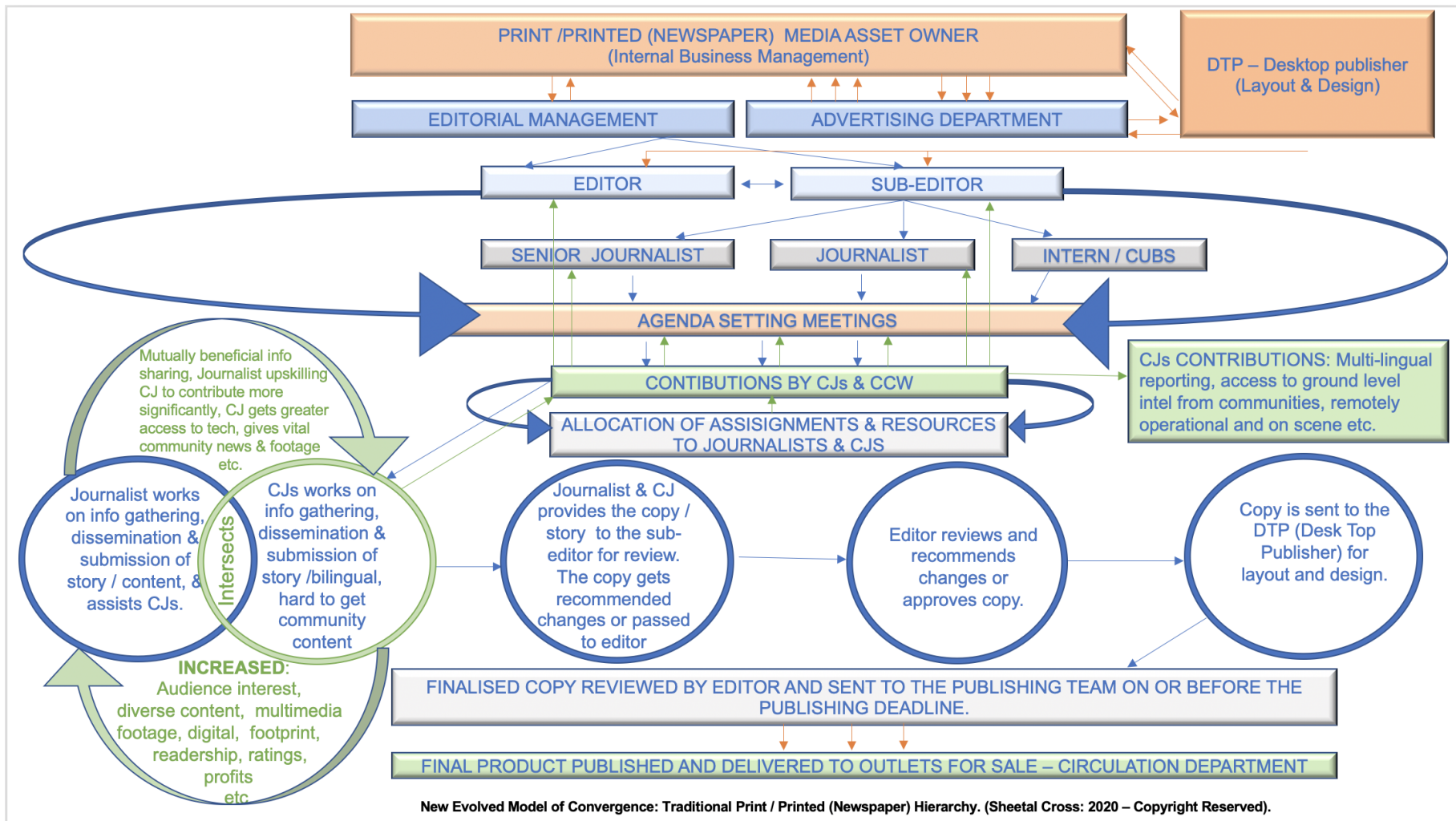


Figure 5.1: Citizen Witness Inclusion Model (Source: Researcher)

5.2.1 The intersection of traditional journalism and citizen journalism

The most significant observation between the two models is apparent in the diagram where traditional journalism intersects with citizen journalists. On the left bottom, journalists are marked with a blue circle and citizen journalists are marked in green. In this model, citizen journalists are incorporated into the Traditional Journalism Model (Figure 2.2), whereby they are invited to participate in the process of newsgathering, dissemination and distribution. Additionally, they are also invited to the agenda setting meetings and given a platform to communicate their ideas, make suggestions, ask questions, collaborate with journalists, and share resources. This model appears to be more inclusive in terms of the traditional and non-traditional reporting methodologies to create a more diverse media product, owing to a larger reach of information, crossing language barriers and infiltrating communities, to ascertain stories that may not necessarily be covered had a citizen journalist not provided the lead.

5.2.2 Transcending language

During the data collection, it was revealed that citizen journalists operating from the communities they live in, often speak the language and dialect most notable to that region. Their familiarity with the community members allows them ease of access in and out of those places, creating trust and bringing change to those areas through their reporting. The study also revealed that journalists combine their expertise, skills and access to technology in partnership with citizen journalists, as the latter are more likely to receive information from community members, and they may have greater access to information. The study furthermore revealed that in this setting, the journalist was more likely to get the “scoop”, “breaking news story” or a unique report that would be considered high value in the newsroom. These types of human-interest stories often create a larger audience interest, which can lead to increased ratings of the media platform, increase sales of the media product and increase in the media brand. In reciprocation of the mutually beneficial relationship, the citizen journalist likewise has access to understanding the newsroom better when collaborating with the journalist. Furthermore, citizen journalists are able to

upskill themselves by asking the journalist for guidance and learning about the traditional ways in which journalism often operates.

It may be noted that while the model is collaborative and integrated, so too are the journalist and the citizen journalist. Therefore, journalists can also be trained to understand the benefits of incorporating citizen journalists into the news organisation – the benefits citizen journalists present to the journalist as a resource and the benefits to the news cycle as a whole. This could potentially lead to a better professional relationship between the two groups, and hence, more willingness to partner for the greater good of the media industry, public interest, and knowledge sharing.

During the agenda setting meeting (section 2.10.2), it is not common for non-journalists to present ideas and stories that can be written for the publication. It is also not common to include members of the public, citizen camera-witnesses or citizen journalists. In this Citizen Witness Inclusion Model (Figure 5.1), we see an open collaboration between the traditional and non-traditional entities. It should also be noted that as some of the citizen journalists are located nationally in South Africa, the use of technology is often engaged to connect everyone at the office, to everyone else who is not. This is often achieved through the use of a conference call whereby they traditional Health-e staff members are seated in the office boardroom surrounded by their peers and superiors, whilst other contributors are connected telephonically to converse and communicate. This particular method is extremely cost-effective, as the organisation cannot afford to arrange flights and travel as well as accommodation for multiple contributors on a weekly basis or even a monthly basis.

5.3 Summary

The Health-e News case study has been thoroughly documented by the researcher, for the first time in an academic setting. During the exploration of the topic and the operational methods used by the organisation to be sustainably inclusive of citizen journalists, it must be noted that the positive impact of this structured collaboration becomes more empowered through the use of technology. More importantly, it should also be noted that both non-traditional and traditional

reporting has individual benefits when observed in their respective environments. When combined, the accessibility to information, footage, human interest stories, and accelerated pace of information sharing among other, become unparalleled.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In keeping with the study's objectives, the insight gathered as a result of the proposed investigation led to unpacking of the influences that citizen witnessing had on the South African media in relation to more traditional models and approaches. The study revealed the potential benefits of citizen camera-witnessing in the larger scope of content production, dissemination and distribution and contributes a new model of news reporting, which harvests the best of both traditional news reporting and citizen camera-witnessing or public/participatory journalism. Insight gathered because of this research adds knowledge to our understanding of existing theoretical models, and it guides policy decision making as well as input for the academic curricula.

The current study provides novel evidence concerning how the emergence of novel technologies and social media sharing platforms supports the integration of citizen journalism and citizen camera-witnessing as part of the traditional news cycle. In particular, the findings presented here provide insight into the convergence of traditional and non-traditional media using the Health-e News portal as an example. In this context, the researcher played a pivotal role in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and ultimately, dissemination.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first qualitative interpretivist study to examine the role of technological innovations in relation to the rise of citizen journalism and camera-witnessing in a South African setting. This study presents an objective view or understanding of the roles and responsibilities of traditional media and its place in the society.

In conjunction with the literature review on global media industry attempts to use citizen journalists and citizen camera-witnesses' input into the news cycle, the study looked closely at the Health-e case study to equally understand the role and contributions, ethical concerns and other related elements concerning the citizen journalism contributions to news reporting as well.

The study presents an evolved model to integrating traditional and non-traditional media in mass communication practices, bearing in mind the benefits and downfalls of each model, pre-collaboration. In the tables below, the researcher presents the benefits and limitations of traditional journalism, citizen journalism, and the Citizen Witness Inclusion Model to better understand how a new collaborative model may enhance the news reporting process, with fewer limitations.

One significant finding is the transformation of media through the use of technological advancements and greater public access to self-regulated platforms, allowing for instant 'self-regulated' or 'unregulated' information, which may present bias and fake news, be untrue, and lack facts, among others.

6.2 Traditional journalism summary

Table 6.1: Benefits and challenges of traditional journalism

TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM	
BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS
Ethical reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower turnaround time in print media publishing, while news is broken online through various digital platforms • Geographical limitation in reporting • Unethical behaviour of one media institute has the ability to jeopardise the reliability of the media industry • Journalists are not witness to events but present a version of the truth as best they can within the guidelines provided • Reporters have no controls over source information, rather, they must present in a structured communication (story) what has been said or provided, and in addition, reporters can be selective of which sources to use or not, which presents a version of the truth. <p>Considers editorial versus advertorial and financial sustainability of the brand in its gatekeeping authority (Market-Driven Journalism).</p> <p>Focuses on certain areas of news coverage based on ratings, sales, financial gain etc.</p>
Fact checking	
Structured management – oversight	
Gatekeeping to ensure legal parameters of reporting are adhered to	
Financial resources allocated to news reporting	
Unbiased reporting	
Access to resources	
Qualified reporters who understand: communication theories, South African Media Law, limitations on reporting on minors, regulations centred on freedom of the press, off the record means off the record, not to reveal sources, etc.	
Simply stated, the values and elements of journalism in one concept of journalism ideology is categorised into five ideal, typical traits or values (Deuze, 2005): "Public service: journalists become watchdogs as well as source of information for citizen; Objectivity: Journalists maintain credibility and reliability of their information by being neutral and impartial; Autonomy: journalists are free and independent in doing their job; Immediacy: Journalists attempt to bring new and immediate information to audiences; Ethics: journalists are required to maintain ethics, validity, and legitimacy of their information".	

TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM
<p>“To enforce its claim on truth and overcome its limitations, journalism has developed discursive strategies to make stories as persuasive as possible. It has done so because it is a profession that aims for a triple-A status. It wants to balance authority, autonomy and attractiveness. These goals guide the actions of journalists. To ensure the effect of authenticity and truthfulness, journalistic texts rely on a set of professional practices, routines and textual conventions developed in the 20th century to guarantee that this construction or representation process is as accurate – or mimetic – as possible. Instead of merely transmitting public speeches and texts, journalists now frame this information in a professional discourse. They have developed specific conventionalized forms articulating the routines they use. By doing so, reporters no longer simply rely on public knowledge; they include knowledge of their own” (Matheson, 2000: 557-73).</p>

6.3 Citizen journalism/citizen camera-witnessing summary

Table 6.2: Benefits and challenges of citizen journalism/citizen camera-witnessing

CITIZEN JOURNALISM / CITIZEN CAMERA–WITNESSING	
BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS
On-scene access to footage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates without consideration of media ethics • Operates without consideration of laws • Related to reporting on minors • Limited resources and technology to the same degree as newsroom or broadcast station, etc. • Biased reporting • Favouring a personal cause • Publishing unverified information • Publishing opinion • Limited access to official media press conferences without proper accreditation • Citizen journalists are not always recognised as reporters
Instant publishing – breaking news, news in real-time	
Access to stories and information that traditional journalists may not have	
Access to community engagement on a personal level, most notably transcending language and (community) cultural barriers	
Operates from any location worldwide, through the use of technology	
Can affect social change by publicly stating its position on an issue i.e.: Political corruption, protests, exposure of the regional or local issues missed by the mainstream media who gatekeeps information	
Breaking news in real-time	
Crowdsourcing	
Real-time publicity and publishing of the information without gatekeeping hindrance	
Does not feel compelled to choose advertorial over editorial	
Sees something, says something	
Creates social awareness	
A democratic right to report, without consideration of political influence or even favour over the publishing platform	

CITIZEN JOURNALISM / CITIZEN CAMERA–WITNESSING
<p>“Different with the previous articles, Allan et al. (2007) appreciate the citizen journalism function in bearing a witness in (an) unexpected incident such as violation and natural disaster. They support the opinion by presenting facts when (the) ‘tsunami’ occurred in Sumatera, Indonesia, some citizen journalists with their technological devices such as camera and video amateurs provide contribution by recording the incident while traditional journalists lose such moment” (Akifah, 2012: 778).</p>

6.4 New collaborative Citizen Witness Inclusion Model summary

Table 6.3: Benefits and challenges of Citizen Witness Inclusion Model

CITIZEN WITNESS INCLUSION MODEL	
BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS
Journalists training citizen journalists in ethical reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journalists feel threatened by the presence of citizen journalists in terms of job security Journalists may be resentful of investing in journalism studies, whereas citizen journalists are informal reporters being compensated for reporting Unequal pay for the reporting within the same media scope of work
Journalists training citizen journalists in fact checking	
Journalists training citizen journalists on unbiased reporting	
Structured management – oversight over both journalists and citizen journalists, while tapping into citizen journalism resources, creating a mutually beneficial relationship	
Gatekeeping to ensure legal parameters of reporting are adhered to, but creating inclusivity of vital community stories	
Financial resources allocated to news reporting and citizen journalists, creating a wider and easier access to information, with local and international networks	
Employment opportunities for citizen journalists	
Access to shared resources from citizen journalists for journalists and vice versa	
Qualified reporters who understand: communication theories, South African Media law, limitations on reporting on minors, regulations centred on freedom of the press, off the record means off the records, not to reveal sources, etc.; sharing these skills with citizen journalists, upskilling citizen journalists; citizen journalists who then use that knowledge and experience to empower their communication and storytelling abilities	
Gatekeeping to ensure legal parameters of reporting are adhered to	

CITIZEN WITNESS INCLUSION MODEL
Inclusivity of citizen journalists, media managers and journalists in the agenda setting. Process, thus leading to more inclusivity of community stories that are generally overlooked by mainstream media agents. Furthermore, creating trustworthiness between the traditional media platform and the community and vice versa and leading to more openness, greater information sharing opportunities.

6.5 Conclusion

In summary, the combined efforts of traditional medias structures that have been globally studied and developed over centuries to produce an operational model that is best suited for information sharing, coupled with emerging models like citizen journalism reporting using new information sharing platforms such as social media or self-regulated, internet based platforms, is contributing positively through the evolution of the news reporting cycle. Through the emergence of ICTs, industrial changes are occurring worldwide across many industries (Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes, 2010: 265, citing Relly and Sabharwal, 2009; Bhatnagar, 2003). Shim and Eom (2008) indicate that the use of ICTs positively affect governments in their anticorruption efforts.

“ICTs can reduce corruption by promoting good governance, strengthening reform-oriented initiatives, reducing potential for corrupt behaviours, enhancing relationships between government employees and citizens, allowing for citizen tracking of activities, and by monitoring and controlling behaviours of government employees” (Shim & Eom, 2008: 298–316).

In “*The case of Zimbabwe: emerging patterns and trends in citizen journalism*”, Mutsvairo and Columbus (2012: 121) state that “media regulation and access to ICTs shape the environment for citizen journalism. In Zimbabwe, freedom of expression is highly restricted”.

This study has reviewed the changes specifically across the news media arena and, consequently, the benefits of co-opting citizen journalists. The use of technology to achieve the objectives of newsgathering, dissemination and distribution has contributed significantly to the ongoing louche and to the news reporting model, in terms of, inter alia, transparency, convenient access to

information and increasing the viability of a free press in democratic and undemocratic societies. Bertot, Jarger and Grimes (2010) also observed changes in government regarding the increase of candidness and clarity in their actions, owing to the costs of effective ICTs in an effort to reduce corruption. In this setting, the researcher has observed an intersection between news reporting and greater access to information through ICTs, which supports the watchdog theory by journalists or even citizen journalists over government.

The wider access to regulated platforms through the use of technology is changing the appetite for news consumption and, consequently, the platforms by which citizens digest the same. The faster access to information is granted by the media, through ICTs, the greater the appetite to consume the same with the same level of immediacy. Therefore, the need for extensive access to unique, community-based stories is likewise propelling industry changes at an equally fast pace. The need to keep up with the public's need for information on the go, means significantly that traditional and non-traditional reporting can no longer remain in silos, but rather as a collaborative model sharing the benefits of each entity individually to create a far more effective operational model within the new cycle process, as mentioned in researcher's Citizen Witness Inclusion Model (Figure 5.1). The research described here provides a sound foundation for future studies to explore the ways in which the Media Synchronicity Theory guides the assessment of citizen journalism and its rise in the South African environment. It will now be necessary to further develop and validate different models and models to examine the contributions of citizen journalists and citizen camera-witnesses through emerging technologies and media practices.

6.6 Future work

The continuous evolution of existing traditional reporting models cascades into global industry changes, which in turn promotes the development of collaborative models. While arguably a work in progress, these attempts, such as those at CNN and BBC, address the new changes with some effort. This is flagged as a suggestion for future work.

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APPENDIX A: MJOURN QUESTIONNAIRE



Journalism M-JOURN, Research Proposal Questionnaire to Health-e

Faculty	Faculty of Arts			
Department	Department of Journalism			
Qualification registered for (e.g. MTech: Fashion)	MJOURN			
Offering type	Full time registration	X	Part time registration	
Prior qualification (e.g. BTech: Fashion)	BTech			
Student Details	Sheetal Cross 07203037659 info@sheetalcross.com			
Research Topic	How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e. An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news into the traditional news cycle.			

Interview Questions

As part of my research thesis at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), I am conducting interviews to establish, “How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e. An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news into the traditional news cycle”. I would appreciate your participation and commit to you, that any information received, will remain private and confidential.

Respondent's details:

Full Name: _____

Education: _____

Mobile number: _____

Age: _____

Question 1	What does news coverage mean to you?
Question 2	How do you incorporate citizen camera-witnessing and traditional news at Health-e?
Question 3	What technology does Health-e use to achieve question 2?

APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHIC SHEET



Journalism M-JOURN, Research biographic sheet for Health-e interviews

Faculty	Faculty of Arts			
Department	Department of Journalism			
Qualification registered for (e.g. MTech: Fashion)		MTech		
Offering type	Full time registration	X	Part time registration	
Prior qualification (e.g. BTech: Fashion)		BTech		
Student Details		Sheetal Cross 07203037659 info@sheetalcross.com		
Research Topic		How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e. An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news into the traditional news cycle.		

Biographic Sheet Questions

As part of my research thesis at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), I am conducting interviews to establish, “How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e. An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news into the traditional news cycle”. I would appreciate your participation and commit to you, that any information received, will remain private and confidential.

Respondent's details:

Full Name: _____ Age: _____

Highest Education achieved: _____

Mobile number: _____

Gender (M/F): _____

Are you employed? _____

If yes, where? _____

How long have you been with Health-e? _____

What did you do before you joined Health-e: _____

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT



Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _____ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study – Research Ethics Clearance, Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of their requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during the study can be processed in a computerised system by their searcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Sheetal Cross

13.08.2018

Full Name of Participant

Date

Time

Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, Sheetal Cross (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness	Date	Time	Signature / Right Thumbprint
_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness	Date	Time	Signature / Right Thumbprint

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level – use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counselling (Department of Health, 2004).

If the potential participant is unable to read / illiterate, then a right thumbprint is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verifying writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. a wrong date or spelling mistake, a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant's file and not thrown away, and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

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APPENDIX D: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION

8 August 2018

Health-e News Service

Office 5, 1st Floor B2 House

8 Tyrwhitt Avenue

Rosebank, 2196

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Masutane Modjadji, **OurHealth** Project Manager, Health-e,

My name is Sheetal Cross, an MJOURN student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters dissertation evolves, “How citizen camera-witnessing has been incorporated by Health-e. An Investigation into the integration of citizen generated news into the traditional news cycle”.

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview the following people at your organisation:

- Three Health-e News Organisation managers
- Three Health-e News Organisation journalists
- Three Health-e News Organisation citizen camera-witnesses

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

Timeline

I will interview you and the candidates you have referred me to. I interview will span one hour each, which will be audio recorded and take place in a neutral venue at your offices in Johannesburg.

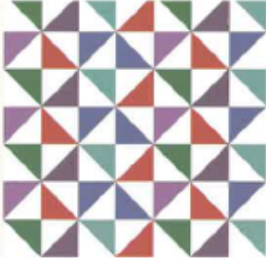

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 072 030 7659, 031 573 1001 or e-mail on info@sheetalcross.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sheetal Cross

Durban University of Technology

APPENDIX E: PROVISIONAL CLEARANCE



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 373 2375
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http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

30 April 2019

Mrs S Cross
10 Windsor Views
9 Ridgeside Road
Durban North
Durban
4051

Dear Mrs Cross

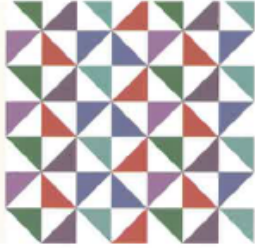

How citizen camera witnessing (CCW) has been incorporated by Health-e. Exploring Media Synchronicity (MST) and Media Richness Theory (MRT) in citizen camera witnessing at Health-e.

Please be advised that your research proposal was reviewed, and the following decision was made:

Provisional approval subject to minor changes to the satisfaction of the IREC chair

1. Methodology is thin and not clearly outlined.
2. Sampling population and method?
3. Why were these 3 of 3 groups chosen? Inclusion/exclusion criteria.
4. How will they be recruited and chosen?
5. Use of pseudonyms to protect identity but nothing on ensuring confidentiality, especially for interview "individual and group sampling" – what sampling is used? Where? For whom? When?
6. Ethics checklist
 - No. 4: Should be 'Yes.'
 - No. 5: Should be 'Yes.' Explain how data will be disposed of after 5 years.
 - No. 7: Cross-sectional sampling first mentioned; nothing on how it will be implemented
 - No. 8: Delete comments.
 - No. 12: Delete comments.
 - No. 32: comment does not address question
7. Letter of Information:
 - Must be addressed to the participants directly. They must be referred to as 'you' throughout the letter.
 - Withdrawal not clear – no penalty for withdrawal not mentioned.
 - Costs of study: Correct the comment as it refers to any costs to the participants in participating in the study.
 - Research-related Injury -Delete the second sentence from the comments.
 - Confidentiality – no information added.
8. Gatekeeper letter: no timelines, no procedures.
9. The consent letter needs to be included.

APPENDIX F: E-BOOK SCRIPT



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
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Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
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Dear Mrs Cross

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- Accompanying Disc (Included in back page sleeve) Contains E-book and Website
- Offline Examples

APPENDIX G: NVIVO VERSION 11 CODED TRANSCRIPT AND THEMES

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the outcome of the data gathering process, reports the results and discusses the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews with both citizen and mainstream journalist working with Health-e, South Africa. The data that emerged from the interview were coded inductively and thematically analysed. All analysis were performed using Nvivo version 11.

4.1: Emerging themes and subthemes from the semi—structured interviews with participants

The analysis of the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews resulted in the identification of the themes and subthemes highlighted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Identification of themes and subthemes

Themes	Subtheme
Understanding of news coverage	Health news coverage
Integrating citizen journalism into mainstream media Health-e technology	The training of citizen journalist in the area of journalism
	Collaborative model between citizen and mainstream journalist
	Impacts of citizen journalism
	Benefits of citizen journalism to citizen journalists
	Conflicting interest in citizen journalism
Technology in citizen reporting	Types of technology
	Challenges faced using the technology
	Solutions to the use of technology

Themes were identified in line with answering the research objectives that is:

- To determine what technology is being used to aid CCW
- To explore the ways Media Synchronicity (MST) and Media Richness Theory (MRT) are evident in CCW at Health-e
- To explain how technology has allowed for greater synchronicity and richness in this setting
- To develop a framework that explains the contributions of CCW technology for media practice

In addition, and in supporting the discussion on themes, relevant quotes from the data generated from the interviews were used. Data from semi-structured interviews was transcribed verbatim and used as such during discussion. The names of interviewees have, however, been changed to ensure anonymity.

4.1.1 Theme 1: Understanding of news coverage

Although the main goal of news is to inform the public, Suh (2019), however, noted that many television news outlets now feature political commentary broadcasts which often diverge from the ideal objective news source. Given this concern, it was critical to know from the participants' perspective their understanding of news coverage. Consistent with the very purpose of news, it emerged that news coverage is about creating a form of awareness and bringing relevant information to the people. As stated by one of the interviewees:

For me, it actually just means just interpreting current events in the country or across the globe in a way that ... in a simple, accurate and informational or educational way that ordinary citizens of a country or the world can understand (MM).

Added to the above, another of the interviewees stated the following:

I think awareness. You get to create awareness to the public, so if there's a problem or something that you've found out that can intrigue the public or create knowledge or educate them, I think that's really important (LS).

Another of the interviewees understanding of news coverage is about bringing news to people from the field of operation.

I think it has something to do with covering news, when you are out there in the field, just bringing news to people, viewers who watch TV or something. Just bringing the news. I think that's news coverage. Or covering news (L).

Despite the above expression, another of the interviewees caution that news coverage means different things and depends on who the reporter is actually doing the news for. The interviewees noted that platforms often dictate the content of the news.

News coverage means different things depending on who you are actually doing it for. Platforms often dictate what the use, so if you're doing something that is for a local newspaper or a local station you would do something that's a lot more parochial than you would than if you were doing something for a national broadcaster. So I think it's definitely largely by the platform. News is anything that's relevant to that particular audience, and the audience also helps to define what the news is (B).

Drawing from above, and going by the logic that news coverage is dictated by the platform of interest, one could rightly deduce that the understanding of news coverage for Health-e reporter may be different from other non-health related media house. Accordingly, and from the context of Health-e, news coverage could transient every facet of health-related issues in the country. As revealed by one of the participants:

We have a very big public health focus, because that's our audience. We like to deal with anything that is relevant to our audience, so things like the NHI would be really important for us right now. Anything to do with hospital systems where there are breakdowns in care and where there are violations in terms of care and also doctors who are dodgy (B).

In terms of the scope of coverage, the above interviewees added the following:

Public health is quite a broad spectrum, so it could be anything from kids using cannabis in school to a dodgy doctor performing strange procedures, to sanitary pads – you know, access to sanitary pads, to surgical backlogs in major hospitals and to ARVs and TB and stock outs (B).

Further to the above, noted that Health-e news coverage also included environmental issues, antibiotic drug resistance. In the interviewees own words:

We look at environmental issues, so we look at mining, and we look at water issues, sexual health issues, and abortion, all of those sorts of things and what's happening in those spheres. Antibiotic resistance. All of those kinds of things fall within the ambit of health and we try and uncover as much as possible in terms of that (B).

In other sense, health-related reporting could also be seen as given voices to the communities to speak about the health challenges faced in their community. This is reflected in the statement below:

So, me being in my community and reporting about issues that affects them gives them a voice, and it sometimes helps them with knowing on issues, in this instance, around health, what their rights are when they go to public health facilities, what types of services they deserve and the treatment that they should be getting. And it's also about informing them about any change that comes into the space of health in the clinics, hospitals. It's about that for me (MZ).

Resonating with the above assertion and understanding of news coverage, another of the interviewees stated the following:

To me, news coverage, as a journalist, it means that I cover stories that people don't know about and, as a health reporter, specifically, we become like the voice to the voiceless, like in the communities, so we report on whatever issues are affecting our communities (T).

Equally relevant and from the perspective of citizen journalism, news coverage may mean reporting critical issues within ones community that often overlooked by the mainstream media house. By so doing, given the community voice to air in their challenges.

So what I understand about that is that the news, especially here where I am, is normally overlooked by mass media and the mainstream media, so I believe that with citizen journalism, we are able to go to deep rural areas to cover stories of people that are usually left out and do not have the voice in our community (ZZ).

In addition to reporting news and educating the public on health related issues, news coverage from the understanding of Health-e journalist could also mean bringing up-to-date relevant stakeholders in the department of health.

Also, if there is a new minister of health, then we'd want to do a background check on who this person is, provide some insight as to what we can expect, and that sort of thing as well (B).

In summary, it can be drawn from the above that news coverage is about exposing health related issues in a marginalised community, thereby given them voices to speak about the pressing issues they are experiencing in the community. This is also captured by another of the interviewees who stated the following:

News coverage to me is about ensuring that stories that are relevant and important to the public are covered by news organisations. It could be a story about a local community with whatever experiences they are having, or a story that involves high-profile individuals, but it needs to be covered (MZ).

4.1.2 Theme 2: Integrating citizen journalism into mainstream media

According to Band (2010), the media and communications landscape has changed in ways that make it possible for envisioning a more engaged citizen participation in journalism. For Health-e, it was found that the National Health Insurance rollout by the department of health instigated the co-opting of citizen journalism into the traditional news media. Moreover, it was revealed that the need for accurate and objective feedback birth citizen journalism in Health-e. This is reflected in the statements below.

Since 2012, the past seven years, Health-e news has identified very active members of certain communities, particularly in the nine national health insurance district pilot projects, because that's where the Department of Health had announced intentions to start the NHI process rollout, and we decided that for South Africans to be able to witness and see for themselves if indeed South Africa is ready to host, I mean, to implement the NHI, we needed accurate and very – how do I say it – objective analysis of those developments in

the NHI, and we couldn't rely on government to monitor it themselves and then give us objective feedback on the developments (M).

Expanding further, it was revealed that the selection of citizen eyewitness's reporter were premised on finding citizens who are actively involved in youth activism within their various communities.

So, the first thing that Health-e did was identify NGO's that are operating in those areas and liaise with them and find out if they have any young activist who might be interested in what we call a citizen journalist. They will monitor and then compile news stories that Health-e can moderate, edit and then decide how it publishes and distributes them (M).

Similar views on how citizen journalist were recruited was also shared by another of the interviewees who disclosed the following:

So, they recruit those people because these are the people who are in the communities and who are very close to the issues that are happening within the communities, because citizen journalism is all about reporting from your community, reporting stories that are untold, stories that you will never see anywhere, you understand (T).

From the successes recorded in the NHI pilot project, it was noted that Health-e saw the importance of integrating, and the continuous corroboration with the identified citizen journalist in other areas of health service that are particularly news worthy in the community. For example, it was noted that Health-e dived into other general challenges of health failures within the communities through their citizen journalist.

We identified policy gaps in those areas in terms of health, service delivery in the country, and as time went on, we decided that there's really just a lot that is tied into the failure, I mean, healthy systems, and we decided to just go beyond just reporting, particularly on the project of the NHI, and just covered the general challenges the community faced, particularly that have to do with health. We covered diseases, we covered shortages of water in those areas and how that impacts on people's health as well, we covered shortage of medicines (M).

4.1.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: The training of citizen journalist in the area of journalism

Band (2010) points out that professional journalist has come under fire in these deconstructive age. Given this concern, the author argues that professional journalism should be an exclusive practice that is reserved for those who would be admitted into it upon completion of a form of training or education programme. Given the recent co-opting of citizen journalist into journalism practice, it becomes highly critical to know from the participants if they identified and selected activist are trained before engaging them in

health news reporting in their communities. It was found that citizen journalist are trained by their mainstream recruiters in the act of health related news reporting.

So, Health-e then trains those citizen journalists, channel them on how to report about the issues from their communities. These people I am talking about, 90% of them don't have a background in journalism, but they know what is happening, they are close to the issues, they know everything about health, and then they write stories from their communities and then they send them to Health-e (T).

The above statement is also reaffirm by another of the interviewees who noted that despite having previously worked as a journalist in other media house, she was made to undergo training in health reporting.

Because for me, despite being a journalist previously, but I was not into health, so I would do just general news. So they train us on how to report on health issues, how to identify stories that could possibly be about health. Because in the communities, there are a lot of things that are going on and they might not be relevant to the Health-e product. So, with that training, I was able to now identify whether a story is a health-related, or a Health-e type of story, or not (MZ).

In terms of the training content, it was found that prospective citizen journalist were trained in the act of writing, videoing, and picture taken.

At the training, the citizen journalists are trained how to take good pictures, even taking the videos, on how to hold the phone when you are taking a video, how to hold the phone when you are taking a quality picture that will go to the website. Because when you write a story and you are saying that there is a sewerage problem within a certain community, you must give us pictures that will go with the website (T).

So, the training that they provide includes how to write stories, how to take pictures, how to interview people, and just about the ethics of journalism, when you are dealing with people (MZ).

Equally important, it emerged from the interview that citizen journalist are managed by a coordinator who oversees there affairs. It was made known that the CJs are meant to correspond and report to one coordinate who instructs, approves, and advise them on their story lines or scoops. As one of the interviewees noted:

There's a programmes manager who manages the citizen journalists. The person will take the stories and read them. Sometimes you have to try and understand, because some of them, you will try and read and find that this is actually not making sense (T).

Elaborating further, the same interviewee hinted that the purpose of the programme manager is to ensure the stories are credible and of good quality that meets the standard of the mainstream media.

So Health-e, their job is to make sure that those stories from the community look good when they go to media. And they come with stories that people thought was actually not a story (T).

4.1.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Collaborative model between Citizen and mainstream journalist

Previous study had observed that majority of citizen journalists have no background in media and many had poor understanding of the provisions of the law in relation to media and information dissemination (Band 2010). Bearing this mind, it becomes prudent to establish an inclusive model between the citizen journalist in the field and the mainstream or rather experienced journalist. It emerged that collaboration strongly complement both the citizen and mainstream journalist. As one of the interviewees stated:

I think it's a win-win for everyone at the end of the day, is to collaborate. The CJs, A, would learn a lot on the shoots, working with a team of experienced journalists. They would actually come away with a lot more knowledge (B).

Hence, it was not surprising to hear another of the experience journalist describing the collaboration with the citizen journalist as being nice. The interviewee while reaffirming the importance of collaboration, voiced that both the CJs and experience journalist are basically helping each other. The interviewee noted that the less experience gets the stories from the field while the experience in-house journalist helps in editing the stories into a quality standard. By so doing, the citizen journalist learns and improve their skills.

So it's a very nice thing to have, especially combining them, combining the two, because CJs I don't think are as...they are still learning so they are not as experienced, from my understanding, so it's also nice to have us in-house with experience working together, because they are basically helping each other out. You will have the normal traditional investigative journalist who you were talking about, and you will have a CJ who will write a story, bring it back. The experienced people can edit it and they can get a learning experience out of it as well (LS).

From the above, one could draw out that citizen journalist got to learn and tap the experience of the mainstream journalist. This was noted to help improve the citizen journalist reporting and coverage of news. More so, it was mentioned by another of the

interviewees that the experience journalist try to develop the journalism skills of the citizen journalist by involving them in the journalism process.

Yes. And then sometimes, if the story is not good enough, we even just say can you please just go back and do this, rather than just trying to change it too much ourselves within the organisation, without them. We really just involve them along the changes that we are trying to make as well (M).

Another essential areas noted where collaboration have been beneficial to the citizen journalist is in virtual reporting. It was assumed that by collaborating with experience journalist, the citizen journalist can learn the right ways of virtual capturing to aid their stories.

I think it would help a lot. For basic things, like when they take photos in a portrait instead of landscape. Like the little things like that, just the basics, just to up them slightly would be great. And also just getting them to send maybe at least three pictures or something per story that they write, if they can. I think that would build a lot to their story (LS).

Of a particular interest, and as example of the importance of collaborative model between the citizen and the experience journalist, an ex-CJ narrated how his citizen journalist story who an award.

I went to the Free State to cover the maternal health story and, surprisingly enough, that story won the Vodacom Original Journalist of the Year, in 2016. And I couldn't believe it (T).

The above interviewee admitted that that would never have been possible without the input and contribution from the experience journalist who had helped guide the story in the right direction.

Ja, it was because if I did it on my own, I had other angles on the story, but the experienced journalist helped me to make the story broader than I thought (T).

Apart from the benefits of improving the skills of the CJs, it emerged from the interviews that collaborative model could also serve as a motivation for the inexperience citizen journalist. As one of the interviewees puts it:

if I'm somewhere, in rural Limpopo, then I am talking about a story idea, say a senior journalist is listening and journalists have these visions. They visualise everything. The person would just say, 'You know what, maybe I need office to book me accommodation. I'm going to Limpopo to work with the citizen journalists to do a bigger story, to help them to do the story.' That was going to be a motivation (T).

Despite the above benefits, it is worth noting that some of the interviewees disclosed to have experience some setbacks in their quest to collaborate with the citizen journalist in reporting. One of the interviewees lamented on the difficulty encountered in trying to collaborate with the citizen journalist. This was blamed on poor office communication.

It is, because a lot of the time I hear about stories too late, where we could have actually partnered with them on something. So there might be some big story breaking in the Eastern Cape, I have no idea that it's happening, because no one's communicated it. There's no sort of flow through communication, even in the Monday meeting, their stories aren't really communicated to us, so I have no idea what they are working on (B).

Reinforcing the concern of poor communication, another of the experience journalist narrate an incidence were the collaboration of citizen and experienced journalist failed to materialize. In the interviewees own account:

We had a case where Cutting Edge had actually asked me to look at doing something on people living on rubbish dumps and how they survive with the food and what they do with the food, and how they make sure that it's safe to eat, and all of that sort stuff, not really of interest to their audience, and I hadn't gotten around to it yet, and the next thing I saw this article that Cynthia had written, from Mpumalanga about exactly this issue. And if I'd known, I would have wanted to go with her and film it and tell the story, you know.

Due to the above incidence, the above interviewee allegedly claimed that in the department operate in silos, and in the interviewees own words, scooped themselves instead of collaborating.

So we scooped ourselves. Instead of collaborating, and I just think that there's all these different silos – we work in these different silos. There's the CJs, there's the print department and then there's the TV multimedia department (B).

Reflecting on the above, one could rightly assume that collaborating between the citizen and experience journalist offers more advantageous benefits to both fields. However poor communication and office bureaucracy may undermine effective collaboration between the citizen and experience journalist. This assertion is also supported by one of the interviewees who revealed the following:

I think that there's a resistance from the print department to work with the television department. And it's a couple of things. It's jealousy, to a certain degree. They don't want us to succeed, and I have a very real sense of that, and also, I think that they influence the CJs against us. And that's why I also think there has been a resistance to pay the CJs for the work they do with us, because they want to keep them for themselves, you know. So instead of making it a more integrated environment, they are actually silo-ing it more and more and more (B).

4.1.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Impacts of citizen journalism

Band (2010) reported that most organisations are beginning to warm up to the concept of citizen journalism with some seeing it as a necessary adjustment to how the media operates. Concerning, however, it is noted that some media organisations are still suspicious about citizen journalism. Moreover, some mainstream media reportedly has issues negotiating the credibility of the citizen journalist reporting as they argue that ordinary people cannot verify their news content. Given this concern, it becomes critical, for the benefits of doubt, explores the impacts of citizen news coverage in the society.

As previously stated, news coverage has a profound impact to the society. It gives voice to the voiceless and bring to the forefront pressing issues that is critical to the community. In this regard, citizen journalist plays a vital role in getting the first-hand news from the community since they live within the community and sees day to day their core challenges. In one of the interviewees own words:

Because human interest stories for us do very well, because we believe that people read what they are able to identify with, and we feel like because it's a community member writing this story, it would have more impact to a person that is reading it than if a journalist, for example, myself, who didn't even go, who's done it telephonically, is writing it (M).

Drawing from the above assumptions, it comes very important to outline some of the impacts of citizen journalist reporting had in the health sector and within their community. These impacts are presented in form of cases.

Case 1: Local women feeding children rooibos

Citizen journalist helps uncover and bring to attention the practices of feeding babies rooibos by their mothers. It was assumed that due to poverty and misconception, local women feed their babies rooibos in place of baby formula. According to the interviewee, this practice is common and have been widely accepted in townships and villages. It was noted that the story generated huge impacts in the society that various clinics and hospitals started re-educating mothers on the dangers of such practice. The story and impact is captured in the narrative below.

she wrote this story about mothers who are feeding their children rooibos, because they get to a point where kids no longer want their baby formula, or maybe they can't afford it, they are just substituting milk for rooibos. And it's a common thing. It's acceptable in townships and villages

where maybe mothers are here in town and they leave their kids with their grandparents back in the villages and they are here for work. So, she wrote a story. We thought it was just a simple story, and the impact it had – it was shared by I think... let me find that story. I don't know if I still have the original story, but I'm going to try and find that story, because the impact it had, it also even surprised me and one of the people wrote to us and said she was at a clinic and then they printed that article and they printed it on their wall, so the mothers can see. Because this is a common thing and sometimes the nurses can explain to you, but when it's coming from somebody who is able to go through the same experiences, who knows what you are going through, it makes a difference. You don't feel like they are talking down on you, they are speaking with you, you know, on the same level, saying these are the challenges I'm also having. That is the impact that I feel like it's making because I feel like if it had been written by any one of us here in the office, it would have been a completely different story (M).

Case 2: High rate of sugary drinks among the elderly

The story was captured by a citizen journalist who bring to light the high rate of sugary drinks the elderly consumed. It was noted that the story gained wide traction and published by daily Maverick. The story emanated from a granny who noticed that she had consumed when she was sorting out her trashed for the recycling person. It was noted that the story left a huge impacts in the society as many people identify with the story in their lifestyles.

This woman said she was collecting her trash, she was sorting her trash for the recycling person, so she was putting the plastic and putting it in one bag, and it surprised her how many sugary drinks she was consuming in one day, and also, it forced her to think of what that is doing to her health and to research. And the story was widely shared, because also, it comes from somebody who is just speaking, not speaking down on people. This is just the guy next door writing about his neighbour and their experiences, and we are all just forced to look at ourselves and our habits that we are creating that we are thinking are normal. But then it's not a doctor ordering us to stop our bad habits, it's just somebody who is going through the same thing, sharing their experiences and I'm able to see myself and say, 'Oh! I'm also guilty of this!' and then you are forced to introspect and change your lifestyle habits (M).

Case 3: Exposing doctor's malpractices.

In another positive impacts from citizen journalist, a story emerged on how a malpractice doctor was exposed by citizen journalist. It was told how the doctor performed illegal surgery that lead to many death in his practice. After the story hit the mainstream media, the doctors practicing license was withdrawn and was subsequently banned from practicing medicine

He was recently banned from practising as a medic because he used to perform surgeries that should be performed at hospitals at his surgery and then there were a couple of people that died. So he was exposed by the guys from TV.

The above case incidence reinforce the positive impacts of citizen journalist to pressing community needs. From the cases, it can be gathered that issues that are of particular concern to South Africans such as diabetes and obesity from high sugary diets were brought to the society attention. The positive impacts of the citizenry reporting, perhaps, may be attributed to the closeness to the community and trust between the community and the citizen journalist. As one of the interviewees noted:

I feel like our stories have an impact in that they touch people and they are able to identify with the way that they are written and the people that write them. So it's not uncaring journalists who are pursuing a story. It's members of the community who are aware of the challenges that you are facing, who have the same access to the same shops that you are having for food and things like that (M).

The empathic nature of the reporting as against the professionalism exhibited by trained journalist was heralded as the hallmark of citizen journalist.

I feel like if you are being interviewed by a trained person you are on your guard, you are trying to get your story straight, you are trying to impress them, even the language you are using, it's not the language you use when you are speaking to someone that you're used to who is part of your community. Also, the culture. You know we have different ways of speaking in different parts of the country, and also the culture there is very different (M).

The abovementioned factors were hinted to be based on trust the community the news emerged from has on the citizen journalist. Hence their willingness to open up to them without reservation.

I do feel like it makes a difference and also in terms of trust – because I feel like there is a deep mistrust, especially now. And this is just me gauging through the social media engagements that you are seeing with people – there is distrust among journalists and ordinary citizens. They feel like we are out to get them, we are always tricking them and because your end goal is just to get a story and you are going to get a story no matter what. But then, if it's like people that are just ordinary members of the community, at least they approach their sources knowing what they are dealing with, the areas of sensitivity, and they are able to work around that and get the person to open up and really speak about their experiences (M).

Echoing similar sentiment, another of the interviewee points out importance of citizen journalist in exposing the truth and reality on ground when it comes to community issues. This is reflected below.

Because it's mostly stories about people, instead of having a government official who will just maybe do something for PR. So, with the citizen journalists, they are able to get that grandmother who has been struggling with her municipality on certain issues, or someone who has been turned

away from the clinic, or someone who was... Like, for instance, I've recently worked on a story where a mother gave birth at a clinic and then she was transferred to hospital, but because she's a foreigner, they told her that she must pay R621. Those are stories that you would hardly ever see (MZ)

The interviewee added that citizen journalist and exposing corrupt practices and abuses is the only way people can get fair treatment and or justice.

So it's one of those stories where you are able to see that having citizen journalists or journalists in those communities, then that's the only way people will get fair treatment or justice for whatever is affecting them (MZ).

Drawing the above narrated impacts, and contrary to the views that the mainstream media underestimate or ignore the concept of citizen journalism, another of the interviewee cautioned that the media houses need to start taken citizen journalism very seriously. The interviewee based his argument on the facts that citizen journalist can help exposed pressing issues within the community and by so doing gain the government attention.

When our government sees something on paper, or on media, they then act. So I think our country, our media houses, need to take citizen journalism very seriously. We need people who can be able to report from their communities. We need those untold stories to be told, in the media. And the only way we can do that is to have people who are in those communities be trained and given that opportunity (T).

4.1.2.4 Sub-theme 2.4: Benefits of citizen journalism to citizen journalists

Apart from the perceived positive impact of citizen journalism to the community and mainstream media, it has also impacted greatly to citizen journalist themselves. During the cause of the interview, it was noted that the citizenry had benefit by way of employment, improvement in their writing and academic skills, and even advancement as a full fledged journalist. Other notable benefit was the privilege of interviewing the president of the Republic of South Africa. In terms of the benefits of creating jobs and given opportunities to ordinary citizen, one of the interviewees reminded us that:

Remember, it's not all about uplifting the community and making their issues being heard by the government, but it's also actually, that somehow you are giving back to the community by creating employment (T).

This is noted by another of the interviewee who praised the concept of citizen journalist by highlighting the following:

I think it's a really important gallery to have because it allows job creation, it allows ordinary people that are down, like foot soldiers in a way, to say, listen, hey, here's a problem here and can we talk about it, and they might be in a small village or in an informal settlement somewhere, or somewhere rural, which obviously, us as a company can't get to every single destination, so just having them around makes us (LS).

Another notable benefits of citizen journalism was the transition from an ordinary citizen to establish journalist. This which suggest that the recruited journalist are not being used and tossed away but can develop a career path from it.

Because, if I look at where I come from, from 2013, from being a citizen journalist and now I'm one of the known reporters in the country, I'm an asset to Health-e, that was actually a job creation. That's what they did, actually (T).

Furthermore, the above interviewees credited the advancement and recognition he had at the moment in journalism to the training he underwent as a citizen journalist. Arguably, one could rightly assume that citizen journalism serves as the preparatory course towards a successful career as a journalist.

One of the persons now who I was being nominated with is currently my editor, [name removed]. When I see her name there and see the names of the bigger journalists, I was like, 'But you see myself there!' Even though I didn't win, but being in the top three in the country, it's a big thing for me. I've been nominated several times but I won the Vodacom, I didn't win the Discovery. But I think it all comes to how Health-e trained me as a citizen journalist on how to find stories and on how to report about them (T).

Regarding the additional benefits of developing the citizenry, another of the interviewees highlights the gains being a citizen journalist had afforded her.

Yes, the reason I joined them was more on improving my academic writing, because I do write academic papers, but journalism is quite different from what I do, so that's one of the main reasons I joined (MM).

In addition to the above benefit, it was noted that citizen journalism have afforded the citizen journalist a rare privilege of interviewing the president. The excited interviewee while recalling the events was highly elated when she mentioned the following:

I am saying, on Tuesday, I am happy, it was the first time interviewing the President! I interviewed [name removed] (ZZ).

From the above, it is sufficient to say that the benefit of citizen journalism to the journalist cannot be overestimated. The above narrative support the integration of citizen journalism into the mainstream media. It does not only empowers them to become a critical

ambassador within their community but helps the ordinary citizen to dream of a new height. This could in a long run benefit the media house and the country by having young and hungry youth putting their talent into better use for the very good of the society they serve.

4.1.2.5 Sub-theme 2.5: Conflicting interest in citizen journalism

Although the above subthemes had detailed the benefits and potential impacts of citizen journalism, it has also brought about some conflicts in the media hierarchy. Kperogi (2011) warned that co-opting citizen journalism into journalism traditional media houses may take advantage of them financially without reward to the citizen contributor. With this in mind, this subtheme explores the perceive conflicts of interest face by the citizen journalist while working in journalism space.

From the interview, it emerged that some of the experience journalist did not support the concept of citizen journalism. From their words, it was gathered that it is not right to have someone with no qualification to venture into an area where others have striven to acquire a qualification for. Citing the medical profession as an example, one of the interviewee argued that no one just enters into the operation room and starts operating on patients without undergoing the necessary training through the medical school. The interviewee while reinforcing the argument against citizen journalist pointed out that many qualified journalist are out of job because of it. In the interviewee own words:

I think, like any profession, no one will just walk into an operating room and start operating on patients without having gone through medical school and have the qualification. So, as much as it works to the organisation's advantage to have different stories and maybe some of the stories even make breaking news, but for someone who has gone through the training, gone to varsity, spent three, four years, and some journalists are even unemployed, as we speak. They don't know how to get employment and yet you will find people who maybe some have matric, some did study but it wasn't journalism, and now they are working as journalists (MZ).

Another potential conflict is the bureaucratic conflicts in the Health-e office. It was revealed that top management hires their girlfriends and pay them better than they pay the citizen journalist. Hence one could rightly assumed that citizen journalist are underpaid as a result of what the interviewee referred to as state capture.

I think it would. I think if they knew about some of the things that are happening in terms of impropriety and conflict of interest issues, which have raised their heads in the organisation, that that would be very concerning to them, because they wouldn't want to be

involved with that kind of thing. I think there's also... you know, we are also sitting with a – in my mind – a mini state capture environment within the organisation. So there are people who have compromised themselves to each other, you know, to the benefit of each other, and are now sort of protecting each other, when they are hiring girlfriends at R1,185 per social media per hour. That's what frustrates me, is if you can hire your girlfriend at that sort of rate, but that's what you are paying a CJ for like, half a month's work and you can't afford data, what's going on in the organisation? And that concerns me (B).

This perhaps might be part of the reason why it is assumed that the citizen journalist is not getting the kind of exposure it deserves.

I suppose the other thing that's problematic currently is that the CJs' work isn't getting the kind of exposure it used to, because the stories aren't right anymore, to the same degree. So it goes out on our website, but one of the big complaints I've been hearing from them is that, 'Our stories aren't going into the newspapers anymore.' And I don't think there's enough of a push from the office (B).

Apart from financial conflicts, copyright concern may be another source of conflicts. It was hinted that the concern of whose name goes into the creative work maybe a source of potential conflicts.

The only gap I would see, generally, between the two journalists' is ownership of their work, because obviously the CJ found this matter and found all the evidence and stuff like that, so he'll have to send out...the journalist from headquarters comes over to this story, does it fall under her name or does it fall under 'with help from the CJ'. That's the only thing (LS).

Equally significant, it has been previously noted that citizen journalist suffers the challenge of underestimation and lack of recognition. One of the interviewees narrated her ordeal in an attempt to interview the president. According to her, she was initially denied entry into the venue as the security men did not consider her a journalist.

I noticed, especially about the people who organise media in those kind of events, they don't take community media, or citizen journalists very seriously. Because there was, at some point we were with other representatives from other media houses, mainstream media – your SABC, Daily Dispatch and other media houses were all standing there waiting for the President to come inside the clinic. So, the guy who was organising the media called all media people to come inside and then he asked each one of us which media house do we come from, and then when it was my turn to enter the gate, I had my accreditation for that on mine. He said I am not from a media house. So I said, 'I am from Health-e News.' So just because the guy doesn't know Health-e news, I am not a journalist? (ZZ).

4.1.3 Theme 3: Technology use in citizen reporting

As noted by Band (2010), technology has, undoubtedly, enabled citizens to have access to different news sources by means of satellite channels, the internet, the computer and mobile telephony.

4.1.3.1 Subtheme 1: Types of technology use

In terms of technology utilised by citizen journalist with Health-e, it was cited by many of the interviewees that mobile tablets are the main technology equipment provided by Health-e. This is reflected in the statement below.

We are using mobile devices or tablets whereby we write things down, or a laptop, and then we quote some of the interviews that we have with community members. So basically that's what we do currently (MM).

Expanding on the above, another of the interviews motion that the tablets serves as the essential technology for the citizen journalist.

They use the tablet for, as far as I am concerned, the tablet is used for everything because it has all the... You can use it for phone, for email, and videos and pictures. So, they use the tablet, but if you have something more that you feel like you want to use, you are more than welcome to do that. We are not going to say no. And then there's just a handful of them – I think four, who were given cameras (M).

Apart from the use of mobile tablets to write down their articles, it was also cited that citizen journalist communicate to the managing journalist assigned to them and other colleagues via WhatsApp platform.

So for our communication really we just use the method that is all too common, which is really WhatsApp. We have a WhatsApp group (M).

The use of WhatsApp platform to communicate was attributed to the fact that many of the citizen journalist are based in the rural areas where there is a challenge of poor connectivity.

They write it in Word and attach it in Word, but I'm very flexible in terms of the demands. If you are not able to write it in Word, and you just paste it in WhatsApp, that's also fine with me. I'll just put it on the Word document and then save it and then send it to the editor. This is mostly because most of them are based in rural areas where their network reception is really bad (M).

Although poor network connection was cited as a big challenge in communication, it was also noted that the issued tablets comes with a 2G every month valid data to enable the citizen journalist communicate and source for their information.

We provide the tablet and it has a contract of 2G data per month, so they get 2G per month, that also enables them to just file from wherever they are if they are able to (M).

Other technology platform indicated was Slack and WeTransfer. The interview noted that every of the journalist in Health-e use the platform a tool for communication.

Yes. A communication platform where, for journalists, that's how they get their stories there. They send their stories there through Slack. I don't know about WhatsApp, I'm not well informed about how they do it, but I do know on Slack, they do send their stories there. And then, for pictures, citizen journalists normally send them via WeTransfer or WhatsApp, for taking images. For videos, I think probably it's either they ask one of the people here to go with them, and take videos, then how we get it as a TV unit, we get it from them through WeTransfer. So I think that's about it. I can't think of any...emails (L).

4.1.3.2 Subtheme 2: Challenges using the technology

Although it was cited that Health-e issues a mobile tablet with 2G worth of data to the citizen journalist, it was noted that the citizenry faced enormous challenges using these devices to capture virtual images. Equally, it was also cited by many of the interviewees that the 2G data was hardly enough to serve the purpose. As stated by one of the interviewees:

We have given them these tablets that are very poor-quality photos, very poor-quality videos, and it's very difficult for them to then send that content from them (B).

While stating further, the above interviewee revealed that connectivity and data is the main challenge confronting the citizen journalist in the field. The interviewee sadly acknowledge that the amount of data given to them is very poor.

I think one of the biggest issues is data, and the connectivity, because that's a big challenge because a lot of these people are living in rural areas, we are thinking like iLembe, Flagstaff, places like that that are very out of the way, and I think the amount of data we give them is so miniscule and you know, there isn't necessarily a lot of access to Wi-Fi there and that sort of thing there, so, that also hampers their ability to do their work and to send their stories (B).

Similar sentiment was shared by another of the interviewees who revealed the following:

Just like of communication and sometimes data and sending the footage. I think it's very hard for them, because they are now....Sarah stays somewhere where there's no internet, or she doesn't have

money to send let's say 500 megabytes of video, or something, to us. I think that that's the barrier they have. So even if they do take let's say a few pictures, or cell phone footage, for instance, which is easier (LS).

On the contrary, another of the interviewee cited that there have never been any incidence of citizen journalist requesting for additional data from the ones given to them in addition to the R55 monthly for airtime. Nonetheless, the interviewees hinted that the poor network coverage is the main challenge confronting the citizen journalist due to their locations.

But then the challenge with that is that they still need to go and access the internet to download, to save, which is really just not conducive to the environments where they find themselves in, because maybe you will need to take two taxis to get to the nearest town where you can access internet, which is not what we want (M).

The fact that none of the citizen journalist had requested for data does not refute the argument that the citizenry are given poor amount of data. Probably, the lack of formal request may be the concern they feel asking for more and been reprimanded or denied. One the citizen journalist admittedly noted that she had to buy her own data to carry out her duty whenever she ran out of the provided 2G.

It's not enough. They give me like two gigs a month, but it never lasts. It lasts for the first two weeks, then the other two weeks I have to buy my own data (ZZ).

Another concern cited for the challenge in using the technology provided was that many citizen journalist struggle to type out their articles on the tablets.

So I think there are citizen journalists who are still struggling with that. Because sometimes you will find that people send 250-word stories and this phone, when you type 250 words on the screen, it's something which is too much. Then you tell yourself that I did my best, I typed a long story, but when you send the story to somebody who has a laptop, the story becomes short. For me, I think it was a challenge that I was facing, but then I have my colleagues, who were citizen journalists by then, who were from the rural areas, the signal was a problem (T).

In addition to poor connectivity, low data, and difficulty in using tablets to type out articles, one of the interviewee noted that she face the challenge of commuting 30km to 40km on a single trip to get her scoops. In the Interviewees own words:

Transport. It is a frustration for me, because our place is very scattered and there is no reliable transport. Sometimes I have to climb at the back of a van to go and get a story.

4.1.3.2 Subtheme 2: Solutions to the use of technology

From the interview, it was noted that the quality of the videos and pictures from the tablets issued to them was very poor for the mainstream media. One of the interviewees argued that quality image is paramount in citizen journalist reporting since the media house is very far away from them. The interviewee cited that for credibility purpose, citizen journalist stories should be supported by camera witnesses.

But if there's some camera witness to the event, or to whatever, it would make sure that we had a lot more credibility to the stories that they were passing on to us (B).

However, the interviewee admitted that the citizen journalist have not be given adequate tools to excel in the field.

I think that this is one of the areas where we've fallen very short, in my opinion. I don't think that we are capitalising enough on our team of citizen journalists and I think that there a number of reasons why that's happened, and I think the most important thing is I don't believe that we've given them the tools to make it possible (B)

Given the above concern, it was proposed as a solution, that citizen journalist be provided with a nice phone that is capable of taken quality photos and make good videos.

I still think that if we had armed them with a really nice phone – it doesn't have to be the most expensive. It can even be a Samsung, you know, those one and a half thousand rand-Samsungs that take relatively good photographs, good videos, so that they can send that kind of content to us from the ground (B).

Another suggestion was in providing a source of incentive to the citizen journalist for every quality images they sent.

I think we could create an incentivised scheme, where we say to say to them, if you send us three video clips a month, you will get five gigs of data. If you send us six, you'll get 10, and create some sort of system where it incentivises them to do it, because data is probably one of the – I can even see it with my teenage kids – one of the biggest ways to get anyone to do something for you is to give them data. And if they know that they are going to get more for providing more, it's going to happen (B).

Equally essential, and while technology is noted to be at the fingertips at the moment, citizen journalist are not obliged to leverage the social media to communicate and post their articles.

Social media plays a massive role in terms of their content, and we are not even asking them to create social media posts to go with their stories, and that's so critical now, that you promote your own stories (B).

