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**THE IMPACT OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF
COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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JUNE 2024

DECLARATION

I, Solomon Prelate Mathebula, Student No.214346605, herewith declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Journalism at the Tshwane University of Technology, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Signature: 

Date: June 2024

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Ndza khensa!

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the South African media landscape has seen several changes as a result of the introduction of new technologies and the convergence of the media. Traditional media such as newspapers, television and radio have had to incorporate digital mediums such as social media, websites, blogs, podcasts, YouTube, and smart devices to disseminate information. The merging of traditional media and new media outlets has resulted in what the media fraternity refers to as media convergence. As such, media convergence has prompted community radio to adopt converged radio stations to keep up with the times. However, challenges faced by community radio, such as financial constraints, staff shortages, and lack of editorial management skills, among others, prevented its ability to operate in remote areas.

This is a qualitative study aimed at exploring media convergence's impact on the survival of community radio stations by identifying the challenges and opportunities brought by convergence. The study determined possible strategies and solutions that ensured the sustainability of community radio stations and the adaptation of media convergence in their day-to-day operations. However, the study used non-probability sampling technique since it focuses on non-randomised methods when drawing the study sample and selecting participants based on their accessibility. As such, because the study took the form of a qualitative approach, therefore, purposive sampling plan was employed to select a unit of analysis. Qualitative methods were also utilised to collect data through in-depth and unstructured interviews generated from presenters and station managers of three selected community radio stations in the Vhembe and Mopani districts in Limpopo province, South Africa, namely, Makhado FM, Univen FM and Phalaborwa FM.

The study discovered that community radio stations have encountered sustainability challenges imposed by the rise of media convergence. It also revealed that not all rural community radio stations could effectively transition to convergence due to inadequate resources and skills. Moreover, the study found that despite these challenges, some community radio stations have

recognised media convergence as an opportunity to align with modern technology. Meanwhile, presenters and station managers agreed that they had adapted their own strategies to ensure a successful converged radio without compromising traditional radio quality.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

Radio broadcasting is regarded as one of the cheapest communication tools compared to other traditional mass media such as television and newspapers (Fang and Repnikova, 2022). The advent of media convergence has resulted in these media having to change their production systems in a quest to adapt to new technologies and a new way of doing things. As a result, traditional media in rural areas have experienced challenges adapting to this new media culture due to a lack of resources required for convergence (Osunkunle, 2013).

Karttunen (2017) points out that community radio stations are mandated to provide affordable services to communities, but the rapid advancement of digital media technologies often poses challenges. Hessler (2021) concurs that there are various challenges that community radio has faced other than capital, which include poor journalism practices, untrained staff, and digital migration adaptation skills.

Mhagama (2016) maintains that financial constraints are the most critical obstacle hindering community radio stations' ability to sustain a successful converged radio station. Okinyi (2019) suggests that community radio could operate a convergence radio station if given sufficient financial resources, as most challenges in this sector stem from a lack of capital.

As a result of these challenges, community radio stations have experienced a decline in listenership due to the transition to multiple platforms and new production styles, aiming to maintain audience engagement (Ajibade and Alabi, 2017).

2. BACKGROUND

The study explored the impact of media convergence on community radio stations' sustainability by identifying opportunities, challenges, and strategies they employed to adapt to convergence in order to maintain their newsroom's livelihood. The study explored community radio stations in Limpopo Province, South Africa. According to Ligaga (2013), community radio stations in South Africa relied on volunteerism, advertising, and donations to exist, as opposed to commercial radio stations that are profit-driven media organisations. Mabweazara (2013) adds that rural communities faced sustainability challenges due to scarcity of infrastructure, such as resources like internet access, poor network connectivity, and lack of public free data provision.

Moreover, Allocott, Gentzkow and Yu (2019) point out that rural communities' lack of development has caused difficulties in adapting to new technologies arising from media convergence. As such, community radio became the least effective media outlet for development, especially during the digital migration era (Mhagama, 2016).

Ferguson and Greer (2017) state that the convergence of media in community radio stations has transformed the broadcasting landscape and escalated global sustainability challenges. For this reason, some community radio stations have had to decline in listenership, while some have had to close due to these challenges presented by media convergence (Sibanda and Nkomo, 2023). Moreover, community radio's challenges have reduced revenue opportunities emanating from advertisers and donors, which resulted in some community radios losing licences from the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) (Okinyi, 2019).

As a result, rural communities were frequently left vulnerable in the absence of a community radio station that acts as a watchdog and voice for the voiceless (Buckley, 2020). Smith and Anderson (2018) assert that community radio's quality is often influenced by its resources. This implies that community radio stations were expected to prioritise quality services and ensure smooth operations amidst the challenges of media convergence (Sahoo and Behera, 2017).

Van Rooyen (2019) points out that converged radio has affected the affordability of community radio stations because it came with the requirement of internet access, which may have possibly affected radio's mandate of remaining the cheapest tool of information for the poor, in contrast to traditional radio, which relied on frequency signals to transmit audio information to the public. Wallace (2013) asserts that despite sustainability challenges brought by media convergence, community radio has the mandate to accommodate both the rich and the poor. This is because community radio carries the obligation to ensure that local content reaches the targeted audience cheaply and affordably (Mhlanga, 2016).

In addition, convergence involves a combination of radio as a mass traditional media and new digital media technologies (McEwan, 2019). In this instance, broadcasting radio uses internet access to utilise digital platforms like online-live-streaming radio and social media like Facebook to engage audiences using portable tools like smartphones, tablets, iPads, and laptops (Ferguson and Greer, 2017).

Tsarwe and Sibanda (2024) add that media convergence was most suitable for commercial radio stations because of the financial resources needed for operational maintenance. However, the community radio station forced itself since it did not want to fall behind due to limited resources. Community radio sought to stay current with modern media technology since it controls the proliferation of news more than the old media (Asy'ari, 2018).

Mhlanga (2016) states that rural communities still lack network connectivity and internet access, and therefore, people in rural areas should continue to rely on traditional radio for news. Fang (2017) argues that some community radio stations have applied media convergence because they are in developed areas and have good funding sponsors. Alabi (2017) supports that the advent of integrated media and digitisation has affected community radio stations' listenership because listeners have flocked to online radio, where news consumption is mainly on multiple platforms.

As a result of the change to Internet radio, conventional community radio has increased the expenses of accessing radio programming because listeners have had to acquire data and have smart devices to tune in than it was when utilising traditional radio. This is because converged radios could not function with frequency signals since they were designed to be driven by the internet (Rumney, 2014).

Moreover, the convergence era negatively impacted community radio and traditional media organisations depending on the resources each radio possessed (Correia, Vieira, and Aparici, 2019). This is because community radio's challenges have arisen from the diversification, stylisation, and innovation that came with integrated media (Osunkunle, 2013). According to MDDA (2020), most South African rural community radio stations rely on the Media Development and Diversity Agency for financial stability and have struggled to manage media convergence in comparison to well-funded urban community radio stations.

However, the government established provisions under the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) Act of 2000. This was founded to establish a regulator under the Electronic Communications Act of 2005, which offers a framework for convergence in the broadcasting, broadcasting signal distribution, and telecommunications sectors.

As a result, convergence has had a great development in South Africa because it has expanded access to media, simplified media production, and democratised the base of media producers through created content. Convergence has become part of people's everyday lives because of smart technologies that give people access to a wide variety of media everywhere and anytime. However, on the other hand, convergence has increased the uncertainty of news since it has allowed fake news to spread at a rapid pace. It has also increased citizen journalism which then compromises the quality of news dissemination in terms of journalism's ethical application (Zhuwakinyu and Lesame, 2023).

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Studies by Mkontwana and Sundani (2023) state that despite community radio having regulatory bodies, like the Media Development and Diversity Agency, for financial assistance and guidelines that seek to promote the development of community broadcasting services, community radio stations were still unable to address sustainability challenges successfully. Technological convergence needed for radio stations to be on par with new technology has intensified and alleviated challenges faced by community radio stations.

New technology and digitalisation of newsrooms in community radio stations were required for radio broadcasters to handle the new converged media coming with social media platforms. As such, financial support was still a major concern for rural community radio stations (Kaushik and Wash, 2019).

Similar study done by Muswede (2009) looked at the sustainability challenges facing community radio stations in South Africa; however, no research was done in South Africa that explored how media convergence influenced and impacted the operation of community radio stations and how radio stations go about sustaining themselves in this era of media convergence.

The study therefore, aimed to address the challenge of rural community radio stations, namely, Makhado FM, Univen FM and Phalaborwa FM that are struggling to adapt to new media technologies resulting from media convergence. Moreover, the production of radio has significantly changed, necessitating a new broadcast stylisation that requires digital technological skills and competence for converged radio operations. As such, community radio has been seen to have lost relevance in terms of keeping the audience glued to the station because it could not keep up with modern technology in which analogue radio is integrated with other various platforms to convey information to the public (Asy'ari, 2018).

However, some community radio stations such as Mala FM and Giyani community radio in Limpopo have incorporated digital platforms to remain relevant and grow their audience base by at least five thousand listeners but they have struggled to sustain production due to the sustainability challenges

that community radio faces, such as a lack of financial muscle to stay afloat (Sithole, 2020).

Therefore, in the context of South African community media, radio stations do not have news reporters and editors; instead, presenters and station managers perform the roles that were intended to be played by a reporter and an editor, respectively. This is because the study planned to use news reporters and editors as the unit of analysis at the beginning. Nonetheless, the objectives of the study were met, therefore this did not affect the results thereof.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study was to explore challenges posed by media convergence in community radio stations and the sustainability strategies that these community radio stations employed for best practices in convergence journalism.

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- To explore the role of media convergence in broadcast journalism, in particular, community radio journalism.
- To describe opportunities and challenges faced by community radio stations in the era of media convergence.
- To identify sustainability strategies employed by community radio stations in the era of media convergence.
- To determine journalism best practices to be employed for converged community radio.

5. ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Previous studies on a similar topic such as “Sustainability challenges facing community radio: a comparative study of three community radio stations in Limpopo province” by Moswede (2009) and “Assessing the role of the community radio stations in facilitating development in South Africa” by Mawokomayi (2017) have revealed how media has evolved from its traditional

form to modern digitisation and how this media development has influenced the viability of the South African media industry, particularly the community radio industry. Although the current study has been undertaken to investigate the impact of digitalisation on community radio, there is still a lack of literature regarding the challenges brought by new integrated media. As such, it is important to ensure that community radio journalism survives the challenges brought by the new media evolution in order to continue fulfilling its mandatory role of informing, educating, and entertaining its listeners at the grassroots level (Mawokomayi, 2017; Sančanin, 2018 and Muswede, 2009).

Therefore, this study investigated the challenges posed by media convergence and ascertained how community radio stations in remote rural areas maintained their day-to-day operations when faced with those challenges. The study also identified strategies that community radio stations could use to address potential challenges posed by converged media.

The study also aimed to investigate possible digitisation opportunities presented by media convergence for community radio journalism. Moreover, it identified new paradigms of journalism in the South African context to further explore the challenges and strategies of media convergence in order to sustain the well-being of community radio.

Thus, the goal of this research was to provide an in-depth investigation into convergent radio in the context of the South African newsroom, which may subsequently be used to design additional media strategies in comparable circumstances. The findings of this study aimed to fill a vacuum in the literature and contribute to the body of knowledge in the fields of digital media converged radio and media studies at large.

6. DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 Delimitations

The study focused on three community radio stations in Vhembe and Mopani District Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa: Makhado FM, Univen FM, and Phalaborwa FM. The Vhembe and Mopani districts were chosen for their established community radio stations, large broadcasting footprints, and

extensive coverage, which allowed for balanced data collection from various geographical areas.

6.2 Assumptions

The following are the assumptions of the researcher about the study:

- Poor quality of news production is due to a lack of journalistic reporting skills.
- Hiring of unqualified journalists as a result of financial constraints.
- Lack of innovation capacity to handle new digital technologies harms the running of a community radio station.
- Lack of innovative strategies will result in poor revenue generation and, thus, poor sustainability of a community radio station.
- Media convergence influences the way radio journalism is conducted.

7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

7.1 Community radio station

Mhagama (2016) describes a community radio station as a media platform that is primarily owned by the community and established to serve the community with news, social cohesion, and other key needs that contribute to the development of the community. Faisal and Alhassan (2018) add that a community radio station is defined as a non-profit radio station that survives through donors and creates content that serves the interest of the community under which it broadcasts. In this study, community radio was defined as an instrument created to fill the gap left by mainstream media in terms of informing, educating, and entertaining the community, as well as a tool on which all listeners rely for social, economic, political, and cultural development (Mohammed, 2018).

7.2 Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the capacity to generate income or revenue for community radio to maintain and sustain the standard of radio's functioning and

operation to serve the community's interest (Jallov, and Jannusch, 2014). In contrast, Correia, Vieira and Aparicio (2019) describe sustainability as a method of addressing community radio's daily challenges that seek to disrupt the smooth running of the station. For example, editorial challenges, financial challenges, and modern skills adaptation challenges encountered by staff members. This study refers to sustainability as a mechanism designed to keep the community radio intact with its services without having tempter with its financial muscles despite challenges posed by advanced media technologies on the move (Almeida and Viana, 2020).

7.3 Media Convergence

According to Zhuwakinyu and Lesame (2023), media convergence is defined as the amalgamation of various utilities or services. Where multiple tools such as telecommunications, computing and audio-visuals come together. It is also referred to as the process by which previously separated media technologies are brought together by digitalization and computer networks. Media convergence involves the interconnection of messages or information using mass media in combination with new media technologies, computer networks, and digital media (Jensen, 2022). According to Biaek (2014:11) media convergence is "the melting of boundaries between telecoms, computing, and media," in contrast to Hadi (2012:8) defines convergence as "the combining of disparate firms in terms of product production. Meanwhile, Meikle and Young (2017:33) define media convergence as the fusion of numerous technologies to create a new technology where social media broadcasting, for instance, is the result of the convergence of smartphone, desktop, PC, and computer technologies. Fosu and Akpojivi (2015) define media convergence as the merging of multiple technologies to create a new technology. For example, social media broadcasting is a result of the integration of various technologies such as smartphones, desktops, PCs, and computers. In this study, community radio interacts with viewers through social media platforms and digital tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Therefore, the definition by Fosu and Akpojivi (2015) was relevant to the objectives of the study.

7.4 Convergence journalism

Ajetunmobi, and Lasisi (2022) define convergence journalism as the integration of traditional media like print, television, radio, and social media with new outlets like blogs, websites, and live streaming. Srisaracam (2022) describes convergence journalism as news consumers consuming the same content through various platforms, including reading newspaper articles, listening to radio broadcasts, and watching videos. Similarly, within the context of this study, convergence journalism is a multi-directional approach that requires journalists to integrate with all platforms to disseminate information to the public through online, newspaper, television, and radio (Filak, 2019).

Abbreviations used in this study

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|--|
| MDDA | Media Development and Diversity Agency |
| SABC | South African Broadcasting Corporation |
| ENCA | eNews Channel Africa |
| TUT | Tshwane University of Technology |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| SANEF | South African National Editors' Forum |
| 4IR | Fourth Industrial Revolution |
| POPIA | Protection of Personal Information Act |
| ICASA | Independent Communications Authority of South Africa |

8. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

8.1 The role of community radio in rural communities

According to Correia, Vieira and Aparicio (2019), community radio stations play a vital role in developing communities around the world. Radio has been a powerful tool for disseminating community content affordably and reaching global audiences, as well as significantly influencing societal growth (Wabwire, 2013). Babbie (2020) states that since the introduction of community radio people have relied on it for community development and participation, as well as acquiring both informal and formal education to the communities in developing countries around the world.

Ajibade (2017) adds that community radio has remained the voice of the people at the grassroots level, and it also remained the most affordable tool to access information as compared to other mainstream media outlets such as television and newspaper (Radio Ink, 2018). Radio not only disseminates life-related information to audiences but also allows the public to engage with officials influencing decision-making processes that impact their lives (Tucker, 2013).

Faisal and Alhassan (2018) concur that radio has ensured that the opinions of the public in the policy-making process are realised and helped the community to have a sense of belonging and the elements of involvement in those decision-making processes. Alabi (2017) states that community radio has accommodated both the rich and the poor and acted as a watchdog for communities by addressing community issues such as socio-economic challenges, environmental affairs, beliefs, culture, and traditions, among others. This implied that the community would not be able to have its voice heard other than relying on community radio stations as people's voice (Rådelius, 2015).

Moreover, traditionally, radio has, over the years, helped develop the government's public policies and allows the public to engage and debate those social, cultural, and political issues (Utami, 2020). Mhagama (2015) contends that if community radio was designed to render services to communities, then community radio should remain functional and operational to address those challenges faced by the target audience. Meanwhile, Aram (2013) adds that community radio was designed as a platform that advocates democracy

through which freedom and pluralistic expression of the communities are promoted and prioritised to serve the interest of those who listen to it. Therefore, this indicates that community radio's mandatory role in the world should always be at the centre of its functionality to serve the interest of the community.

8.2 The advent of media convergence and convergence journalism

O'Sullivan and Fortunati (2021:08) define convergence as "joining together of different industries in terms of product development" while Białek (2014:11) defined media convergence as "the blurring of borders between telecoms, computing, and media." This implies that in convergence, the internet is the main engine that drives this media evolution (Willems, 2013). As a result, media convergence has forced community radio and other traditional media, such as newspapers and television, to rely mainly on internet tools, such as social media, for dissemination of content, as well as sources of information (Duan, 2020).

According to Babbie (2021), convergence in the media industry was critical since it combined multiple technologies, such as smart gadgets, allowing for the effective conveyance of information to audiences. Utami (2020) adds that convergence may have been perceived as a barrier to grassroots communities due to the costs it entailed, which continue to be an issue. However, Duan (2020) contends that convergence has increased information consumption and enabled content catch-up platforms, but at a cost because it requires internet access, which rural media organisations continue to struggle to afford. Therefore, in the context of this study, convergence played an important role in reshaping the media environment, processes, and skill development, as media personalities such as journalists and presenters are now required to integrate multiple media platforms to disseminate information in order to interact with audience (Tulenko, 2016).

Media convergence has destabilised the traditional media industry at various levels of operations. For example, the mainstream media organisations and as well as community media organisations such as newspapers, television, and radio (Kolodzy, 2013). Although some previous scholars commend

convergence to be the fastest dissemination of information to the audience (Allocott, Gentzkow and Yu, 2019). This is because the convergence era introduced many challenges, particularly in the community radio industry (Okinyi, 2019). As such, media convergence has seemingly affected the way community radio stations operate, particularly in instances where the radio broadcasters must present while engaging the audience on a live-stream broadcast on social media platforms (Duan, 2020). McEwan (2019) argues that convergence does not only affect community radio but the entire traditional media fraternity.

As a result, potential donors withdrew their funding because these community radio stations did not have the capacity to handle the convergence era (Fang, 2017). O'Meara (2015) concurs that due to the incapacity to handle the convergence era, community radio seemed to be deteriorating day by day. Denzin (2017) adds that the convergence era had collapsed community radio's originality for creating pictures through sound as it has been since its advent. However, this has caused a shift in listenership. Nowadays, people listen to the radio on online platforms in the form of podcasts. This transformation has caused radio to be different from what it has been used to. In addition, community radio listeners who afford streaming content are increasingly interested in streaming radio content rather than listening through analogue radio. Therefore, community radio's popularity was influenced by the age group of listeners, with younger generations preferring new methods while older generations remained loyal to traditional radio. Similarly, the sustainability of community radio stations has been impacted by the need to maintain listenership to accommodate both the poor and the rich within the community (McEwan, 2019).

According to Hessler (2021), the practice of journalism in traditional media changed dramatically when digital media was established. Internet became the most powerful tool to disseminate information and therefore traditional media organizations had no choice but to adapt to the new media (Kalogeras, 2014). For this reason, some traditional media organisations struggled to cope with digital migration due to a lack of resources and skills (McEwan, 2019). Dal

Zotto (2016) concurs that despite other traditional media struggling to adapt to the new media, more developments came about, and thereafter, media convergence surfaced with full force. As such, media convergence left many traditional media organisations vulnerable because it attracted more civic journalism, which otherwise dominated the community media using social media platforms to disseminate information to the public (Karttunen, 2017). People started following news on social media rather than in the actual traditional media means of communication such as community radio, newspapers, and television (Mhagama, 2016).

Sančanin (2018) adds that the convergence impact on traditional media nearly paralysed the reporting sector of quality. This was because many of news reports were found not fact-checked and misleading the public. For example, the recent Covid-19 fake news reports. Moreover, Convergence came with demands and requirements of new skills and innovative knowledge to handle new technologies to report and disseminate information, and therefore, most traditional media organisations were still struggling to handle this transition (Duan, 2020). O'Meara (2015) further states that since the advent of media convergence, traditional media has been challenged by how the media environment has turned, with social media taking the lead in the distribution of information, which somewhat lacked the credibility of sources. However, despite challenges that arise, traditional media organisations are mandated to put the best practice of journalism to distribute information that is accurate and trustworthy and enhance quality journalism that serves the interest of the community (McEwan, 2019).

8.3 Opportunities and challenges brought about by media convergence

Mabweazara (2014) points out that community media organisations struggled to handle the newsroom environment in a manner that probes the delivery of quality news beats such as science journalism and politics. This was supported by the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) report that community

media has faced a critical challenge in dealing with the uncertainty of information during the outbreak of COVID-19 (Dugmore, 2022).

There has been an outcry about the rise of fake news regarding COVID-19 recently, and most community media organisations have not succeeded in dealing with the detection of fake news surrounding the pandemic (Jamilah, Utami, and Kurniadi, 2020). As a result, media convergence fuelled social media platforms to spread unverified information about the pandemic and community radio and other community media outlets suffered due to a lack of resources that amounted to making social media platforms a source of information to feed the community (Babbie, 2021). In addition, community media organisations are viewed to be using unprofessional journalists that run a newsroom as opposed to the mainstream media organisations such as SABC, ENCA, and Newsroom Afrika to run a newsroom as opposed to mainstream media organisations such as SABC, ENCA, and Newsroom Afrika, where the editorial structure is observed. (Kalogeras, 2014). Community media in rural areas had a tendency to use one reporter to perform different tasks, such as working as a producer, presenter, editor, and newsreader. As such, this destroyed the effectiveness of the newsroom and devalued the good practice of journalism (Utami, 2020). Furthermore, community media continued to use untrained staff members and inexperienced station managers who somehow did not study journalism or any related media qualifications (Kurniadi, 2020).

Bryner (2020) adds that community media would continue to struggle to practice good journalism if there is no intervention from media regulatory bodies to address these challenges. Arya and Kashyap (2022) support that it is still a challenge for community media reporters to verify sources of information or use incredible sources to enhance the quality practice of journalism. This is because social media platforms were utilised by community media, particularly community radio stations, as reliable sources of information. As a result, community radio tends to be faced with incompetence in running a newsroom during the convergence era, which intensified more challenges such as the escalation of spreading fake news, advocating propaganda, and misinformation to the public (Casey and Glorgio, 2020). Moreover, Sellas and Solà (2019)

contend that community media were affected by the inability to run a successful newsroom because of a lack of financial strength to hire professional journalism staff, such as journalists, editors, and essential resources to facilitate fact-checking process before the public news consumption. This has put traditional media at risk of compromising journalism ethics and standards, especially during the convergence era, where traditional media is expected to tighten up to avoid street journalism (Smith and Anderson, 2018).

9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Kivunjia (2018), a theoretical framework is a theory that already exists and that helps researchers explain and understand the hypothesis of their study to support their research topic based on the theories' perspectives. Grant and Osanloo (2014) add that the theoretical framework acts as a guide for researchers to be able to think about a specific notion through which they might approach the study topic from a particular school of thought. The theoretical framework should consist of theories that uphold and underpin the researcher's thinking in planning and understanding the research objectives (Braidotti, 2019). Therefore, this study was anchored on social responsibility theory and media dependency theory. Although the study discussed two theoretical frameworks, only one was the driving force behind the study, and that theory was the media dependence theory.

9.1 Social Responsibility Theory

Social responsibility theory is defined as the theory aimed to govern any action performed by the media or any organisation that has an obligation to society, culture, and the economy (Asaad, Saeed and Ahmad, 2023). According to Christians and Fackler (2014), social responsibility theory dates back to the mid-twentieth century and was mostly employed by emerging countries in the West, such as the United States, to promote freedom of the press around 1949. The theory was based on the idea that media and journalism should have a focus and commitment to society or people in general who consume news through reading, watching, and listening (Apata and Ogunwuyi, 2019).

The primary objective of this theory was to ensure that journalism does not harm but rather promotes and benefits society while also allowing people to participate in various activities that speak to their hearts and fulfil their civic obligation (Coates Nee, 2014). Uzoechi (2014) supports that the idea of the theory was to primarily hold the press to have total freedom and responsibility to preserve democracy through proper dissemination of information in a manner that is responsible, accurate, balanced, and objective, as well as upholding professionalism of the press towards the society.

Social responsibility theory was also regarded as one of the four theories of the press that were specifically developed to provide more vital information about the many responsibilities that media, particularly journalism, could play in society. This theory was also intended to determine how the media should behave with respect to the society in which it is involved, as well as what should happen in reference to the social duties they are expected to have in order to improve society. As a result, the theory holds that the media should be independent or privately owned, with complete freedom that is guided and characterised by accountability (Christians and Fackler, 2014). In addition, prior to the rise of social responsibility theory, there was the libertarian theory, which held that no one should tell the media what to do and that the media should not account to an external body, as this would limit the freedom of the press, which the theory aimed to promote. Therefore, when the social responsibility theory was created, its major purpose was to replace libertarian theory and step in to provide the media unlimited freedom to report on social issues with the sense of accountability for any abuse of freedom of the press.

Social responsibility theory has some features with libertarian theory; the only difference is that these similar tenets come with responsibility and accountability (Coe, 2018). Uzuegbunam (2015) adds that this theory provided a free press without any censorship by any form of government. It required the media to maintain specified standards and professionalism by following ethical norms and refraining from disseminating information that has the potential to inspire violence, social disruption, or harm ethnic or religious minorities. In this theory, society has unlimited access to the press, and it can hold the press

accountable should it fail to uphold its social responsibilities. The theory holds that the media should always appeal to their consumers' preferences and needs (Uzoечи, 2014).

Jiang and Park (2022) concur that the media should be free yet self-regulated through a code of conduct and ethics. The media should be pluralistic in the sense that it could function in a diverse society while appealing to a wide range of viewpoints and ideas. This theory also asserted that media ownership is a public trust. Therefore, newsmakers such as journalists and producers should answer to their audiences (Jiang and Park, 2022). Therefore, this theory imposes a social obligation on community radio stations operating under the media convergence era to ensure that they perform their responsibilities of educating people, entertaining, and informing the public without fail despite the sustainability challenges they are facing in rural areas.

Community radio stations, according to this theory, should be able to perform their civic obligation, which includes, among others, uncovering the truth, reporting well-balanced news, and ensuring objectivity in their news dissemination (Coe, 2018). As such, this implied that keeping the radio functioning and operational is of utmost importance to rural communities while ensuring that challenges are addressed successfully to preserve the radio's sustainability. The theory further imposed that the media should not do as it pleases in terms of reporting news and handling media organisations but should always respond to the interest of society (Uzuegbunam, 2015). The social responsibility theory of mass media is grounded upon professional standards of the media, encouraging the quality of news and its maintenance while disregarding false interpretations of information and poor journalism practice.

This theory supported the researcher's assumptions and emphasised the importance of community radio stations and other media outlets in addressing and resolving issues affecting journalism quality (Jiang and Park, 2022). As

noted by Fourier (2010) social responsibility theory demonstrated how it should be applied in newsroom settings to show to the public that press freedom is now accompanied by accountability and responsibility. Therefore, this theory outlined the proper way for the media, particularly community radio stations in this context, to cover social issues and always put its responsibilities first in action to avoid being considered irresponsible by news consumers.

9.2 Media dependency theory

Media dependence theory is defined as a systematic approach to the study of the effects of mass media on audiences and the interactions between media and audiences. The theory holds that individuals rely on the media as a reliable source of information to fulfil their needs and objectives. It is understood to be the practice of regularly and excessively consuming information or objects through the media. Ball-Rokeach (1985) established this theory in reaction to the media's continual evolution and dominance in human space (Jung, 2017). According to Kim (2020), this theory argues that society would not be able to meet its demands unless it relies on the media since people are accustomed to consuming things from the media that have an impact on their lives both positively and negatively. The media instructs people on how to behave, what to think about current events, and how to act in circumstances, which makes it difficult for society to survive without involving the media in their daily lives. Zhang and Zhong (2020) add that the media, the public and larger societal structures have a close interaction and that these three role players rely on one another to fulfil their objectives.

This theory was applicable when, for example, a great event, such as elections, occurs in a society which impacts people's daily lives. In this situation, people relied on the media to keep them informed about the political party that won power in government. In addition, their dependence was influenced by an increased need for electoral information. This implied that society could become less reliant on the media if there were other ways to get information outside the media. This was because the audience has the power to decide how dependent

they are on the media if they perceive fewer external influences. As a result, their reliance on media sources was reduced after having discovered other forms of entertainment that fit their needs.

Moreover, the media-dependency theory implies that audiences use media to accomplish specific satisfactions and goals. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the public became increasingly reliant on the media to learn about the global spread of the virus. During that time, the media was the only avenue for the audience to receive information. This suggests that the media was able to address people's demands by giving information at the appropriate moment (Wang et al., 2015). The theory used a multi-level framework to explain how people, media, and society are interrelated. It began with traditional mass media, such as radio and television, and has since evolved into new media outlets, such as social media, on which most audiences rely more than traditional media (Towner, Alexander and Copeland, 2021).

This theory supported this study because people in rural areas relied on community radio stations as a source of information, entertainment, and education, and when community radio faces challenges imposed by media convergence, some listeners become less dependent on the actual radio and more dependent on the media tool that meets their demands in terms of news supply. In the case where community radio was converged listeners begin to rely on a solid platform that fulfils their expectations rather than a single platform (Paschke, 2023). The decline in community radio stations' news dependency and listenership is because of media convergence fuelled by new media platforms such as social media, which leverage improved technologies to transmit news information more quickly. As a result, news consumers rely increasingly on platforms that are dependable and that meet their needs (Khalifa and Khalifa, 2020).

10. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

10.1 Research paradigm/philosophy

A researcher needs to base any study on a certain philosophical perspective or research paradigm (O’Gorma and MacIntosh, 2016). According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019), the concept paradigm was developed from the Greek word known as “paradigm” which is a set of assumptions, beliefs, ideas, and academic values that a community of researchers have in common regarding the nature and conduct of research”. The interpretive paradigm builds a pattern that influences research participants to discern their position in the study.

The interpretivism paradigm was used in this study as it allowed the researcher to gain a greater scope in addressing the issues of concern, influence, and impact, and the opportunity to ask critical questions such as ‘why’ and ‘how’ the convergence era influences traditional media such as radio (MacIntosh, 2016). Dimache (2019) argues that the purpose of the interpretivism paradigm has been to help the researcher produce an understanding of the study context in terms of information science that is influenced by the context. The interpretivism paradigm enabled the researcher to interpret elements of the study and integrate human interest into research while basing its philosophy on the critiques of positivism in the social science-related study the researcher intended to conduct.

The interpretivist approach helped uncover relevant research questions and other interesting issues that the researcher might want to follow up on in the process of interviews. In addition, an interpretive approach enables a researcher to act as a social actor while being able to accept people’s differences. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to conduct independent, diverse interpretations of the findings of the selected case studies where the focus was on station managers and presenters of these three community radio stations (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

10.2 Description of inquiry strategy and broad research design

According to Staller (2021), the research method refers to a road map that gives direction to the study in a logical and orderly manner, while Babbie (2020) refers to the research method as “the logical methodical and exact execution of the research design”. This study was a qualitative inquiry designed to provide the researcher with the ability to understand a phenomenon by means of observing and interacting with participants in the study (Denzin, 2017). It is important to note that, qualitative researchers are most interested in exploring or explaining a phenomenon as it occurs in the natural setting while attempting to make a meaningful sense of the phenomena and/or interpret meanings that people develop (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Goodall (2018) adds that qualitative researchers also focus on obtaining intimate and in-depth information concerning the study’s problem. Therefore, this research inquiry allowed the researcher to learn how and why research participants think, behave, and make meanings as they do, instead of focusing on what people believe or do.

10.3 Sampling plan

The study used non-probability sampling methods because it focuses on non-randomised methods when drawing the study sample and selecting participants based on their accessibility. Non-probability sampling enabled the researcher to obtain data from specific participants who had the necessary information needed for the study. As such, this study employed a purposive sampling plan because it is most suitable for a qualitative study. It also allowed the researcher to make use of participants who had sufficient information needed for the success of the study. The units of analysis were the station managers and presenters of the selected community radio stations namely, Makhado FM, Univen and Phalaborwa FM in Vhembe and Mopani districts in the Limpopo Province, South Africa.

10.4 Data collection plan

The researcher collected data by conducting unstructured, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with presenters and station managers of the three community radio stations in the Vhembe and Mopani districts in the Limpopo province, namely, Makhado FM, Univen FM, and Phalaborwa Community radio.

Although the initial goal or promise made at the start of the project was to interview news reporters and editors at these community radio stations. However, during data collecting, the researcher discovered that these community radio stations do not have news reporters and news editors, but rather presenters and station managers who execute the roles of a news reporter and news editor. This demonstrates that, despite the researcher's use of presenters and station managers, the objectives of the study were achieved.

Therefore, the researcher used in-depth and unstructured interviews to collect data. These qualitative methods enabled the researcher to gain more insightful information and able to probe and explore the participants' point of view and understanding of their real situations (Taherdoost, 2021).

10.5 Data analysis

According to Hayes (2013), qualitative analysis is non-numeric data generated through observation, interviews, transcription, audio recordings, video, notes, text documents, and images. Therefore, within the context of this study, the researcher used a thematic analysis, to group themes from interview transcripts and interpret patterns of meaning that link directly to the objectives of the study (Emery, 2014).

11. RESEARCH ETHICS

According to (Coccia, 2018), research ethics refers to the human treatment of other people during research conduction. This implied that the researcher should know ethical values, standards, and responsibilities before conducting research to protect human rights. However, the researcher should have ethical standards to deal specifically with ethical principles through which good and bad behaviour patterns are determined (Liamputtong, 2019). Smith and Aderson (2018) support that research should contain trustworthiness and credibility and that research should be embedded within ethical standards and

values to avoid unacceptable behaviour. Furthermore, it is important to note that the researcher should write a letter requesting permission to collect data through interviews or questionnaires, of which, in this study, permission was required to conduct interviews with station managers and news compilers and to analyse news bulletins of the three selected case studies. Therefore, this study has observed the following ethical standards (Clark, 2023).

- **Permission to carry out a study**

A researcher should know that it is significant to ask for permission from the Composition of the Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee to conduct a study. As such, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee to get permission to carry out the study. The request letter contained the purpose of the study and the methods of collecting data. All these were done soon after the proposed study was approved and accepted by the faculty research committee.

- **Informed consent and voluntary participation**

According to Udoudo and Nwosu (2019), informed consent is a procedure that enables an individual or group of people to choose whether to participate in a specific study after being informed about the Impact and facts that would possibly influence their daily lives and choices. The researcher has chosen the following element involved in the informed consent, as proposed by Fang (2017). Firstly was competence, which refers to the ability to make relevant choices. The researcher ensured this procedure by allowing participants to decide whether to participate in the study. Secondly was voluntary participation, which related to a choice taken by participants to freely engage in the research.

This procedure guided the researcher not to force people to participate in a study. Thirdly, was the full information where the consent form should contain relevant information about the research. In this regard, the consent form consisted of the purpose, procedure of the study, and the benefits of

participating in the study. These aspects were clearly explained to all willing participants at the initial stage of informing the respondents about the proposed study. Fourthly: comprehension whereby participants understand the nature of the study. To ensure that participants fully understand the nature of the study, the researcher explained all aspects of the study, such as the purpose and methods of collecting and analysing data.

- **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Confidentiality refers to the principle of not disclosing individuals' personal information in an identifiable way (Neuman, 2014). It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that participants' names are not included during the process of the research report. The researcher should bear in mind that although participants claim to have no problem with their names being disclosed during the interviews, the researcher should always ensure that their names are confidential for the sake of their protection and to be offered another opportunity freely without fear in the future. Furthermore, the researcher considered confidentiality to build trust with research participants. In this criterion, the researcher ensured that information that could affect the dignity of participants was fully protected. To ensure the effectiveness of this criterion, the researcher applied the Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 (POPIA) to protect participant's personal facts. For example, the data collected will be stored in a locked room to prevent other people from accessing the personal information of the participants. In addition, during data analysis, the researcher strictly used letters to represent participants instead of indicating their names to avoid violating their right to confidentiality. Wallace (2013) argues that privacy should be treated as a core standard when collecting data. In this case, privacy was concerned with the access of participants' information that should be entwined with confidentiality. However, during the issuing of consent, the researcher will indicate people who will have access to the information collected. For example, the researcher will tell the respondents that he or she will be the only one having access to their information. Although, the

study was being supervised, however, the supervisor did not have access to the respondent's personal information but was only present to monitor the progress of the study. This implied that the researcher kept information anonymous to other people and known only by the researcher.

- **Respect, dignity, and standard of care**

According to Comsowre (2016), the researcher should take respect as a vital ethical standard that concerns the beliefs, values, safety, and well-being of participants involved in the study (Neuman, 2014). In this case, the consent form indicated that individuals would be given an opportunity to decide whether to participate in this study or not. This has helped participants to understand the study's consent form in the easiest language and to avoid misconceptions (Westcotte, 2018). During interviews, the researcher did not ask irrelevant questions that did not serve the purpose of the study so that participants could engage freely and comfortably. Significantly, this was a way of showing a sense of respect and honour and admiring the participant's dignity (Gentzkow, 2019). To ensure the standard of care, all participants involved in the study were treated as equals irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, and status, and this was a way of applying the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 which advocated equality in human race (Buckley, 2020). For example, all participants with irrelevant media convergence knowledge were respected like the ones with relevant needed knowledge.

12. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher presented the study and provided background information. The problem and purpose statement were outlined. The chapter also described the study's objectives and the theories that drove the investigation. The chapter expanded on ethical principles and preliminary literature, which would be further explored in the next chapter.

13. DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

The chapter outline for the study is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

The first chapter introduced the problem under investigation. It also provides a summary of the study's goals and objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The researcher reviewed scholarly literature to understand the study's context, identify themes, and provide background for a meaningful discussion of the research findings.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used in the study.

Chapter 4: Research findings

Chapter 4 outlined the significant findings from the primary data collection, as well as their analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations

The chapter provided an analysis of the study's findings, draws conclusions, and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews previous research on community radio stations during media convergence, defining concepts like sustainability, digital journalism, and media convergence, enhancing understanding of these stations. This chapter delved into the theoretical framework that informs this study, which includes social responsibility theory and media dependency theory. It also examines important topics such as the introduction of community radio in South Africa, media convergence, areas of media convergence on traditional media, media convergence and the reshaping of mass communication, convergence strategies and opportunities and challenges for the community radio sector in the convergence era. This chapter concludes by outlining the difficulties community radio stations face with media convergence and giving a current summary of community radio journalism in South Africa during the convergence era.

2. MEDIA CONVERGENCE AND THE RESHAPING OF MASS COMMUNICATION

According to Zhuwakinyu and Lesame (2023), media convergence is defined as the amalgamation of various utilities or services. While Meikle and Young (2017) refer to media convergence as the fusion of numerous technologies to create a new technology. Social media broadcasting, for instance, is the result of the convergence of smartphone, desktop, PC, and computer technologies (Fosu and Akpojivi, 2015). Babbie (2021) adds that the fusion of digital media, computing and information technologies, communications networks, and information content creates media convergence.

For other well-funded media outlets like community radio to utilise converged radio effectively, a high level of technological fusion is required. It is now

relatively easy for media convergence to spread the news across multiple news channels at once through digital technologies and media convergence. Community radio, for instance, publishes content on social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X, TikTok, and online presence, as well as YouTube and podcast (Kalogeras, 2014). The progress of digital discourse has been concentrated on text and images; however, it is now vital to highlight compatibility among all sorts of information and representational forms available throughout the media convergence era. Sounds and related themes, such as sound, have been relegated to the periphery. This is true in the case of digital literacy development (Kalogeras, 2014).

Media convergence, however, has the potential to offer a few positive qualities in its current condition, including simpler use, lower costs, and, if the degree of digital convergence is larger, a stronger chance for monopolistic behaviour. For managing digital data systems utilising digital technology, it is possible to combine some of the best solutions into a single formation portal (text, images, audio, and video). One benefit of content management system convergence is that it makes it simpler to manage content (Utami, 2020).

In addition, media convergence provides a unique way to depart from this established structure. Changes in ownership, structure, collaborations, information collection and presentation, as well as socio-political ideals in various cultures, can all help to foster media convergence. The process of media convergence can be impacted by cultural factors. Due to the restricted selection of traditional radio stations in South Africa, an alternative method of information access through converged media is required. People may prefer using mobile phones to obtain radio material mostly because they can utilise the Internet to access, verify, and broadcast local news (Ngomani, 2016).

Furthermore, community radio stations in South Africa continue to have resource constraints while catering to convergent radio because they operate independently and lack a supporting structure. They make money through advertising, donations, and materials that are frequently chosen by no community members (Mollgaard, 2019). As a result, media convergence has brought in a new era in which journalists, independent reporters, and citizens

collaborate to produce content in different regions of the world (Van Rooyen, 2019).

This paradigm promotes the objectives of community discussion and development in the context of South African communities (Tella, 2022). Community members' involvement in radio station programming, especially in rural or economically stratified areas, can be significantly influenced by social media participation and internet availability (Pimmer and Tulenko 2016). As a result, media convergence in South Africa advances the objectives of neighbourhood and local radio stations, which are to give news consumers accurate, fast, and dependable news material. Community radio has become converged because radio stations have incorporated some elements of digital content into their regular broadcast. As such, listeners in remote locations can get information using digital tools instead of conventional radio waves (Babbie, 2021).

Similarly, media convergence has reached the poorest community radio stations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and South Africa and has managed to have a positive impact despite the scarcity of resources (Tulenko, 2016). Furthermore, due to the shortage of oriented skills to provide good journalism and quality radio production, other scholars have found that most community radio stations are still struggling with resources to maintain convergence standards. As such, other researchers have discovered that most community radio stations are still battling with resources to maintain convergence standards owing to the lack of oriented skills to provide quality journalism and radio production (Faisal and Alhasaan, 2018; Pimmer and Tulenko, 2016; Thompson, 2013).

In contrast to the aforementioned, some radio stations have chosen to use the web tool to stream programming; nevertheless, there are still areas where this service is not available due to the digital disparity between wealthier, urban commercial stations and poorer, rural community stations (Jensen, 2022). Furthermore, listeners are moving into media convergence because it is no longer anything new but rather a process that has already happened in most

radio stations due to the rise in mobile phone usage (Hadi, 2022). Additionally, in Mozambique, Uganda, and Mali, it has been demonstrated that convergence in community-based journalism benefits information dissemination and residents' civic engagement, particularly when mobile phones with internet connectivity are used (Nassanga et al., 2013). Finally, there is a developing participatory culture among rural community radio producers and listeners (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013). Therefore, in the context of this study, those without mobile devices are still dependent on traditional means of news consumption, so it is debatable if media convergence can assist increase the reach and integrity of radio station broadcasts and news coverage. Due to the limited availability of energy, this is frequently the situation in rural communities. Due to a lack of access to a radio or cell phone, people may miss important information that could save their lives as a result of their dependency on battery-powered devices (Tkach and Williams (2018).

Jensen (2022) defines media convergence as the integration and interoperability of computing networks, information technologies, and adaptable digital information through intelligent platforms, applications, and devices. The processes that enable media convergence are moulded by, and shape, social practices and cultural values, the ways in which we generate and consume digital media to transmit science, politics, sport, and so on. Whereas people used to be able to gather and filter scientific knowledge through numerous conventional communication routes, digital technologies are now playing an essential role. Media convergence refers to the melting of boundaries between telecoms, computing, and media, combining disparate firms for product production and merging multiple technologies to create new technologies (Babbie, 2021).

For this study, Fosu and Akpojivi's definition (2015) is relevant because community radio stations used multiple devices, such as social media, smartphones, desktops, PCs, and computer technologies, to create a converged radio in deep rural areas of Limpopo.

2.1 Technological convergence

According to O'Meara (2015), technological convergence is the process by which the media uses computerised equipment to communicate information to the public rather than relying on traditional forms of media. Media companies use technical and functional components of technological convergence to function efficiently. Technically, technological convergence may convey any type of data, and users must be able to combine computer, entertainment, and voice capabilities into a single device capable of performing several purposes (Fortunati, 2021). Karttunen (2017) adds that the technology aspect of convergence is the easiest to understand because it simplifies how the media industry handles production, which used to take a long time to produce a show, but now, with technological convergence, one person can perform multiple tasks without having to spend more time. Lee (2015) supports that technological convergence has driven billions of people to migrate from old communications medium to new media that is interlaced with the internet, smartphones, tablets, computers, smart televisions, and other digital tools. As such, for traditional media outlets to reach a wider audience of news consumers, they are now being compelled to consolidate their platforms to allow new technologies to expand their audience (Han and Sohn, 2016).

However, with the ability to access a range of materials via the same devices through technological convergence, media companies have developed cross-media content. For example, news organisations are now portals that provide content in a variety of media formats, such as text, video, and podcasts, as well as links to other valuable resources, online access to their archives, and opportunities for people to comment on the material (Karttunen, 2017). Media convergence has transformed journalism by removing long-standing restrictions such as who is and is not a journalist, deadlines and other time constraints, journalists and editors, and content platforms. Therefore, technological media convergence is the result of the transition from "atoms" to "bits," as well as the digitalisation of all media content (Kim, 2020).

2.2 Network convergence

As noted by Margulies and Uddin (2019), Network convergence is the optimal coexistence of telephone, video, and data transmission within a single network. Bell and Shine (2015) add that the use of several communication channels on a single network provides ease and flexibility that separate infrastructures do not. As a result of its simplicity and flexibility, the media business now refers to network convergence as unified communications (Lim, Kwon, and Lee, 2018). Moreover, Oberman and Calder (2018) agree that network convergence allows for the separation of channels and content and makes the platform and its media networkable and interoperable. As a result, there are new digital technologies, as well as analogue technologies, that have been digitalised and improved. This enables the merging of cable networks, the Internet, intranet, telephone, and mobile networks to become what is known today as network convergence (Kopecka-Piech, 2011). Jeanne and Wilson (2015) highlight that as applications become more sophisticated, converging network resources can become overwhelming, leading to potential issues in utilising a single network. Therefore, Bahnasse and Elkamoun (2015) assert that, despite the obstacles of network digitisation, it continues to carry out specialised responsibilities. Thus, as with device convergence, the notion that one network could do all functions would be a variation on the "black box" fallacy.

2.3 Convergence of Devices

Tella (2022) refers to the convergence of devices as the process of combining multiple media functionalities within the same device, leading to the supply of information to news consumers. For example, community radio has to merge other media tools such as websites, social media platforms, and podcasts to spread information to a larger audience. However, Peil and Sparviero (2017) argue that device convergence is a new word that characterises its evolving nature, such as mixed media, which refers to any medium in which two or more types of communication are integrated. Kim (2020) indicates that a convergent terminal is a mobile phone that also functions as a radio and MP3 player. The

black box myth is a misconception that surrounds the phenomena of gadget or device convergence.

Meanwhile, Park (2019) states that device convergence is primarily driven by the growth of the Internet, e-business, multimedia, and information technology applications, as well as advancements in computer power and price reductions. As such, because of the terminal radio, television, phone, and computer involvement, it is sometimes referred to as terminal convergence. In addition, it is significant to highlight that the computer was frequently referred to as universal media or Metamedium before the advent of smart devices. The notion that defines a "black box" was evolving. Initially, the greatest device was known to be a television set, especially when combined with a set-top box. But things changed when personal computers, Internet accessories, portable computers known as "smart terminals," and, finally, video games came into play (Hessler, 2021).

Ahmed (2020) claims that "black box" realisation is not achievable; news consumers are entering a time where media is present everywhere and interact with different types of mediums on the growth of channels and the pervasiveness of computing and communications. This means that device convergence has had an impact on changing the media environment and how journalism is known to be done thus far. As a result, in this study, media convergence plays a significant role in enabling integrated platforms on community radio stations to allow news feeds to be transmitted to various devices under one main device, which is local radio (Gustafsson and Schwarz, 2013).

Mobile phone convergence is used to link two transmissions to achieve better communication. It has been the tool that enabled the broadcasting industry to transition from relying on huge cameras and LiveU-streaming machines to crossover to the studio. However, since the advent of smart mobile phone convergence, reporters can now use their smartphones to provide news feeds to the studio while on the field (Algan, 2013). This has simplified the work and

minimised workforce in the media industry because, through mobile phone convergence, reporters are now able to work alone without the need for a camera person to assist in filming instead of reporters filming themselves (Fortunati, 2021). In this instance, a reporter can undertake a variety of tasks in a very simple manner. For example, a reporter can use their mobile phone to Facebook or tweet news developments while on the field, utilising the same convergence to distribute the same news material to numerous platforms. This suggests that, in comparison to a century before, mobile phone convergence has had a significant influence in transforming how news is consumed today (Park, 2015). Carmody (2013) states that an estimated twenty-eight million people in the new democratic South Africa own mobile phones, which also increases the use of media-converged radio stations. This means that the country's mobile phone usage landscape has substantially improved, propelling it to second place in the globe after Asia (Tulenko, 2016). However, these mobile phone penetration numbers show how many people grow more dependent on their phones to access news in many mediums daily (Ajibade, 2017). As such, mobile phone convergence has become useful to news consumers, replacing traditional tools. Because news consumers use their phones to watch TV, listen to the radio, and read articles on news websites, and therefore mobile phones are in high demand due to their adaptability and general applicability (Park, 2019).

Thus, in this study, mobile phone convergence applies to news consumers for community radio stations who use their phones and the internet to consume news and other programmes catered to them, and it is through these mobile phones that listeners can engage in multiple platforms available for community radio (Utami, 2020).

3. THE ROLE OF CONVERGENCE IN THE NEWSROOM

According to Hassan and Elmasry (2019), convergence has thus far played an important role in unifying the newsroom environment by bringing about the flexibility of news operations, where the intake or input 'which means every news content that comes into the news operation' and output 'every news

content that goes out from the newsroom into the target audience on multiple devices' are brought close together. Tapsell (2015) argues that content convergence is also referred to as several processes of media convergence, integration, and intersection in the context of its content across the entire creation process. Because of this, content convergence in the context of this study represents a cultural movement that motivates community radio stations to expand their knowledge and connect different media sources in rural areas. Wasserman (2020) adds that convergence is a continuous process or sequence of occurrences rather than a routine. As such, the third media convergence, also known as a variety of processes of convergence, integration, and intersection, is known as content convergence (Hessler, 2021).

In essence, media organisations make every effort to guarantee that the content they create daily can be reused by any other component of the organisation. For example, the SABC frequently distributes content developed for radio broadcasts to television news shows in the form of audio recordings. This means that, thus far, content convergence has fostered content centralisation, particularly in mainstream media corporations where the material is converged for numerous platforms and mediums (Mallick, Mishra, and Chae, 2020). However, in the context of this study, community radio stations at the grassroots level in Limpopo province use content convergence by combining radio content with that of digital platforms. This has thus far aided the audience in the situation where the show was missed, and listeners easily get hold of the same content on a different outlet because numerous ways of communication have been merged to reach a large number of audiences (Doudaki and Spyridou, 2015).

According to Horváth and Szabó (2019), the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is the major driving force of media convergence because it has introduced an advanced technology that has the capacity to incorporate systems to run industries, manufacturers, and the economy. Sananin (2018) adds that 4IR has thus far improved the media and communication spectrum in terms of advanced digital technologies that enabled employees and managers to incorporate systems and devices to reach larger audiences within a short period. Dugmore (2021) concurs that 4IR has reduced the workforce in the media and

communication industry by introducing enough robotic systems that only one person is required to operate, as opposed to previous industrial revolutions where many people were required to operate a machine in a studio or outside broadcasting. In this instance, media convergence has been considered as a result of the efficacy of internet gadgets, which has been sparked by the 4IR, in which a range of digital avenues interact with traditional media outlets (McEwan, 2019). As a result, in this study, media convergence is driven by new types of digital media platforms, such as social media outlets, websites, blogs, podcasts, and smart devices merged to transmit information to achieve the same goal (Wang, 2017).

According to Garca-Avilés, Kaltenbrunner, and Meier (2017), convergence has enhanced newsrooms by allowing them to use numerous technologies, such as digital platforms, to distribute the same material to news consumers. Villi, Matikainen, and Khaldarova (2016) argue that the advent of convergence has destabilised the newsroom because it has destroyed the nature of traditional media platforms such as radio, print, and TV, causing news consumers to shift from these outlets to the fastest new media platforms that are primarily driven by the internet to access news content. Drula (2015) states convergence has resulted in a considerable shift in the newsroom in terms of news operation, news stylisation, news management, and skill adaptation. It has also played an important role in providing larger chances related to new technology and times. As such, Convergence revitalised traditional media for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, transforming it into an internet-centric world and enhancing accessibility and ease of life.

4. THE ROLE OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE IN SOCIETY

Expanding on the concepts of media convergence presented above, it can be maintained that one approach to understanding media convergence and its impact on society is through the interaction between old and new forms of media. It is also essential to emphasise that the idea of transition from analogue to digital media is at the heart of media convergence, as it would aid in laying out the influence media convergence played on news consumers, individuals

in general, and society (Anderson, 2017). Media convergence is divided into four dimensions that cover different stages of the communication process: integrated production (which focuses on content), multi-skilled professionals (deals with information sources), and multiplatform delivery (which focuses on medium or platform), and active audience (people who receive information actively and reliably). These factors enhance the understanding of the many roles that media convergence has had on various parties (Ngomani, 2016).

The emergence of media convergence has had a huge impact on society since it has created a shift in the way society responds to news and interacts with one another. It has contributed to a number of people purchasing their own smart devices such as laptops, iPad, and smartphones and always seek access to the internet in the form of purchasing routers loaded with data for the purpose of consuming news on their smart devices (Han and Sohn, 2016). However, Margulies and Uddin (2019) state that there are some advantages which news consumers enjoy under media convergence. News consumers had the freedom to choose which platforms to consume information other than relying on a single medium. News consumers now catch up with a program content and download the content on digital platforms. It is also essential to highlight that most people are now able to create their own content, which means this era brought about the increase of citizen journalism at a very cheaper without buying expensive resources. News consumers are now using their smart devices to share information they receive to their own platforms and in that way, they generate income for themselves.

Bell and Shine (2015) add that the medium also enabled people to interact with news markers using the comment section on integrated platforms such as social media outlets. This enabled a quick flow of interaction without having to spend a lot of money to call a landline to join in the topical conversation. Moreover, media convergence has opened a way through which news consumers can join conversations with media organisations through video calls via teams and Skype. This has enabled news makers and news consumers to start conducting interviews virtually, which means there is less need for physical

studio visitations. It is media convergence that also saved many lives across the world during covid-19 pandemic because media houses and other industries would work virtually from home, and in the case of news business, information was able to be disseminated to the people without having to seek for physical appearance but through the use of integrated devices and platforms driven by convergence era (Johnston, 2020).

Inasmuch as there are opportunities, there are also challenges faced during media convergence on the societal level. News consumers had to be forced to adapt to the new media where the internet is a driving force of news; they would require having access to the internet, and some of them cannot afford to purchase data that can enable them to consume information. News consumers have been put under pressure to purchase smart devices to install Apps that can be used to access information, and still, some ordinary news consumers from dusty rural areas cannot afford such resources. This means that the converged medium has become more expensive to access, unlike relying on analogue media platforms where there is easy access. For example, with community radio, consumers do not need internet access radio if they have a good signal, therefore with converged media everything is centred on internet which is very luxury to rural consumers and other ordinary people in urban areas (Jensen, 2022).

Donders and Raats (2015) concur that the biggest challenge that news consumers encounter is financial challenges; they are failing to access these smart devices because of a lack of internet accessibility in their respective communities, in developed countries, where all the streets are wired with internet access for the public to access information. Therefore, within the context of this study, media convergence has played an impact on the development of new media, particularly in the urban areas, as opposed to the grassroots level of communities where poverty is still a challenge and access to the internet is the driving force of convergence is still a dilemma.

5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE ON COMMUNITY RADIO

Giorgio (2020) asserts that radio broadcasting necessitates a high degree of professionalism, dedication, and practicality. Surprises and problems are to be expected in this line of employment. The quality test of announcers is also from a broadcast with draft to broadcast without a draft, and they must also be able to adapt to and deal with hotline communication without restriction. This test is from the time of "preaching" and "broadcasting" to the time of "open live communication." While change is constant, invariance is ephemeral. The broadcasting and hosting industry faces both numerous opportunities and many challenges (McEwan, 2019).

5.1 Opportunities for community radio stations

Margullies and Uddin (2019) point out that new media gave rise to media convergence, which has since dominated all media platforms, grown in popularity, and expanded impact. When adopting new media, there is fierce competition among communicators, yet the impact of communication also expands and is widespread. As a result, numerous radio and television programs saw an increase in audience thanks to new media. Additionally, they set up public accounts to participate in multi-channel, matrix, and all-directional communication that is visible and audible. In addition to the core role of broadcast, information is also transmitted throughout the airways via WeChat's public account, microblogs, mobile clients, and other platforms (Dugmore, 2021).

Kim (2019) adds that convergence media is a category of self-renewing media that appeared in the context of the information era. It is based on the factors that have had a significant impact on the profession, including the rapid expansion of Internet information data, the value of resources, the high degree of integration operation pattern, the idea of technology that iterates and updates, and the significant alteration of the media environment.

The advantages of new media in integrated media communication include instantaneity, interaction, openness, uniqueness, mass information, limitless communication, low cost, quick search, and more (Alhassam, 2018). The

characteristics that are most essential to effective communication stand out among the rest as being the interactivity of communication and the digitisation of information processing technologies. Due to the rapid development of new media and "we-media," people are experiencing the influence and power of network media more than ever. The authority and accuracy of the dissemination are, however, inadequate because the bulk of those doing so are regular people, and as a result, the information must go through an inversion and inversion process (Ngomani, 2016).

In contrast, Fortunati (2021) points out that broadcasters and hosts in traditional media gain from a solid basis in terms of ideology, policy level, and communicational propriety supplied by professional training. Even though new media information bombed because it was exciting and captivated a large audience, experts predict that as audiences grow and conventional media announcer hosts develop more mature personalities, they will begin to stand out throughout the period of wide dissemination and the expansion of convergence, which is becoming more and more spectacular (Duan, 2020).

According to McEwan (2019), media convergence is a technology-driven field, and technological growth has resulted in seismic alterations in communication patterns. The shift from the "Internet of everything" to the "intelligence of everything" period has had an impact on not only traditional media, but the value of humanity itself will be challenged in the future by artificial intelligence. In contrast, the key to convergence media is technological change. The system engineering of the future media is focused on providing the public through technology. Senior members of the media, notably broadcasters and presenters, are disproportionately affected, and it is their role and purpose to confront and manage change. As human society advances toward artificial intelligence, no one can avoid the absorption of technology into life and work (Daun, 2020). In the context of this study, community radio broadcasters who have a solid foundation in media literacy and have inherited the benefits of media social communication can better adapt to the new era by integrating media through Unicom before the advent of the era of comprehensive artificial intelligence, which is media convergence, and can better adapt to the new era (Koirala, 2021).

5.2 Challenges experienced by community radio stations

A review of the literature reveals that community radio stations face many challenges that keep them from airing content that promotes grassroots development (Shukla, 2014:351). Rådelius (2015) states community radio in South Africa faces challenges due to media convergence compared to public and commercial broadcasting, despite its significant role in community growth. McEwan (2019) adds that community radio stations initially prioritise development programming but struggle to achieve their objectives due to integrated radio operations challenges. Phimolsathien (2024) adds that community radio stations face challenges such as funding, low-income generation, digital migration, skills shortages, audience measurements, and licensing delays. Lack of funding is one of the problems that community radio stations worldwide struggle with.

Funding has always been seen as a major problem for community radio both globally and in Sub-Saharan Africa (Jensen, 2022). Most community radio stations in most countries operate in appalling circumstances, with limited access to telephones and transportation for day-to-day operations. Babbie (2021) concurs that community radio lacks the financial resources to recruit and maintain competent staff members as well as other resources required to provide high-quality programming and promote community involvement. As a result, community radio stations are unable to broadcast programs that assist their audience due to a lack of funds (Kalogeras, 2014). Duan (2020) adds that most community radio stations in sub-Saharan Africa rely on international donors for financial support. This is supported by Muswede (2009) that the community radio sector, even in South Africa, relies on both local and international donors for funding, start-up costs, training, and the purchase of broadcasting equipment. In addition, the shortage of digital skills contributes to the list of obstacles that rural community radio stations face in the media convergence era (Manyozo, 2012). This is due to low resources at these radio stations, as well as inexperienced staff members, as compared to major radio

stations, who have professional and trained staff members to deal with the media fraternity's rapid development (Jensen, 2022).

6. BENEFITS OF CONVERGENCE ON COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS

According to Kim (2019), media convergence has also brought a lot of benefits to community radio stations in terms of enabling content creators to use its tools to generate customised content towards the targeted communities. It has also brought changes in the receiving of information to news consumers where consumers would use new media platforms to listen to the same radio, for example, through online streaming, podcasts, and social media outlets. Jensen (2022) adds that media convergence has brought skills to manage advanced technologies towards integrating smart devices with the actual radio. It has enabled news consumers to catch up with the aired content at their flexible time and able to download it and share the very same content with other people. For instance, if the radio station has announced an important announcement to the public and therefore new consumers are able to get shared content from other people, which was not possible before.

Community radio stations in rural areas have gained in terms of dynamics of economic distribution and cost structure because it is different from the traditional media. This means that media convergence has increasingly benefited community radio financially because of the through which money is generated using multiple streams of devices that which news consumers are accessing information from and advertising from (Doudaki and Spyridou, 2015). Among other benefits brought by the media convergence on community radio stations is the ability to market its content on various devices, which also contribute to revenue generation to the station. This has helped community radio to be able to maintain itself financially and be able to pay staff members to maintain itself financially and be able to pay staff members, which previously was hard because most community radios relied on donations for financial support. However, media convergence has stretched revenue avenues rather than waiting for donors; the capacity of being able to use other platforms for

radio to remain intact financially is the achievement of community radio (Hassan and Elmasry, 2019). This has also brought about a change in the experience that a person goes through by consuming media. It has transcended the limitations of the traditional media. Babbie (2021) contends that media convergence has brought about a sense of post-modernism to the field of media consumption, where the consumer is not an audience but is also a co-creator of content. While Utami (2020) states that media convergence has transcended the limitations of the traditional media, things that the old media was unable to achieve are now achievable easily.

Donders and Raats (2015) state that despite the benefits that media convergence has on community radio stations, it also has some highlighted negatives which need to be addressed by these community radio stations. Media convergence has brought in a certain amount of unpredictability in the responses that a media would receive, and the audience is being exposed to a plethora of media platforms, which is becoming tougher to understand what has had what kind of effect on the consumer. This has led to an increase in the competition for consumer's time and attention that the community radio stations face. Koirala (2021) postulates that another disadvantage that community radio stations face under media convergence is poor management capacity to handle the new media trends in terms of equipping staff members with the knowledge and expertise to handle convergence. Pimmer and Tulenko (2016) argue that editorial management of community radio stations is not necessarily to blame in this instance. However, these community radio stations do not have financial support to handle media convergence. As such, community radio should be funded sufficiently to enable editorial management to have the capacity to invest knowledge and expertise in their staff members to incorporate with converged radio.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF CONVERGENCE ON COMMUNITY RADIO JOURNALISM

According to Jamil (2022), several convergence implications have emerged not only in the media space but also in the journalism fraternity, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa and other African countries. Jensen (2022) concurs that the entire new media phenomenon brought changes triggered by advanced technological developments that gave birth to media convergence and that these changes affected not only developing countries but also developed countries such as the United States of America, Germany, Australia, and England. This means that media convergence has an impact on the entire world in terms of media development because the entire media in the world is driven by the proliferation of the internet towards consuming news, and journalism is now primarily reliant on devices and platforms that fuel information faster than before and that is where media convergence comes into play as an influence on the journalism space in the world (Fosu and Akpojivi, 2015).

Moreover, the convergence media era has had a variety of implications on the practice of journalism. It has changed the way journalistic work is presented to the public and received by news consumers. Over the years, different media organisations relied on analogue material to send information to people, but since the advent of convergence coming to space, media organisations are seen moving to the new development coming with advanced digital technology that is driven by the internet world (Meikle and Young, 2017). This new media convergence trend become the main target that the audience can use as a point of criticism in consuming online news because most audiences question the credibility of news reports since the world has now gained more newsmakers who keep spreading news online with or without journalism experience or possessing journalistic ethical standards (Dal Zotto and Lugmayr, 2016).

Kalogeras (2014) argues that the existence of media convergence has somehow disturbed the flow of professional journalism due to the increase in influencers in newsrooms. For example, social media influencers are those who generate and share material on a regular basis to establish their expertise and build their own audience. The other influencers are celebrities, such as musicians, entertainers, and players who already have a good following. Media companies, particularly those in the broadcasting industry, have been seen recruiting influencers to push numbers and boost audiences. As a result,

influencers tend to use their own various channels to bring audiences into the program they are overseeing. This has altered public perception of journalism because newsmakers are not always competent journalists but rather superstars from the entertainment industry.

Media convergence has, thus far, brought about change to rural community radio, one of which was forcing radio to integrate with other digital platforms without being prepared for these new media trends. Community radio has battled to retain itself while attempting to integrate with new forms of media, which necessitated a significant investment in digital skills development by community radio to keep up with the convergence age (Souisa, 2017). McEwan (2019) adds that community radio has become more than radio due to media convergence because of how listeners are consuming news by using various methods instead of relying on listening to radio. Since the convergence has increased ways through which listeners can consume news, therefore, community radio has gained multiple ways of generating revenue through the integrated outlets.

Although community radio can make a good revenue, it comes with a lot of pressure and changes to its operations and therefore, community radio must be able to adapt to changes in communication and information technologies. As a result, community radio must choose between two options: first, follow the changes and sustain their existence, or second, survive with traditional media forms but deteriorate by change and loss in the competition. Meanwhile, community radio stations encountered the struggle to adapt not only to the converged radio but also to the emergence of digital radio, where productions need to change and require expertise to sustain this phenomenon (Phimolsathien, 2024). This indicates that community radio had to eventually follow the flow of changes in various aspects such as managing their mass media according to the needs of today's digital society which is not easily possible for community radio due to the lack of financial muscles to cater all the needs of the new technologies coming up with digital era. Therefore, community radio has had its implications of convergence media even though some stations have thus far benefited positively given their financial capacity to handle the

new media change presented to them by integrated radio journalism or converged radio phenomenon (Tsarwe and Chiumbu, 2023).

8. MEDIA CONVERGENCE STRATEGIES FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY RADIO

According to Fortunati (2021), media organisations have devised strategies to survive the new media evolution, which has been driven by the digital media age, which has resulted in the establishment of media convergence around the world. This follows the media industry's realisation of the upheaval that the convergence era has brought to the sustainability of traditional media. Strategies, on the other hand, are now utilised to appropriately cope with the news media trends that come with sophisticated technology in a setting where conventional media still dominates the fraternity (Akpojivi, 2015). Ajibade and Alabi (2017), strategies have been applied by media houses as pointed by (Akpojivi, 2015) to survive the era of media convergence particularly in the grassroots level of communities.

The media industry in South Africa has started training its staff members to improve their skills and expertise in the space of handling multimedia and digital technologies featured by convergence. This is being done through hosting media workshops where well-established media organisations such as British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN), Sky News among others equip journalists, producers, editors, and editorial managers with media convergence skills. For example, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has had a yearlong function workshop in preparing for the 2024 General election; the BBC was invited to help equip their expertise in the new digital technologies featured by convergence media (Anderson, 2017).

The media workshop strategy for media convergence has had an impact in getting the funders to sponsor the less privileged media organisations such as community media outlets like community radio, community television and community newspapers after being trained and equipped to handle the news media developments. This has served as one of the strategies that sustains

many media organisations in the media convergence era. Jensen (2022) states the other strategy that sustains media organisations to cope with convergence is the availability of public internet access in parks, malls, streets, and other important key points. This has seen working positively and easing the pressure that media houses have been facing given the critical economies of the world. However, this only benefited and still benefits media organisations that are in the urban areas, mostly mainstream media houses such as eNCA, SABC and Newzroom Afrika.

As opposed to the community media which still suffers from the scarcity of funding the operations of the stations, Utami (2020) argues that community media organisations have long been suffering, even before the advent of media convergence. Therefore, the public provision of the Internet through WI-FI connectivity does not necessarily benefit them because rural communities still suffer from network connectivity. Therefore, this strategy is applicable to financially stable media outlets, especially in urban areas, where news markers can use integrated devices to disseminate information quickly and efficiently.

Affordable smart devices enable media organisations to handle convergence media, as people own these devices, enabling simultaneous live-television and streaming of radio through apps like the SABCplus channel. This implies that media houses now find it easy to cope with convergence because audiences have the resources needed for the phenomenon (Pimmer and Tulenko, 2016). As such, strategies for media convergence rely on financial resources to tackle challenges faced by community media, particularly community radio stations, in the study's context. Community radios struggle to adopt these strategies due to geographical location, financial strength, and developed areas with smart devices, while others benefit from financial strength and economic development. (McEwan, 2019).

9. CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the research on the challenges and opportunities that community radio stations face during the media convergence age. It discusses the development of community radio in South Africa, its impact on media convergence, and the difficulties facing the community broadcasting industry in the age of convergence media.

However, media convergence is not a well-researched and explored area. For this reason, there are limited authors who delved into media convergence, particularly in the community media context in South Africa. This demonstrates that sources were very limited to enable the researcher to identify enough gaps in literature to which the study could have attempted to address. The chapter concluded by examining the theoretical framework that served as the foundation for this research and highlighting the opportunities that the convergence period has created for South African community radio journalism.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter detailed the research process, approach, and justification for using a method defined by Kothari (2004) as a blueprint for conducting the study. The chapter discussed the process of choosing participants, collecting data, and analysing the data. It further discussed community broadcasting journalism, the researcher's role in qualitative research and highlights the researcher's responsibilities in this focus area. The chapter aimed to describe the phenomenological research paradigm, qualitative inquiry, sampling methods, and data processing techniques employed in the study.

However, the methodology used in this chapter was aimed at achieving these fundamental objectives, which were aimed at exploring the role of media opportunities and challenges that are faced by community radio stations during convergence era, identifying sustainability strategies used by community radio stations and determining journalism best practices to be for converged community radio.

The chapter concluded with a review of the validity and reliability standards for this qualitative study and how these standards were met to ensure its authenticity and rigour.

2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study used the interpretivism paradigm to collect data from three community radio stations located in two district municipalities in Limpopo province. According to Kar and Biswal (2019), interpretivism is a research paradigm associated with the idealist attitude that is widely used to group together several approaches such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, and constructivism.

The decision to adopt an interpretivist approach was to enable the researcher more leeway in addressing the themes of concern, influence, and impact, as well as the opportunity to pose important questions such as "why" and "how" the convergence era affected community radio (MacIntosh, 2016). According Stavraki (2014), the major purpose of the interpretivism paradigm was to help researchers create knowledge of the study context in terms of information that was influenced by the context.

Wilson (2017) points out that interpretivist paradigm established a structure that helps study participants to determine their place in the investigation. Steenkamp and Rensburg (2018) argues that the phenomenological research paradigm focuses on understanding people and their interactions with institutions and behaviours that are common in daily life and society at large. Furthermore, Kaushik, and Walsh (2019) states that interpretivism paradigm portrays humans as conscious, self-directing, symbolic beings. This indicated that, people understand the world through their interactions with other people, institutions, and cultural norms (Silberman, 2015). Ponelis (2015) argues that interpretivism emerged as a response to the dominance of positivism, rejecting the notion of a single, verifiable reality.

Levers (2013) points out that interpretive ontology is anti-foundationalism. It opposed the establishment of any enduring, unchanging, or foundational principles that allowed universal acceptance of reality. It disapproved the adoption of any enduring, unalterable, or fundamental principles that permitted everyone to recognise the truth. On the other hand, interpretivists believe that various realities are socially generated. Truth and reality are created, not discovered. As a result, it is impossible to know reality as it is because it is constantly mediated by our senses. Interpretative epistemology is arbitrary without bringing in their worldviews, concepts, and backgrounds, observers could not directly access the outside world. Emery (2014) contends that rather than being a passive, receptive process of representation, perception is seen as an active, productive process of production. People interact with one another and with society; as a result, many social phenomena have names and meanings (MacIntosh, 2016). Therefore, researchers are essential components of the social reality they are studying. They are inextricably linked to the subject of their studies (Hua, 2015).

Interpretive research paradigm was adopted to comprehend how people see the social phenomena they engage with rather than seeking out universal, context- and value-free knowledge and truth. According to Cuthbertson, Robb and Blair (2020), social scientists can only gather data from a particular point of view by observing the world through lenses that are shaped and coloured by the researcher's language, culture, field-specific knowledge, prior experiences, both professional and experiences that arise from those experiences. As a result, there are discrepancies of some kind between the reality that the data are supposed to reflect and the data that are collected.

As stated by Alase (2017), an interpretive technique requires that social phenomena be viewed through the eyes of the participants rather than the researchers. The goal of the interpretative technique was to understand social phenomena in the context of their environment. Interpretivists, like ethnographers and case studies, primarily collect qualitative data from individuals over a long period of time. Furthermore, the qualitative methodology used to examine data obtained in this manner is inductive. This means that the researcher utilised patterns in the acquired data that were then arranged into broad themes to understand a phenomenon and develop a theory. This is in stark contrast to the deductive approach, in which researchers first identify patterns and themes before beginning the data collection process; once the data is gathered, researchers search the data for words, statements, and events that are instances of the previously identified patterns and themes. As such, interpretivists employ the inductive rather than the deductive approach, believing that theory develops from data collection rather than being the driving force behind research (MacIntosh, 2016).

Maxwell (2018) adds that data is primarily verbal rather than statistical, and it is typically audio or video captured to preserve the happenings in a largely authentic manner for future data analysis. Thorne (2016) argues that although numerical data may be provided, interpretive researchers use processes that generate qualitative data and do not rely on it. Data collection techniques that produced qualitative data included open-ended interviews with varying degrees

of structure (standardised open-ended interviews, semi-standardised open-ended interviews, and informal conversational interviews), observations, filed notes, personal notes, and documents. The interpretivism paradigm enabled the researcher to interpret study elements and incorporate human interest into the research while basing its philosophy on positivism critiques in the social science-related study that the researcher intended to conduct (Yates and Leggett, 2016).

3. DESCRIPTION OF INQUIRY STRATEGY AND BROAD RESEARCH DESIGN

Grey (2014:13) defines research technique as "a road map that gives logical and orderly direction to the study," whereas Babbie (2020:16) adds that research method is "the logical methodical and exact execution of the research design." Therefore, qualitative research was chosen as the research technique for this study (Allan, 2020:12). Qualitative researchers are mainly interested in examining or describing a phenomenon as it occurs in the natural setting while also seeking to make sense of the phenomenon and or interpret meanings that individuals develop (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Aspers and Corte (2019) add that qualitative researchers likewise focus on gathering intimate and in-depth knowledge about the study's problem. Instead of focusing on what individuals believe or do, this research inquiry enabled the researcher to learn how and why study participants think, behave, and generate meaning the way they do.

The research strategy for this study was centred on qualitative methodologies for data collection and analysis. The qualitative technique was a method that included individual definitions, descriptions, and interpretations of occurrences. The qualitative technique focused on social interaction as experienced by participants affected by the study rather than from the standpoint of the observer (Staller, 2021). According to Aspers and Corte (2019), the research methodology was determined by the nature of the study's objectives and the subject under consideration. The research format used in an inquiry should be considered as a tool to address the study objectives. The purpose of the study was to investigate how media convergence influences the livelihood or

sustainability of community radio stations by identifying the opportunities and challenges that media convergence brings to these organisations. It also sought potential methods and solutions to ensure the survival of the community radio sector and the incorporation of media convergence into the daily operations of these organisations.

The researcher opted for qualitative research because it was best suited for this topic because it is broad; it addresses the large picture and begins with an attempt to comprehend the entire phenomenon under inquiry. Furthermore, qualitative research investigated the relationships within a system and focused on comprehending a specific social situation rather than making predictions about it. The qualitative research design incorporated an informed consent procedure as well as ethical issues. Morse (2020) adds that the purpose of a qualitative strategy is exploratory and descriptive rather than explanatory. The descriptive character of qualitative research enabled the researcher to give an account of the participant's experiences that would either support or challenge the theoretical presumptions underpinning the study. Due to the descriptive nature of qualitative research, readers might understand the relevance of the experience, the distinctiveness of the problem, and the significance of the topic under investigation (Gerring, 2017).

Chauhan (2022) contends that qualitative interviews were a useful method of data collection. One-on-one interviews gave the researcher a chance to talk to the participants and keep an eye out for nonverbal signs. An open, in-depth discussion of the research issue was possible due to the use of an unstructured interview method in this study. Unstructured and in-depth interviews helped the researcher comprehend the complexity of media convergence (Roulston and Choi, 2018). The researcher gained a deeper understanding of the participants' constructs through dialogue and the language they use while building distinct discourses by using unstructured interviews as a data collection approach. The interviewing technique enabled the researcher to explore specifics and go further into a problem.

3.1 Sampling method and sample size

According to Du Plooy (2009:108), “sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting a unity of analysis for a target population.” As such, this study used non-probability sampling methods because it focuses on non-randomised methods when drawing the study sample and selecting participants based on their accessibility. Non-probability sampling allowed the researcher to obtain data from specific participants who have the necessary information needed for the study, unlike probability sampling where participants are selected randomly.

Moreover, purposive sampling is referred to as judgmental, selective, and subjective sampling. In this sample, the researchers often rely on their very own judgment, especially when selecting members of the population to play a role in their studies. Therefore, this study has chosen purposive sampling to collect a qualitative data because from the participants who were the key role players of these selected radio stations, namely presenters and station managers and these participants had more knowledge of the specific subject and were within the geographic population where the study intended to investigate.

The target population of the study consisted of three Limpopo provincial community radio stations, namely: PFM, UNIVEN FM and MAKHADI FM. The researcher chose 30 participants as the unit of analysis, which were presenters and station managers of those classified radio stations. The researcher obtained a wide range of data by utilising the complete population, providing a better knowledge of how community radio stations employ and manage media convergence. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) concur that a sampling unit is an element chosen for research from a list of potential sampling units.

Presenters and station managers were chosen as the sample unit for the unstructured and in-depth interviews, with a list of full-time personnel from each community radio station serving as the sampling frame. Even though there are not many radio stations in the province, Phalaborwa FM, Makhado FM, and Univen FM were all considered the most suitable ones for this study. These stations are found in the districts of Mopani and Vhembe, respectively. The study investigated how the sampled community radio stations operate in terms of radio's engagement in media convergence daily in several key functional and

operational aspects of radio journalism. The following is a summary of the profiles and operational mandates of the community radio stations that were purposively sampled for this study.

9.1 Profiles of community radio stations in the Vhembe and Mopani districts of Limpopo province

- **Phalaborwa FM**

Phalaborwa FM broadcasts programming that is entertaining, educational, and enlightening to its audience. The station is in the Limpopo municipality of Ba-Phalaborwa. It is headquartered in a mining and wildlife-friendly town and works to preserve Ba-Phalaborwa culture and customs. PFM has strong working connections with traditional leaders, the municipality, and other stakeholders and can constantly provide our listeners with relevant and unbiased content. This radio station focuses on topics including politics, gender equality, health and wellbeing, and social cohesion.

The station broadcasts in Xitsonga 50% of the time, English 10% of the time, Tshivenda 20% of the time, Northern Sotho 10% of the time, and Tshivenda 10% of the time. The PFM was founded in response to a national call from the collective community and civil society for more rigorous citizen participation in corporate governance. PFM was recently established with the goal of providing fascinating, cutting-edge community radio. The station is a community radio station that broadcasts on the 105 FM frequency around the clock.

- **Univen FM**

Univen FM is a community radio station in Thulamela Municipality's Thohoyandou. The transmission range of the station extends to the district municipalities of Vhembe and Mopani, as well as the local municipality of Mutale and the eastern half of Kruger National Park. Univen FM has been serving the local community for over 20 years. The station strives for high-quality programming, encourages skill development, and serves as a forum for the community to discuss and understand issues such as politics, agriculture,

sports, gender, ethnicity, economics, youth development, women and children, education, entrepreneurship, religion, and race.

The station has been at the forefront of imparting skills and job expertise in program production, screenplay writing, marketing and sales, presenting, news reading, administration, secretarial, technical, human resource, advertising, music, events management, and journalism disciplines. The frequency is 99.8 FM. Coverage Areas: A 100km radius around Vhembe District and adjacent areas of Mopani District. 1 - 5 LSM Group Age Range: Primary age range: 16 to 35; Secondary age range: 35 and higher. Female and Male Broadcast times and days: The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. English, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and Sepedi are the broadcast languages. Students, teens, young adults, and the elderly are the target demographics. Talk 60% of the time, music 40% of the time. General Information: Most of the participants are young people; however, certain programs also attract adults. The station disseminates content using a variety of methods, including online streaming radio, Podcast, and social media sites such as Facebook and X. This station is supported by ads and donations from a wide range of partners.

- **Makhado FM**

Makhado FM is a community radio station headquartered in the Makhado Local Municipality's small town of Louis Trichardt. It broadcasts on 107.3 FM and on online livestreaming platform. The station has a few kilometers of coverage around town. It is appropriate for persons of all ages. Makhado FM is a Makhado radio station that broadcasts to Beit Bridge, Vivo, Elim, Tzaneen, Polokwane, Musina, and Thohoyandou. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The broadcast languages are English, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The demographics targeted are students, teenagers, young adults, and the elderly. 55% of the time, I talk, and 45% of the time, I listen to music. Although most listeners are young people, many programs also draw different age groups. The station distributes information through a range of channels, including social media platforms such as Facebook and X. This station survives through advertisements and donations.

3.2 Data collection plan

This researcher investigated media convergence's impact on community radio stations' livelihoods by identifying challenges, opportunities, and strategies for sustainability and adaptation in daily operations. Data was collected through face-to-face unstructured and in-depth interviews with presenters and station managers of the categorised community radio stations in the Limpopo province. Scanlan (2020) defines in-depth interviews as face-to-face interactions between researchers and informants to gain their perspectives on their lives, experiences, or events.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with station managers and presenters to get deeper into a subject and learn about participants' perspectives on a specific problem or occurrence (Osborne and Grant-Smith, 2021). In-depth interviews were used to provide valuable information about participants' perspectives, memories, values, motives, and sentiments about community radio performance (Fritz and Vandermause, 2018). The unstructured interviews provided context for the community radio station's environment. It also gave the researcher the freedom to veer from rigid questions and ask clarifying ones. This strategy enabled the interviewer to elicit more detailed responses based on the participant's responses especially when their responses were unclear (Mertens, 2018.).

The researcher was able to follow particularly interesting avenues of conversation that emerged during the interview by using unstructured interviews. The participants were treated as experts and given the opportunity to leverage their experience and knowledge. As a result, the researcher was able to relate to the participants in a subjective way on their terms rather than the researcher's terms (Roulston and Choi, 2018). This process also gave the researcher the freedom to explore areas that would be difficult to capture with a structured interview (Williamson, 2013). This was due to the standardised procedure, which makes tabulating, coding, transcribing, and analysing the responses easier. The researcher interviewed all participants, recorded the interviews on audiotape, and stored the data in the cloud. In addition, the

researcher enabled nonverbal behaviour observation and provided a rich context for explanations of why participants provided specific responses.

3.3 Data analysis plan

Wickham and Wickham (2016) define data analysis as the process of examining and analysing data to find relevant information that would help the researcher draw findings and offer recommendations. Richards and Hemphill (2018) argue that data analysis is the process of extracting essential information that is then utilised to make informed decisions. Mezmir (2020) argues that qualitative data analysis is essentially an inductive process of arranging information into categories for researchers to identify patterns. Meanwhile, Jackson, Bazeley and Bazeley (2019) state that one of the general guidelines of qualitative data analysis is to look for similarities and differences in the obtained data. Mihas (2019) supports that when evaluating qualitative data, the researcher should focus on the recognised patterns of interactions and occurrences that are typically common to what the researcher is investigating. Data was analysed thematically. The researcher recognised developing themes and analysed them to answer research objectives. Qualitative data was acquired through unstructured and in-depth interviews, which were then recorded and transcribed. The researcher organised and discussed the emerging topics from the interviews and categorised them into major themes.

4. CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research design option that was chosen for the study and provided support for it. An explanation of the data instruments, data collection, sampling, analysis, and description of interview questions are presented, along with a justification for the usage of the interpretivism paradigm. It also provided a more detailed description of the research's objectives, which were centred on examining how community radio stations might survive in different contexts of media convergence; the fourth chapter discusses an analysis of data acquired in chapter three.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to this chapter, there was a thorough discussion of the methodological description, population sampling, data analysis plan and ethical considerations, amongst others, in the previous chapter. This chapter delves into the analysis and interpretation of data gathered using qualitative research methodology. The thematic analysis concepts are being utilised to analyse the responses of participants from in-depth interviews. The findings were presented as themes derived from these interviews. Major themes were derived from the objectives of the study, and some direct quotations from the participants were used to emphasise themes.

The study involved thirty participants from three community radio stations in Limpopo, namely, Phalaborwa FM, Univen FM, and Makhado FM. Twenty-seven presenters and three station managers were interviewed to obtain insightful information from all parties involved.

2. DISCUSSION OF THEMES

The following themes were developed from the data obtained from the in-depth interviews outlined in Chapter Three. The researcher categorised emerging topics and identified key themes from the classified data. Direct quotes from interviews were utilised verbatim to validate the concepts used in this study.

THEME 1: The role of media convergence in community radio journalism

The following responses were found by the managerial staff on the significance of the role media convergence played in community radio stations. Most of the

participants used this platform as an opportunity to outline the role of media convergence in their respective managerial levels of experience and expertise. Most participants showed an in-depth understanding of the role of media convergence and explained how it affected the operation of community journalism on this question.

Participants indicated that media convergence has significantly influenced the reshaping of community radio journalism in rural areas. They also stated that one of the roles of this phenomenon was to transform how communication was received traditionally into a modern digital format. Participants also agreed in their numbers that the role of media convergence was to establish a system that could accommodate various mediums of communication to transfer information faster and without limitation. For example, participants 7 and 11, respectively, had this to say:

“Media convergence’s role is to enable the use of multiple media platforms to communicate a single message to the public.”

“It is very important to say that the role of media convergence is to incorporate traditional media with the new media. For example, allowing the radio to have various access than before.”

However, other participants argued that the role of media convergence has been to close community media organisations and introduce digital platforms. In support of this view, participant 3 pointed out that:

“Media convergence’s role is to demolish the existence of traditional media such as community radio station, newspaper, magazine and television.”

Even though other participants had a different perspective. This may be because they did not have related knowledge as others. However, the majority of participants agreed that media convergence's role is to encourage the integration of numerous platforms to transmit a single message to the audience. Therefore, these findings implied that community radio stations in Limpopo are managed by station managers who are knowledgeable and experienced in media convergence. It also demonstrates that their decision to integrate platforms with their stations was informed and deliberate. This, of course,

contradicted the widely held belief that most community radio stations were controlled by inexperienced managers. The results also demonstrated that community radio stations have professional management and were able to describe the functions of media convergence and take advantage of this development. Furthermore, this also suggested that most community radio stations in Limpopo have incorporated their stations with other platforms to improve their production.

When it comes to the presenters themselves, results found that most participants outlined the role of media convergence based on their knowledge and views on this question. Most of them agreed that the primary role of media convergence in community radio was to encourage the integration of multiple media platforms to communicate information to the public. To support this illustration, participant 2 indicated that:

"One of the convergence's roles at the community level was to develop a multimedia platform such as radio having to be accessed through texts, video and audio which becomes accessible to anyone."

Other participants indicated that the role of media convergence was mainly to foster a combination of multiple mediums to convey a single message. They further indicated that another role was to bring about a significant change in reshaping the effectiveness of community journalism. Participants believed that the role of media convergence was to introduce ways in which community media could function even outside its demarcation. For example, one illustration from participant 6 indicated that:

"Media convergence's role is to create a way in which community media can be accessible without borders. I can give you an example with community radio and newspaper, they have an online presence under the same umbrella. In other words, one outlet with multiple platforms to access it."

This indicated that community radio presenters had made strides in keeping up with the continued changing media patterns. This is because community media is often associated with falling behind on media trends. In contrast, most of the participants indicated that radio stations are evolving and are responding very well to the advent of digital media. Therefore, this made it easier for community

presenters to understand the role of media convergence. This is illustrated by views from participant 10, who indicates that:

"Media convergence's role in both community journalism and mainstream media is to bring together what we call the three C's: computing, communication, and content. This is intended to specifically transform media organisations, their services, and work practices while enabling new forms of content to emerge."

This is a further indication which suggested that journalists at these community radio stations have a clue about the phenomena, contrary to what the literature suggests. This also implied that while these journalists may have lacked resources, they are somehow aware of new media formats on the rise and have taken this challenge head-on. To support this statement, participant 5 stated that:

"Most community presenters know that media convergence's role is to bring together the collaboration of various platforms onto a single platform."

The implication of this theme is the fact that community presenters possess the necessary knowledge of the role of media convergence and what to do to take advantage of this development. This also suggested that media convergence has a positive impact in rural settings. This is even though community journalism is typically characterised by limited resources. The findings showed that the emergence of media convergence has caused a shift in the media landscape in rural Limpopo. This further implied that media convergence has not only had an impact on community journalism, as suggested by literature.

The findings revealed that media convergence has impacted the entire media space, including mainstream media, in terms of disseminating information to the public. Most participants used this question to also elaborate on the function of media convergence in the overall integration of traditional and digital media. Supporting this, participant 20 supported these assertions by indicating that:

"The main role of media convergence is to bring together traditional media and new media to function as a single media, such as your TV, radio,

or newspaper. The convergence of media has ensured that all of these platforms interact and establish a single communication method."

Consequently, this theme explained that both presenters and station managers of these community radio stations agreed that the role of media convergence brings together multiple platforms into a single channel. They also agreed that media convergence enabled simple communication with listeners across many platforms at the community media level, which was previously only available at the mainstream level.

THEME 2: Opportunities and Challenges of media convergence in the sustainability of community radio stations

The responses from station managers indicated that media convergence brought about opportunities that helped improve radio production. Most importantly, participants mentioned multiple access to disseminating information to the consumers as the greatest opportunity. For example, participant 9 stated that:

"In my knowledge and experience of media convergence, one great opportunity we have received is that we are accessible in various modes of communication. You can find our radio station on social media and other online presence such as website and online streaming."

Although most participants have identified the above as an opportunity for media convergence in their radio stations, one other participant argued that the opportunity for media convergence is the speed at which information reaches the audience and not necessarily the access through which information is received. This was submitted by participants 3, who indicated that:

"The opportunity is that it created the fasted system to supply information because it is driven by internet media."

This indicates that station managers have different perspectives on what the opportunities for media convergence are. Despite the above different opportunities. The majority of participants agreed that multiple access to information is the greatest opportunity that media convergence presented

towards sustaining community radio stations in Limpopo. Most participants maintained that extensive access to information has contributed largely to the success of integrated community radio stations. Views from participant 11 supported this by indicating that:

“Through multiple access to systems, we have been able to increase our audience engagement and to reach a larger audience in news and also in marketing.”

It is from these findings that one can make an inference that community radio stations now have access to various information than before. This was qualified by the majority of participants, who pointed out that there are various ways through which information can be accessed under the umbrella of their radio stations. In addition, this also indicates that station managers have been utilising this opportunity to improve engagement with the audience on various outlets that are integrated with their radio station.

As outlined by community presenters, media convergence has presented opportunities for community radio journalism to flourish. As a result, most participants indicated that media convergence has resulted in several access points to information through the use of various platforms integrated with radio. All participants agreed that having numerous accesses to information gave them more options to absorb information rather than to rely on a single stream. For example, participant 18 indicated that:

“Media convergence has provided numerous avenues to obtain information. Community radio now has online streaming and also uses social media to reach out to audiences.”

The above point signifies how media convergence has simplified the way audiences get information and how such information is conveyed. Consequently, this has caused a significant shift in the community media space. For instance, radio did not have online streaming, but today, listeners may readily obtain information without relying on analogue platforms.

Meanwhile, radio accessibility has been a bit of an issue for audiences who do not own a radio set and those who are unable to listen because of the limitations of its demarcation radius.

Most community radio stations in rural areas were unable to reach audiences. This created a communication breakdown and a lack of news awareness due to how it has been designed to cater to specific kilometres. This was substantiated by Participant 27, who stated that:

"Most community radio stations use digital media platforms to gain larger audiences because radio is designed to cater to specific communities as compared to when it has integrated with digital tools."

Most participants indicated that the integration of various platforms on community radio has improved listeners' access to them whenever they desire. They also highlighted that media convergence has enabled the audience to easily engage the stations without having to use a telephone during talk shows. Rather, they opt to use a variety of digital methods to engage the broadcasters at the station. To validate the above statement, participant 17 indicated that:

"As a community radio station, it is hard to reach our community members living in Johannesburg while in Limpopo. That is why we acknowledge this integration because it assists our people in accessing our programs. Anyway, society is evolving with the times, so we must adapt... even if we have some challenges here and there. We are striving to get there one day."

The results also revealed that participants recognised the importance of cross-platform collaboration at the community radio level. As a result, participants agreed that community radio has been recognised as the medium in which people must sit beneath a tree and tune into a wireless. However, convergence has made things easier for both listeners and broadcasters. Listeners no longer have to carry a radio or struggle with making calls whenever they want to engage broadcasters. In the era of media convergence, listeners could use various platforms to connect to radio anywhere. Participant 25 stated this to further support the above statement:

“Our listeners use their smart devices, such as laptops and smartphones, to listen to us. These devices are portable to enable them to move around while listening. “

Participants further indicated that media convergence has been a driving force for the internet mediums. Various platforms have taken the lead in the spreading of information. For this reason, both presenters and radio station managers agreed that media convergence has allowed the community radio station to develop new means for obtaining information. An example is the launch of podcasts in which pre-recorded content may be uploaded for subscribers to catch up on. Participants also agreed that the podcasts have helped them reach a larger audience who would not normally listen to the radio but prefer to listen to it on YouTube. Most participants further indicated that podcasts are considered internet radio as they are watched on YouTube and contain pictures rather than voice or airwaves. Participants stated that the podcasts had a positive impact on the day-to-day operations of the radio station in terms of increased listenership. This suggests that podcasting has a significant impact on how traditional radio operates in the digital age. To illustrate this, participant 10 stated that:

“It is a great opportunity that we never had because, as you can see now, people are doing podcasts, which is a different way of doing radio. It is not exactly like radio; it is a different platform that can come up, which is more digital. They even take videos; it is different from what we do on traditional radio.”

This finding shows that podcasts are utilised to assist community radio stations in developing their listeners. Therefore, participants consider podcasts to reach younger age group audiences who are likely to be on online platforms.

Furthermore, most participants indicate that they have access to internet live-streaming, which differs slightly from podcasting. This media transmits information via airwaves; however, unlike podcasts, the audience must listen to the content. Many participants further asserted that having access to online live-streaming radio boosted the number of radio listeners and that the station

benefited by addressing young people who are always on the internet and emphasising the importance of new radio in the increasing media environment.

While findings show that media convergence has enabled the audience to listen to news through online streaming on their smart devices, this access has requirements for community radio and audiences based on their cost, even though in rural areas, online streaming is still difficult to maintain due to inconsistent network access. Even though these community radio stations offer an internet streaming option that enables the audience to obtain content on a separate platform, it comes at a cost that some may not afford.

The findings also indicate that even the traditional community radio industry has discovered the need to use internet live-streaming radio to access information and to reach people. Unlike in the past, when community radio was only available on analogue channels, today, media convergence has enabled convergent radio to serve a comparable role in communication. Many participants also indicated that one of the benefits of media convergence is that it affords community radio to break news on various platforms. Community radio can break the news on its Facebook page, X, podcast, or even on its website. They could also employ the merging of many news platforms to communicate information. In this case, breaking community-based news has never been easier. Participants further stated that since the joining together of these media platforms, they have been able to reach people from all walks of life and keep them informed about current events in their community. Supporting this, participant 29 indicated that:

“We tend to break stories on any platform that is converged with our radio station. For example, we use Facebook and X to break stories. People usually obtain our breaking news on different platforms other than the radio because most people these days are online. That is why we multitask when it comes to breaking our stories. We also have community members who live far away who receive news updates through our social media pages and other digital tools.”

This implies that community radio stations in rural areas used a variety of news instruments to inform their listeners. Although this is widespread among mainstream media organisations, these findings revealed that community radio prioritises the incorporation of diverse modes of communication to offer current news to their audience. Participants further stated that if the radio fails to perform well, they utilise other connected media to break the news. This means that radio can be defined differently in the digital era than it was in the past. This is because radio now offers several channels of access to breaking news.

Employing a variety of breaking news methods, each of which is distinct and brings a higher volume of news delivery. This distinguishes community radio stations in their quest to match modern broadcasting on numerous platforms. Although most participants were able to outline the benefits presented by media convergence, the major finding in this regard is that three community radio stations have used these opportunities as a way of opening multiple access to information. Media convergence has, therefore, allowed the audience to have a choice of mediums to obtain news other than relying on traditional radio. These opportunities make the smooth running of content and an increase in the audience of community radio stations more possible.

In terms of challenges brought about by media convergence, responses from station managers indicated the most pressing challenges that community radio faces daily. All participants indicated that the major challenge they have is financial support to sustain their stations. They have indicated that due to this challenge, they find it difficult to manage these stations to the best of their abilities. Results also indicated that lack of financial support is still a major issue that keeps affecting community radio stations in rural areas. Most of the participants indicated that it is not easy to manage community radio without financial backup. A statement from Participant 15 emphasised this:

“Funds is the problem here. If community radio had enough funds, most of them would not have collapsed. Just check around only a few are still operational, but most don’t succeed because of this problem.”

“Managing community radio is not for everyone because, at some point, one has to volunteer because we mostly run out of funds. This shows you that if

station managers do not get a salary at the end of the month, what about buying resources to keep the station running? It is very tough, but we are able to integrate our radio using the existing resources; the problem is when these resources collapse.”

Most of the participants also agreed that financial constraints have been the biggest challenge that hindered progress for community radio and its managerial staff. This implied that station managers at these community radio stations were also affected by this challenge. However, this seems to have been a long-lasting dilemma for community radio stations around the world. This also shows why most community radio stations do not adopt media convergence in their stations. This was because media convergence required funding in terms of maintaining all the integrated platforms and, of course, hiring enough staff to handle the platforms effectively.

On the other hand, when it comes to challenges faced by radio journalists in these community radio stations, results show that most of the journalists shared similar challenges to the station managers. Most participants mentioned that financial challenges are central to their problems in their respective workplaces. They further pointed out that community radio experiences financial issues because it is a non-profit organisation that relies heavily on local business sponsors and advertising. Participants also stated that community radio is still struggling to maintain various elements of the industry. Although the stations have merged various media platforms, such as digital channels, to remain relevant, the service is not as successful as it should be. They further indicated that journalists do have skills, but volunteering drains their passion for converged radio. For example, participant 23 indicated that:

“The major issue is that community radio lacks financial resources. We may have some of the abilities, but without resources, they cannot be sharpened easily. Another biggest challenge is financing because, without money, we are unable to do certain things and hire certain people who are capable of taking us where we want to be as a brand, so it also becomes a challenge.”

This implies that community radio stations are still facing financial challenges to preserve media convergence in their services. Even though the media platforms have been integrated into community radio maintaining a more functional and successful operation remains a difficulty. If community radio stations were sufficiently funded, most of them would be able to handle a converged radio successfully. As such, these three community radio stations in Limpopo have various issues which are caused by a lack of financial resources. This also implies that journalists in these radio stations are overworked because the stations cannot afford to employ enough workforce. This demonstrated that financial constraints affect various areas of community media other than maintaining media convergence.

Most of the participants indicated that community radio stations are always left aside when it comes to financial support by the government as opposed to mainstream radio like SABC. Participants further stated that community radios sometimes spend the whole five years without any funding to sustain themselves. This demonstrates that financial constraint is still a major concern for community radio to easily develop and keep up with times when it is not financially resourced. Participants further indicated that the government should intervene to ensure that enough aids are established to keep community radio viable in the digital era, which necessitates additional financial assistance. This implies that the three community radio stations under review face a financial crisis. This remains the most pressing issue that hinders the success of media convergence in their radio stations. If these community radio stations were financially strengthened, chances are the findings would have been different in terms of handling the media convergence more effectively.

THEME 3: Media convergence strategies for the sustainability of community radios

Community radio stations have employed strategies to handle challenges presented by media convergence at the managerial level. Most of the participants indicated that digital media training workshops were used as a strategy to solve challenges faced during the integration by community radio stations. Although other participants argue that the media convergence strategy

involved hiring a sufficient number of experienced employees, participants also stated that having enough media-trained personnel might alleviate the issues that community radio stations encounter during media convergence. Participant 7 stated that:

“As station manager, the solution to challenges was to train the whole staff, including the managerial staff. The digital workshop has equipped staff in terms of skills needed for media convergence.”

Majority of the participants also stated that while they could not afford to organise these workshops on their own, MDDA provided such training for free. Therefore, community radio stations are not only funded but also provided media training workshops by sponsors and agencies. Most participants further indicated that they rely also on sponsors to get training. For example, participant 11 indicated that:

“These sponsors offer us media training for any developing media trends. They may not fund us in the way we prefer, but we do receive media training, especially as station managers. Hiring expert media journalists is the best strategy for dealing with issues presented by media convergence. I believe it is much better because professionals have prior knowledge of media. For it is the technique that has proven to be effective so far.”

The majority of participants agreed that providing media training has been the greatest strategy in helping station managers handle challenges brought by media convergence. This implies that station managers have undergone media training regarding media convergence and have acquired skills to manage all the challenges they encounter at the managerial and editorial levels.

The above assertion indicates that community radio stations should have journalists who regularly undergo digital media training or workshops to help prepare them for new technologies and working techniques. It also implies that most of the community radios under examination still require sufficient training to learn new ways to deal with media convergence. Digital training programs are limited in community media, and journalists rely on prior knowledge and expertise to keep the stations going. However, this suggests that participants need digital training as one of the strategies to handle media convergence and

to be equipped with the new technologies. Presenters in these community radio stations are working without the necessary skills needed for the convergence of media platforms. This has put pressure on the operations of the stations because there is a certain part of the journalistic ethical compromise associated with these many media platforms put together. Although they are using their prior knowledge to maintain the smooth running of convergence, such is never enough. Participants should be afforded professional media training other than depending on the self-teaching method.

Most participants further agreed that there is a need for adequate digital training to assist not only professional presenters with limited knowledge but also other staff members who enter the media space without suitable media qualifications but with a passion for community journalism. They maintained that digital skills are the most critical instruments for dealing with new media technology in all media organisations. Presenters and station managers are expected to be familiar with technology and adapt to new media styles as they evolve, even in the most disadvantaged communities. While one can argue that media convergence has provided the opportunity to instil new digital expertise and skills in journalists at the mainstream media level, it is notable that, when it comes to the community media level, presenters still struggle with resources, which makes it difficult to incorporate these media platforms. As a result, presenters had to self-teach themselves since the radio stations could not host workshops due to a lack of resources.

THEME 4: Practicing ethical journalism under media convergence

This area is very important to every media organisation as it outlines the founding ethical principles of journalism. The station managers maintained that all of their community radio stations practice ethical journalism and that their work meets ethical standards. For example, one response from one manager was that:

“Our community radio is one of the trusted sources of information in the community because we deliver information that is verified and balanced. I am a qualified journalist and most of the journalists that we have are media-qualified journalists from this Univen they are ethically trained.”

Most participants maintained that the managerial leadership of the stations is fit to hold office and always ensures that stories are edited and verified and that they have followed all ethical standards in all their news coverage. However, other participants argued that community radio stations mostly suffer from ethical knowledge because some staff members are not trained nor have attended media ethics training before. For example, participant 11 indicated that:

“Not every manager is media ethical trained because some of us have not done media but business. We are managing the station in that line of knowledge. We just get trained along the way in these workshops.”

While this participant shared a different view regarding managerial staff members on ethical journalism, most station managers are ethically trained and have been leading the stations with media ethical knowledge. This implies that although some community radio stations may still lack ethical standards in the delivery of their news content due to not having experienced media managers, these community radio stations seem to have managers who possess media ethical knowledge and expertise. According to the findings, most of the station managers have graduated in the media space and have full knowledge of the area. Therefore, these community radio stations may be located in rural Limpopo, where resources are scarce, but ethical standards seem to be treated as a priority. Participants indicated that they adhere to journalism ethics. However, they further agreed that the merging of various platforms into traditional radio has created a new set of media adherence which focuses on internet etiquette, and this differs slightly from what traditional radio adheres to.

While adhering to media ethics is not always easy, presenters and management have to undergo ethical training as frequently as possible. This is because these community radio stations somehow lack professional media specialists who could pass such knowledge and expertise. Although these community radio stations claimed to adhere to basic ethical standards of digital media and journalism, a lot of unethical behaviour occurs among internet users who are otherwise citizen journalists. This implies that addressing the community radio sector about media ethical adherence is still a need because there is still some unethical behaviour highlighted in the interviews with the

researcher particularly on their social media platforms. This is also a matter of concern, particularly in the convergence era, because journalists and station managers are expected to maintain strong journalism practices without fail. To validate this statement, participant 6 indicated that:

“Ethical standards are something I think all media sectors need to revisit and address because you find that media organisations use the same picture without photo credit supplier. So, you see that digital ethics standards are somehow compromised.”

The most important aspect of excellent journalistic practice is objectivity in news writing for media platforms such as radio stations, television, internet media, and print media organisations. This means that the writers of these news outlets must have the abilities, ethical awareness, and journalism competence to provide the public with balanced and factual news. Most participants indicated that they had received a short training for writing for journalism news before working for the radio stations. They also agreed that because radio is combined with other digital media, they can differentiate their writing for multiple platforms. However, the participants claimed to have received ethical training.

The findings further revealed that some participants lacked any media training or qualifications. It is quite improbable that such staff members would function without sufficient ethical training to maintain the media's credibility. To illustrate this point, participant 28 indicated that:

“Writing is a skill that requires practice. So, before joining this community radio station, I taught myself to write for several media platforms. What I will tell you is that there isn't much writing training available here, but they do try to hold writing workshops sometimes...”

This implies that, while participants do receive minor writing training to ensure good journalism practice at the community level, adequate news and ethical writing workshops are still required because writing for journalism is a process, not an event. As a result, there must be professional journalists with extensive experience in the media space to train them in writing abilities and standards since most of the journalists in these community radio stations did not study

journalism or any related studies. It is for this reason that they need training because they do not have the basics for journalism.

As indicated above, community radio has a requirement that qualifies it to be a fully-fledged radio, which includes, among others, a good managerial structure. Participants agreed with the preceding assertions that a community radio station should have a complete management structure in place to help provide quality, factual, and credible news to listeners. Participants also indicated that this is a unique instance because these radio stations continue to be short-staffed in areas such as news editors, field reporters, and producers. This implies that the community structure is still compromised for it to run a functioning radio station with full areas for operational services. All these three community radios combined still lack key departments such as HR officers and editors, and a shortage of skilled journalists, among others. This suggested that even ethical standards of journalism are still compromised and need assistance in this regard.

All the participants further indicated that a shortage of resources has caused community radio stations to compromise on editorial structure, which also reflected on the quality of good journalism. They highlighted that one of the reasons for this is that one person is likely to be overworked with responsibilities. For example, one presenter writes, edits, and broadcasts a story, which is not permitted for one individual to do so. According to journalistic standards, an article should go through editorial checks to verify if it meets the objectivity standards.

Therefore, the major findings revealed that despite having media-experienced management, these community radio stations nevertheless still struggle with ethical adherence when it comes to presenters. This implies that some journalists did not obtain media ethics training from professional media specialists. This also suggests that the practice of good journalism is still undermined because presenters are the ones who cover stories. Moreover, this indicates that theoretical training is still required for these journalists. This is because theoretical application differs from practical implementation. It also shows that media convergence may have increased the pressure to adhere to

digital ethical standards. Therefore, ethical training is still a prerequisite for these community radio stations in Limpopo.

3. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the conclusions based on a theme analysis. The findings are based on unstructured and in-depth interviews with presenters and station managers, and they are presented and classified according to the following themes: the role of media convergence in community journalism, the opportunities and challenges of media convergence in community radio, strategies for media convergence, and the practice of ethical journalism under media convergence. As will be seen in Chapter 5, the research findings addressed the objectives of the research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provided conclusions and recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. The main aim of this study was to investigate the impact of media convergence on the livelihood of community radio stations by identifying the challenges and opportunities that convergence brings to community radio stations. The study also sought to identify possible strategies and solutions that will ensure the sustainability of community radio stations and the adaptation of media convergence in their day-to-day operations. This chapter made inferences from the findings and assisted in determining whether future research is necessary to discover new phenomena and fill gaps which may be created by the current study.

2. ANSWERING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2.1 Identify the role of media convergence in community journalism

The study found that community radio stations were able to identify the role that media convergence played in community journalism. This was an important area and objective of the current study. Both radio station managers and presenters revealed that the role of media convergence was to encourage the joining of multiple platforms to communicate a single message to the public.

The results in this area indicated that although community radio stations are perceived as not having media convergence experienced journalists and managers, this view has turned out to be false. The study also found that most participants knew what the role of media convergence was and how the convergence has impacted the overall community radio in rural communities.

Therefore, the findings indicated that the role of media convergence has helped reshape community journalism and improve its lifeline. Station managers and journalists also indicated that the role of media convergence has instilled new

knowledge and sharpened news skills for digital technologies. These results indicate that station managers and journalists identified the roles of media convergence because they have adopted it and have since taken advantage of it.

2.2 Opportunities for media convergence in community radio stations

The findings indicated that these three community radio stations under evaluation, Phalaborwa FM, Univen FM, and Makhado, have realised the benefits of media convergence, which was introduced to ensure radio's long-term viability. These radio stations were able to identify opportunities as a result of merging various media platforms into one medium of communication.

As highlighted in chapter four, these three stations have identified different opportunities depending on their financial capacities. This study also found that all three community radio stations used media convergence to sustain themselves and remain relevant in the new digital age.

Participants provided various components of new technologies which were incorporated into the traditional radio settings. These findings addressed the research objectives, which sought to explore opportunities given by media convergence on community radio stations in Limpopo's deep rural areas. Although the results showed that there is still much work to be done to create additional opportunities that would not have been possible because of a lack of resources in all of the stations under investigation, the results showed a positive outcome in this regard. The study found that these three community radio stations have attained components of media convergence, and all of the variables ascribed as themes in the prospects of media convergence have been explained clearly.

2.3 Exploring challenges of media convergence in community radio

The study sought to identify the obstacles that prevent these radio stations from playing their roles under media convergence. This objective was met by the study; nonetheless, the findings indicated that these radio stations lack adequate funding which may have ordinarily made converged radio more

successful to their listeners. The study results also found that this lack of financial assistance has affected the flow of communication and engagement among audiences. Further, the study found that financial instability in maintaining their internet presence has caused integrated media platforms to discontinue in some areas.

The results indicated that financial challenges can only be addressed when community radio stations are funded sufficiently. The study also found that since these challenges are resourcefully based and not capacity issues, the community radio stations can manage convergence if funding is given adequately. Presenters and station managers further disclosed that, while they have discovered opportunities to sustain community radio, there are still places where they are challenged and unable to operate effectively.

The findings also revealed that, while there are challenges impeding the performance of radio services under media convergence, these radio stations have identified solutions and strategies that are being employed to solve these difficulties. However, the results from the themes and sub-themes mentioned in the preceding chapter four suggested that these three community radio stations still have work to do to properly address these problems and operate as a well-functioning and effective convergence radio in Limpopo's rural areas.

2.4 To identify Strategies for dealing with challenges of media convergence by community radio stations.

The study sought to identify and determine mechanisms which these radio stations employ when faced with challenges during media convergence. The findings revealed that although these three community radio stations have strategies for addressing challenges presented by media convergence, participants revealed that digital media training was the best strategy to use to ensure that the stations manage media convergence well. The results further revealed that digital media training, hiring adequate staff members, and financial support could be the greatest method in helping community radio during media convergence.

The findings revealed that financial support is the biggest need for community radio, as it can assist in training staff members on media convergence. The results further indicate that when digital media training is provided, community radio would be able to generate income through media convergence. Thus, keeping challenges to a limit as stations would be able to sustain every future media trend. The research also revealed that the techniques used by these community radio stations to deal with media convergence are infinite because of a lack of resources to facilitate an effective converged radio. The results also helped achieve the research objectives as part of evaluating the strategies which community radio stations can use to sustain themselves in the midst of the convergence of media.

The findings also indicate that the stations are developing ways to withstand the pressure of new technologies brought by media integration in the traditional radio setting. Although some participants may have viewed the techniques as ineffective in addressing the challenges of community radio during the convergence era, based on these findings, media digital training is viewed as a solution that can improve community radio's ability to handle media convergence now and in the future.

2.5 The practice of ethical journalism under media convergence

The results of this study revealed that ethical journalism is being prioritised in community radio stations. The study found that station managers ensure that stories are fact-checked, verified and balanced prior to being aired in order to avoid legal penalties which may lead to reputational damage. Station managers indicated that their staff members undergo ethical training annually to make sure community journalism is respected and remains a trusted source of information by the community.

The results also revealed that even though there is still some perception that community radio stations are run by managers who are unethically trained, this trend was slowly diminishing. The study further found that these stations have qualified managers who insist on training their journalists to continually remain ethical and professional in every facet of their reporting and coverage of news.

Meanwhile, the study also found that there is still a need for more staff members who are qualified in media training but need to be trained in ethical journalism. The results also indicated that due to lack of funding, there are a lot of qualified staff who are absorbed by other mainstream media houses such as the SABC. As a result, there was always a void left by this attrition, and this means that managers must continually preach the concept of ethical journalism to every new crop of journalists. As such, the findings revealed that the unqualified staff members are compromising the quality of ethical journalism in Limpopo.

The study further found that a shortage of qualified staff members makes it difficult for them to operate. As a result, one staff member tends to perform various duties, including making editorial decisions. The study also revealed that these community radio stations lack editors, and station managers mostly act as editors. The researcher found that station managers have to deal with a lot of administrative work, which leaves journalists with no choice but to edit their work. Although participants indicated that they follow ethical journalism, the results revealed that there is still room for improvement in terms of ensuring that ethical journalism is maintained. For example, presenters should not be permitted to edit their own stories, irrespective of how qualified they are. This may lead to risking the quality of good journalism. Although, station managers serve as the editors for the presenters, however, chances are the station managers have a lot of work to do which may be compromised.

The study found that these community radio stations do not have editorial teams to perform their duties. Therefore, these results suggest that community radio stations should have a full flesh editorial team that could ensure the good practice of journalism.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, it is vital to note that the majority of participants confirmed that these radio stations implemented media convergence in their various areas throughout Limpopo. The main findings and results can be summarised as follows:

- There was an adaptation of media convergence in all these three community radio stations.

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- Opportunities and challenges of media convergence have been discovered, and these community radio stations managed to utilise these opportunities and attempted to address the financial challenges but still struggling.
 - There was a shortage of staff members at these stations to be able to manage the pressure that came with integrated media platforms.
 - These community radio stations earned a portion of their revenue from online advertising channels such as Facebook, X, internet radio streaming, and websites. This showed that media convergence has also been used as a revenue stream by these stations.
 - These community radio stations have a shortage of experienced journalists. Instead, they rely on volunteers with limited media experience.
 - These radio stations lacked enough funding to sustain themselves in digital skill development, staff reimbursement, and operational resources.
 - There is still a need for media-experienced station managers in community radio stations. Among the three radio stations, one of the managers lacks media managerial efficiency.
 - Journalists at these radio stations still struggle with media convergence due to an increased workload and resource shortages.
 - There was still a need to improve ethical journalism. These stations do not have an editorial team, which increases the risk of bad journalism. For example, there are no editors; journalists perform all duties.
 - The study discovered and helped dispel the widely believed perception that community radio stations in rural areas do not use media convergence.
 - There are no news reporters and editors in these community radio stations, instead, the presenters and station managers serves as reporters and editors to keep the stations operational.

4. LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The researcher acknowledges the following research limitations:

- **Lack of previous studies on the topic**

The scarcity of previous studies on media convergence regarding community radio stations in rural areas has limited the researcher's ability to compare the notion of media convergence with a large number of community radio stations. As a result, the researcher had to rely on a limited number of case studies to form study conclusions. However, if there had been sufficient existing relevant research on this area, the study would have discovered a new research typology and potentially enabled the study to discover new gaps in the literature review.

- **Language barriers - Fluency in the English language**

The study results were limited due to the inability of some of the participants who could not speak English well. This required the researcher to explain and interpret each question during the interviews. The outcomes of this study would have been different if all of the participants had been able to speak and understand English well without the assistance of a researcher. This also caused the researcher to speak many different languages during the interpretation of interview questions, including Nguni, Tshivenda, and Sepedi, most of which the researcher is not fluent in.

- **Lack of financial resources to conduct this study**

The study results were limited due to a lack of financial support to gather as much information as possible because the researcher was an unemployed student. This means that the researcher was not as flexible to travel to different places due to financial constraints.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While the results of the study revealed the importance of integrating modern technologies to sustain the community-based radio stations, especially in the rural areas, more aspects regarding the management of these community radio stations could be explored more, by conducting a more broad study that will include all community radio stations in South Africa. Furthermore, more studies could be conducted with regard to other strategic issues such as the inclusion of mandatory regulatory measures to all South African community radio stations.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STATION MANAGERS

1. Does media convergence have an impact on community radio stations?
2. How do you manage media convergence's effects?
3. What is the key role of media convergence in community radio?
4. What are the successes of media convergence thus far?
5. What are the potential challenges of media convergence at your managerial level?
6. Have you received prior training in media convergence before?
7. What strategies have your station used to manage convergence?
8. How has media convergence influenced community journalism?
9. In the context of media convergence, how is ethical journalism at your station?
10. How do you make sure that media ethics are upheld at your station?
11. In your opinion, has media convergence resulted in any significant change in your community journalism?
12. What is your station's main focus areas for change after media convergence?
13. How has the new coverage transformed, and do you think it remains relevant to the target market?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR JOURNALISTS

1. What do you understand by the word media convergence?
2. What is the role of media convergence in journalism?
3. What are the challenges facing community radio during media convergence?
4. In your opinion, what are the challenges of media convergence in community radio?
5. What mechanism do you employ to address these challenges?
6. Why do you think these strategies would work for the community radio sector?
7. How are they going to be employed to effectively improve community radio?
9. In your opinion, what is the impact of media convergence?
10. Why do you think the mentioned impacts are brought by media convergence?
11. What is the difference between media convergence and digital media?
12. What is the level of ethical journalism practice in your community radio?
13. How do you identify good and bad unethical journalism practice?
14. How does your community radio handle the unethical practices of journalism?
15. Does your community radio have a complete managerial structure to manage ethical journalism?
16. Does your community radio station offer media convergence training?