NEWSROOM GATEKEEPING: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER EDITORS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

BY

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Contents

DECLARATION

I Charlotte Johanna Mahlangu hereby declare that the study titled **"NEWSROOM GATEKEEPING*:* PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER EDITORS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM"** which I hereby submit to the University of Limpopo in fulfilment of the Masters of Arts in Media Studies has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work and all the sources used have been acknowledged by means of complete references,

Signature: Date:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to almighty God, for His unfailing love, strength and mercy. I am grateful to you for seeing me through this academic journey. Many times I wanted to quit but you held me together.

To my children, Khayelihle Reginald and Bandile Othello Masina, your presence in my life motivates me to pursue greater heights in order to pave a way for you.

My brother, Thabang Tolie Myako Mashiloane, for your support. May God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

Citizen journalism has the potential to enhance the state of community newspapers. The emergence of digital media brought about the concept of citizen journalism, allowing ordinary citizens to practice journalism similar to professional journalism. The resultant high volume of news information from ordinary citizens, despite its benefits, leaves editors grappling with what enters the news gate. This study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of editors of community newspapers in Limpopo province of South Africa towards integrating citizen journalism into their daily journalism practices. This qualitative study used interview guide for data collection from a total of six (7) community newspaper editors in the province. The findings of the study indicate that most editors of community newspapers have positive perceptions towards citizen journalism. They are of the view that it could contribute positively towards their organisations particularly in strengthening democratic participation as a corner stone of community media, increasing the circulation of their newspapers, and assisting their communities to strive and strengthen their relationship with the outside world. However, they are not keen to incorporate citizen journalism in their professional practices. Their expressed concerns are lack of ethics and other basic journalistic skills in citizen journalism and the possibility of encumbering the process of news gatekeeping. However, due to many positive impacts of citizen journalism, editors should endeavour to find ways to incorporate citizen journalism into their organisations.

Keywords**:** Gatekeeping, citizen journalism, community newspapers, community participation, news editors

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This research project focuses on how editors in Limpopo community newspapers perceive the concept of citizen journalism. The emergence of digital media brought about the concept of citizen journalism, allowing ordinary citizens to practice journalism similar to professional journalism. This results into high volume of news information from ordinary citizens. The Disruptive Innovation theory clearly explains that new technology systems disrupt traditional operations. In this context, citizen journalism which came as a result of digital media allows ordinary citizen to practice professional journalism without applying journalistic principles. The lack of regulation from the new technology operation makes it more appealing to the users. Moreover, the concept of citizen journalism poses a challenge towards the process of gatekeeping. Editors find themselves no longer having the power to control what enters the gate, because citizens are given the privilege to publish what seems to be newsworthy through social media platforms even writing their stories and submitting them to news organization to be published. The specific objectives of the study were to: investigate the perceptions that editors of Limpopo based community newspapers have towards citizen journalism, the role of citizen journalism in Limpopo community newspapers and the application of gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content in Limpopo based community newspaper.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A qualitative study was applied. Face to face interviews were conducted. Seven editors of community newspapers based in Polokwane, Vhenda, Tzaneen, Lephalale, and Bela were selected through purposive sampling technique, and were interviewed from February to May 2018, patterning to their perceptions towards citizen journalism. An interview guide was used containing open-ended questions to collect data. Their responses were transcribed and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The data obtained were coded based on the research variables, and sub-variables.

RESULTS

EDITORS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Despite their concerns about the lack of ethical practice from citizen journalism, editors in this study believe that citizen journalism can be an effective tool that will strengthen the community media principles such as democratic participation. They account to this opinion by stating that ordinary citizens play a role in gathering and disseminating their own stories. Also, citizen journalism will increase readership, in assisting their communities to strive and increase their level of media literacy. Moreover, they state that citizen journalism ignites the passion for citizens to pursue journalism as a profession, particularly young people, because young people are leading audiences in participating in technological civil engagement operations. However, they state that because citizen journalism lacks professional standards as ethical guidelines, it cannot be a breeding ground for credible and professional journalism. Furthermore, they state that the perverseness of citizen journalism will not lead to the replace professional journalism, because professional journalism is grounded on principles and credibility unlike citizen journalism. On the other hand, they believe that both citizen and professional journalism can operate cohesively in order to produce credible and relevant journalism.

THE ROLE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF LIMPOPO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AND THOSE OF THE COMMUNITY

According to the editors in this study citizen journalism has no effective role towards enhancing profit in their organization, because they believe that citizens through citizen journalism only write articles and disseminate stories. This is not connected to advertising. However, they believe that citizen journalism will play an effective role in creating a platform and opportunity for marginalized community members such as elderly people, gays and lesbians to voice out their challenges. This will help in address the existing

stereotypes towards them. However, the editors believe that citizen journalism will help to increase the quality of their news content because citizens are in a good position to capture events as they unfold. Therefore, including their content in their news publications will enable their organization to report current news. Furthermore, editors are of the view that citizen journalism will meet informational needs of the community because they are playing a leading role in creating and distributing their own stories.

THE APPLICATION OF GATEKEEPING TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Few editors in this study incorporate citizen journalism in their news production. They outline challenges they encounter with news contents from citizen journalists such as lack of journalistic writing style, lack of journalism ethical adherence and lack of truthfulness. Moreover, they state that stories with influence, have the potential to create awareness of important developments in their communities, and align with their organizational standards from citizens get published in their newspapers. The majority of editors who do not incorporate citizen journalism state that they will incorporate citizen journalism only if they can come up with strategies that will effectively distinguish the role of professional and citizen journalism. Similar, the few editors who incorporate citizen journalism also indicate that effective and robust incorporation of citizen journalism needs thorough strategies.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is one of the important commodities within a society. As Moore (1990), state that "…information now plays an increasingly important part in economic, social, cultural and political life". Therefore, for members of the society to effectively function and be civil society members they need to know about what is happening in their society. Well informed citizens are likely to be patriots (Gritzalis, Brunnstein and Blerleur: 2007:82). Media plays an important role as a source of information to a vast of people. Individuals' media use is a function of a deliberate information-seeking strategy (Loveless,2007). Chiefly, currently media platforms such social media and technological developments are shifting the roles of information dissemination between audiences, journalists and media organisation. Previously, audiences were deemed as unresponsive receivers of media messages, but technological advancement changed the situation. The invention of internet and its gadgets enabled the public to express their voices publicly (Riaz, 2011). The process of audiences becoming active collectors and disseminators of news content is called citizen journalism (Miller-Carpenter, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how community newspapers in Limpopo province respond and cope with the concept citizen journalism.

The advocacy role of the media in South Africa dates back before democracy. Community newspapers played a significant role during apartheid by providing a platform for black people despite strong restrictions. Publications such as *Grassroots, Saamstaan and Iliswe Lase Rini* encouraged black and coloured people to voice out their stories within their communities (Scher, 2009:52). In the post-apartheid era, there was a significant growth in community newspapers particularly in 1999. Furthermore, De beer (1998:100-103) outlines trends that   surrounded community newspapers after the apartheid era:

- Ownership

In 1996 there were only four publishing groups (Avusa, Naspers, Independent News and Media). Later, this number increased to five after the introduction of New African Investment Limited (NAIL). However, this development brought about the concentration

of the media into few hands. The concept of concentration came into scrutiny because there was a public outcry that it hindered diversity and pluralism. Hence, a step towards opening the industry for competing voices was taken, resulting in the provision of variety of information in the South African community media sector.

- Ethnicity and language

During the oppressive era, there was a separation between English and Afrikaans press which was bridged by professional journalism, as the state of community newspaper improved. Publications such as: *Imvo Zabantsundu, UmAfrika* and *Ezase* were introduced and these played a significant role in objecting to the limitation of the freedom of the press particularly, in language and culture.

- The Steyn Commission

Its main task was to investigate whether media served the interests of community members. Its findings revealed that communities were being deprived the right for the fulfillment of informational needs. However, its findings were rejected. Instead, means of sustainability were established, advertising was one of them it performed as a source of revenue (De beer, 1998:92-98). Later, there was more growth in community newspapers. According to the AIP (Association of Independent Publishers) there were 245 community newspapers in their database.

According to Sikiti (2009), currently most community newspapers in South African are under-funded, under-equipped and lack vision and professionalism. Furthermore, Vivian (2003: 94) state that, some rural weekly newspapers are experiencing challenges because of the low agriculture production that is affecting the economy. Moreover, Mudgal, (2011), state that another phenomenon that is escalating challenges in community newspapers is citizen journalism. In their opinion, Anderson, Ogola and Williams (2014), state that citizen journalism brings difficulties towards community newspapers in terms of sustainability. Community newspapers need to be sustained because it is mostly funded by such enterprises. Therefore, since community newspapers struggle with sustainability, they cannot sustain citizen journalism. A study in India

indicates that community newspapers are being overshadowed by citizen journalism initiatives. This may be the case in some other countries as well. On the contrary, Sutcliffe (2016), argues that community newspapers depend on citizen journalists for survival. This means that citizen journalism can help community newspapers in their current challenges.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Media landscape and roles are changing in today's digital society. The process of gathering and disseminating news no longer relies solemnly on the traditional journalist. This is evident through citizen journalism, a new phenomenon that allows ordinary citizens to start the process of reporting events, similarly to professional journalism. The citizens' participation in journalism is not regulated by any journalistic guidelines (Banda, 2010). This is shaking up newspapers' traditional structure. It is not only altering the life cycle of news production, but also presenting new challenges to journalistic norms and values (Singer, 2007, cited in Lewis, Kaufhold and Lasorsa, 2010). Gatekeeping is one of the practices that is affected by citizen journalism. Traditionally, through gatekeeping media had the influence towards their audiences by shaping the idea of news. This is possible through the process of selecting newsworthy stories among others that add news value to the public and meet the newsworthy standards (Shabir, Safdar, Imran and Mumtaz, 2015). The accessibility of multiple news channels poses a challenge for news editors to keep control of the gates and sieve stories for publication. Instead, they watch what information passes through the gates, changing gatekeeping to gate watching (Bruns, 2011). Hence, the existence of online communication is changing the traditional function of gatekeeping (Channel, 2010). Moreover, studies have noted that citizen journalists such as webloggers are pushing against the norms of journalism (Ali, 2013). For Ward (2016), the questions are:

> "…whether newsrooms should keep all types of journalists to the
> same editorial standards? For example, should citizen journalists be
> required to be balanced and impartial? Can journalists who operate
> a newsroom's web site report on a story before their colleagues, the

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print reporters? In other words, should print reporters be held to a higher standard of pre-publication verification?"

Despite the pervasiveness of citizen journalism, it is still challenging for newsrooms to incorporate and embrace it because user-generated content is often biased, lacks journalistic background and has high level of inaccuracy (Culbertson, 2012:191). Therefore, citizen journalism as a journalistic practice seems to tamper with the fundamentals of professional journalism and recognised traditional news culture.

According to Hanson (2005: 10), advanced mediums utilised to convey a message to a large group of people is referred to as mass media. During the development of mass media, audiences were dependent and passive towards it (Bryant and Zillmann, 1986). However, Livesey (2011) argues that we are in an era where there is a fine line between mass media and non-mass media. This indicates that it is no longer about the media distributing media content to inactive multitudes, it is about the masses disseminating media messages to one another, even to the media.

Gatekeeping is one of the ways that ensure media maintains its power in controlling audience's perceptions and it was more effective during early technological developments. Through gatekeeping process, unwanted and controversial information is removed which helps to control the society and navigate them towards what is regarded as a true meaning of news (Shabir, Safdar, Imran and Mumtaz, 2015). According to Barzilai-Nahon (2009), gatekeeping process was established by Kurt Lewin in 1947. He observed the selection of food that makes it to the dinner table. He applied this process in the selection of news items to the public.

During the mid-1950s news were perceived as produced by mass media and disseminated to the public (Fourie, 2008: 237). According to Scher (2009: 53), throughout the gatekeeping process, when journalists submit their stories, 40 percent is changed by the editor, 60 percent is changed by a reporter. Also, Vivian (2003; 265) provides Wilbur Schramm's explanation of gatekeeping. He suggests that there are three gatekeepers;

- The source; who decides which part of the event to pass on to the journalist by selectively noticing some features and ignoring others
- The journalist; who communicates with the source, decides which facts to include and excludes
- The editor; has the choice to remove or add on the provided facts

Therefore, gatekeeping during early development of media was a prevalent practice that shaped the concept of news in the audience's mind. The media had the power to select stories that will be consumed by the public. The selection of news among others made audiences to believe that there are no other news items besides the ones provided by the media through newspapers, television and radio.

Journalism is reckoned as a tool used to inform the community about its identity in a diversified manner (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey and Richardson, 2005:129). Journalists apply their skills in joining news items, distinguishing between facts and non-facts and handle changeable events (Curran and Gurevitch, 2005: 221). However, there is a new type of journalism that came as a result of digital invention called Citizen Journalism. It is the type of journalism in which audiences make their own news content instead of waiting to be provided by the traditional media outlets (Dare, 2011). According to Glaser (2006), the outstanding feature of citizen journalism is the primary role that audiences play in the selection, collection and dissemination of news. This gives professional journalists a secondary role in the process of news making.

Overall, gatekeeping, community newspapers and professional journalism were the ultimate key role players in influencing audiences on what is news and what is not news at a developing stage of mass media technology. Presently, new concept citizen journalism allows media audience to shape the concept of news. This leaves a critical question of what are editors and journalists supposed to gate keep since they share similar roles with audiences. Therefore, there is a need to probe how editors of community newspapers deal with the burgeoning of citizen journalism.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Citizen journalists are not aware of journalistic ethics and professionalism. Yet, in professional journalism, these ethics and professionalism are considered as the fundamentals of good journalism. Clearly, there is conflict between these two types of journalism.

In this era of advancing technological developments, editors no longer have power to control what enters the news gates. Audiences break boundaries by actively participating in collecting, picking and distributing news. As a result, the process of gatekeeping is altered. Receiving news content from a professional journalist who understands and applies journalistic procedures makes the process of gatekeeping much easier. However, getting news content from an ordinary citizen who has no professional journalistic background causes challenges for editors.

Sustainability is a major challenge within community newspapers. Hence, it is still difficult for these newspapers to integrate citizen journalism into their businesses despite its popularity. Likewise, citizen journalism demands sustainability because some citizen journalists require motivation in a form of remunerations and the work overload for editors increases and intensifies when editing citizen journalism content. Therefore, such situations escalate business challenges faced by community newspapers. Also, it tends to outshine community newspapers in some places. Consequently, community newspapers may become irrelevant in such places, leading them to shut down. Therefore, it is important to investigate how editors from community newspapers perceive and incorporate citizen journalism content into their news production. This will help community newspapers to come up with strategies of integrating citizen journalism into their businesses.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of community newspaper editors towards incorporating Citizen Journalism in their news production.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

- To explore the perceptions of editors of community newspapers in Limpopo Province towards citizen journalism.

- To Find out how editors of community newspapers in Limpopo Province practise gatekeeping with user-generated content.

- To examine the role of citizen journalism in community newspapers in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The community newspaper industry is expected to embrace new technological innovations that are necessary for its continuity in the present technologically fast-paced society. This study will help to find out the extent to which editors of community newspapers in Limpopo Province are incorporating new media technologies in their professional practices, and by extension, the level of viability and sustainability of the newspapers. In addition, it will help community newspapers in Limpopo to come up with effective strategies for incorporating citizen journalism content in their news production. Since there is a high cell phone and internet penetration in South Africa (Calandra, Stork and Gilluad, 2013), this will help to improve their popularity in the already digitalized environment in which they operate. Furthermore, the study will add to the existing body of knowledge by focusing on the impact of citizen journalism on the gatekeeping process in community newspapers, since the majority of studies conducted in this area focused on the mainstream level.

1.5 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are different types of citizen journalists; among them are citizens who add opinions and photos to the articles written by professional journalists. Also, there are those who contribute their expertise towards draft articles written by professional journalists. This study focused on citizens who submit their news content to community newspapers with the intention of getting it published. Editors were selected for this study because they practice gatekeeping daily. Hence, they have more experience than journalists. Community newspapers were the universal population of this study.

1.6 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study is motivated by the necessity to find out how the concept of citizen journalism is perceived and incorporated by the editors of community newspapers in Limpopo Province. Newsroom gatekeeping has played a key role in creating news and directing audiences towards the definition of news. Part of the gatekeeping process involves editing news content; ensuring that there are no grammatical errors and that there is ethical adherence in the gathering of news. Despite the fact that journalists are expected to adhere to certain journalistic ethics when collecting and writing their stories, editors still double check the stories to ensure conformity to ethical considerations. This indicates that gatekeeping ensures quality news and contributes towards enhancing the image of a news organization.

Citizen journalism allows ordinary citizens to accumulate, write and disseminate news like professional journalists. However, there are different kinds of citizen journalism. This study focuses on citizen journalists who write and submit their stories to newspaper houses with the aim of getting them published. Hence, there is a need to investigate how editors practice gatekeeping with the content they receive from citizens with no journalistic skills and journalistic ethics. Citizen journalists have the ability to get stories fast and frequently. This will be an advantage in increasing news content in community newspapers. Furthermore, the concept of citizen journalism promotes democratic

participation and news content that reflects social diversity. However, citizen journalists lack journalistic knowledge which is an important aspect in journalism. Hence, with its advantages and disadvantages citizen journalism is a notion that cannot be overlooked because it affects the fundamentals of professional journalism such as gatekeeping.

1.7 AREA OF STUDY

The study focused on exploring the existing citizen journalism against gatekeeping in Limpopo community newspaper newsrooms. Even though the Province has five districts namely: Capricorn, Vhembe, Waterberg, Mopani and Sekhukhune,the study focused only on four districts (Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe district). Areas in the selected districts are: Polokwane, Lephalale, Thohoyandou, Phalaborwa, Lebowakgomo, Botlokwa, Tzaneen, Zebediel, Belabela, Mokopane and Louis Trichard.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

A formal request in the form of a letter was sent to editors of various community newspapers in four districts of Limpopo Province (Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe) for interviews for data collection purposes. The researcher ensured that she abides by the ethics of scientific research by ensuring that the study process is based on truthfulness. The participants' identities were protected through anonymous participation in the process. Their involvement in this study was on a voluntary basis and strictly based on their individual consent.

1.9 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1.9.1 Gatekeeping**:** Is a process where news items are channeled and selected among others to control the manner in which news is deemed (Fourie, 2008:16).

1.9.2 Journalists**:** An individual who has acquired skills for collecting and broadcasting information (Deuze, 2005:121).

1.9.3 Newsroom**:** It is a place where journalists cooperate to craft media content for distribution (Degeler, 2013:33).

1.9.4 Editor**:** An individual who instructs written information for publication or broadcasting (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006:317).

1.9.5 Journalistic ethics**:** "A practical activity that seeks reasons to questions on how journalists to act" (Steele and Barney: 2007:23).

1.9.6 Community Newspaper**:** Minute publication in scope and in circulation which is based in a limited area (Lauterer, 2006:16).

1.9.7 Mass Media**:** "Media which have their proper program and constitute their own audience" (Meulemann and Hagenah, 2009:12).

1.9.8 Citizen journalism**:** Stories created by laymen rather than experts (Ornebring, 2013:45).

1.10 RESEARCH CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: **Problem in Perspective**

This chapter entails the overall introduction to the study, background, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, rationale of the study, area of the study, ethical considerations and definition of key terms.

Chapter Two: **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

This chapter contains literature reviewed form internet sources, books and journal articles. The literature reviewed is in line with citizen journalism in community newspapers, gatekeeping in relation with citizen journalism and the perceptions of editors concerning the concept of citizen journalism. Also, the chapter provides a theoretical framework which provides a supporting perspective towards the identified research problem.

Chapter Three: **Research Methodology**

Chapter three provides explanation of how the research was undertaken, by outlining the research method and design (qualitative), study population, profile of sampled community newspapers, area of study, sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data analysis, data interpretation and quality criteria.

Chapter Four: **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This chapter provides the presentation and analysis of data generated from an interview guide, which contained questions related to editors'

perceptions towards citizen journalism, the role of citizen journalism in community newspapers and the application of gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content.

Chapter Five: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

This last chapter provides the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the overall study based on research findings.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the introduction and background to the study which entailed an overview of the concept of media, newspapers and gatekeeping and how they are affected by the concept of citizen journalism. Moreover, the chapter was inclusive of the purpose, rationale, significance and the scope of the study. Therefore, there is hope that this study will contribute significantly towards filling the academic gap in this area of study, since there are few studies that researched about the perceptions and attitudes of community newspaper editors towards citizen journalism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETHICHAL FRAMEWOK

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter dealt with literature review and theoretical framework of the thesis. The literature review provided issues that concerns citizen journalism in community newspapers particularly on gatekeeping. Moreover, the chapter unpacked the concepts of citizen journalism, its characteristics, roles and ethics. Apart from this, the state of newsroom before and in the current digital era and the future of both professional and citizen journalism was discussed. Since citizen journalism came as a result of digital technology, this chapter also, provides ideas of how community newspapers approach the concept of citizen journalism and how community newsrooms have adapted to accommodate technological advancements. Moreover, citizen journalism and broadcasting media were deliberated. These concepts were discussed because they convey knowledge and ideas that have been established on the topic, objectives and aim of the study. In addition, they provide a clear and broader perspective of the study.

2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNALISM

There are several aspects that shaped the concept of South African journalism. The apartheid era amongst others marked the significant genesis of journalism in South Africa, which was strongly characterized by government control. After the fall of apartheid era means were implemented to bring ownership of the media to the community.

The digital influence is also a contributor towards the current state of South African journalism. Fourie (2010), state that technology amongst other social factors greatly influences the concept of journalism. As a result, policies are still debated in order to ensure access to media and telecommunication service. However, Fourie (2010) further notes that the impact of technological development poses huge challenges towards journalism ethics and operations.

2.2 THE ROLE OF APARTHEID ERA IN SHAPING SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNALISM

According to Sites at Penn State (2014), journalists in South Africa during the oppressive era had ensured that they don't temper with government's law which among them stated that there should be no news report that condemns the state. Failure to adhere to this rule led to shutdown of newspaper organization. Moreover, the English Press also played an opposing role against the apartheid media laws. Hence, it formed an alliance which exposed the wrong doings of the government. "South Africa had its own Watergate – journalists uncovering a government scandal which brought down the Prime Minister.

> "It was not until the Township Uprisings of 1984 that these unspoken journalists finally gained the momentum to challenge the newspapers. Young journalists from all backgrounds fought verbal wars with these one-minded newspaper publishers, finding massive loopholes in the rushed restriction laws passed by the National Party" (*Sites at Penn State*, 2014).

Also as mentioned, all English language newspapers were anti-apartheid" **(**Alhadeff, 2018). The *Guardian* newspaper contributed towards opposing unfair media laws practiced by the government by introducing alternative press. This concept led to the incarceration enforced outcast of journalists such as Ruth First and Photojournalists Peter Magubane among others (Collins, 2004).

Alhadeff (2018), outlines that the apartheid government was consistently banning back people such as Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela from appearing in the media. This meant that journalists were supposed to overlook any events that included banned individuals. "If the journalist saw bodies of slain soldiers or police officers, he or she could not report that information until it came from official sources" *(Sites at Penn State*, 2014). In terms of journalism research during the apartheid era, De beer (2008), outlines that most of the research conducted during this era were embodied by challenging approach such as debates about the issues of race and societal labels.

Therefore, this indicates that journalism during the oppressive era was dominated by stories that supported the government. However, despite strict laws, censorship and pressure to be a mouthpiece for the government, journalism and media strived in ensuring fair media through alternative media during the apartheid era. This shows that the media played a significant role in advocating social, political and economic justice. Journalists and other media practitioners were not passive towards authoritarian laws but played a strong opposing role towards the apartheid system.

2.3 JOURNALISM IN A DEMOCRATIC ERA

According to Berger (1999), despite attempts to balance racial injustice within journalists, white male journalists consistently headed newsrooms. In contrasts, Wisserman (2010), argues that there was a significant attempt to break racial and gender injustice amongst journalists. However, the measure of success was dawdling compared to broadcasting. As South Africa moved towards democracy, the media was in the forefront in capturing events that emerged as a signifier of democracy. For example, the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the first democratic election in 1994. Duncan (2000), argues that "even though the media contributed to peaceful first election, it was biased in its representation of political choices to South African voters, which could be attributed to the fact that media content remained largely characterized by white values". This means that despite democracy, the media and journalists were still subjected to racial injustice and their reporting was still influenced by white supremacy.

Unethical reporting, independency, brutality towards journalists and in accessibility of media were the major issues within the media arena as democracy deepened in South Africa. The media in general, was expected to play a major role towards enforcing democratic values. Hence, it was regarded as the fourth estate role, meaning its power to contribute towards democracy was recognized. As Wesserma (2010), terms the role of the media in the democratic era as "a site and agent of change". This meant that journalists were expected to report fair unbiased news about the government and act as a watchdog. However, journalists were accused of reporting issues unethically,

particularly issues concerning government officials (Daniel, 2010). Moreover, Daniel (2010), state that government officials such as the former President Jacob Zuma and former Communication Minister Siphiwe Nyanda among others accused journalists of reporting unethically. Therefore, the relationship between the media and the new government has been strained and characterized by clashes over respective perceptions of their role in transforming post-apartheid society (ibid).

Normative theories were introduced and emphasized in South African media as guide to the media on how to transit from authoritarian government to libertarian government. According to Skerdal (2001), the normative theories approaches were suggested in order to mediate the conflicting role and needs of the government and the media, immediately after the apartheid era. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1963), clearly outline the normative theories as: Authoritarian theory, the Libertarian theory, the Soviet theory and the Social responsibility theory as the main model of the press. Other models were later introduced such as the: development model and the democratic-participant model (ibid). Moreover, Skjerdal (2001), state that the outstanding theories that were highly relevant to remedy the situation between the press and the government where Libertarian and social responsibility theory.

> "It is frequently reported that the Western private media are libertarian, meaning that they enjoy full independence from the government. This model is therefore also called the free press model. The model rests on the idea that each individual should be free to publish anything he or she likes, as long it does not infringe on the freedom of others. Its history is usually traced back to 17th century philosopher John Milton, who asserted that competition between choices would eventually bring about the best possible order, both for the individual and society at large. This 'free will' principle applies to the press as well. A full grown libertarian system encourages the press to challenge official government policies" (Skerdal 2001).

Therefore, in the context of South African media. This means that the media should objectively depict every state of the country despite its implications, particularly towards the government. However, while practicing this, there should be acknowledgement of the responsibility that is enshrined within the Constitution.

McQuail (1994), stipulates that Social responsibility theory highlights that the media has responsibilities towards the society. This means that the media should report news honestly, correctly, impartially and unbiased. Moreover, the government has the right to intervene if the media does not fulfil its social responsibility role. In the South African context this meant that journalists should refrain from reporting sensationalized news. However, should support the development of democracy.

According to Blankenberg (1999), for journalism to be able to function in an effective ethical framework. Ubuntu value could be a useful practice for the development and adaptation of journalism towards democracy. Moreover, Hyde-clarke (2011), contributes by stating that journalists should do away with dramatic reporting and report issues of race with a display of peace and not adding to the racial segregation. The issue of ethics and journalists in a long run became a concern. Hence, there was a call for media and journalists to regulate itself. As a result, regulatory bodies such as the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF), which was formed in 1996 with an aim to address issues of media. accessibility of This was inspired after it was viewed that the media is only accessible to those who have financial advantage. This meant that media was only serving the interests of those who are rich because they are the ultimate audiences (Wasserman and de Beers, 2005). Moreover, the South African National Editors Forum also discourages the influence of government towards the media. This implies that journalists should not be bribed or forced to report in favor of the government. Another regulatory body that was established for journalist's ethical guidelines was the South African Press Council, which was reinvented in 2007. Its aim is to guide journalists on how to gather, report, and avoid conflict of interest, to be mindful of dignity, privacy and reputation of the society (ibid.)

Even during democratic era, there were events that strongly signified the failure towards media freedom. This was evident through the events that were happening.

Legislations such as the law on Anti-terrorism presents treats to the 'national interest' by restricting journalists reporting on security or penal institution. The coverage of political or business actions key Points Act prohibits journalists from accessing, photographing or documenting investigations in a number of locations such as the President Zuma's Nkandla home, which was controversially remodeled at an estimated cost of US$200 million (Freedom House, 2015).

Therefore, in the democratic era South African journalism was marked by conflict whether to report in favor of the newly elected democratic government. Moreover, ethical frameworks such as the SANEF and normative theories among others were established and adapted in order to ensure that journalists' function within the interests of democracy. Despite this, journalists were still facing racial injustice within the newsroom and brutal killings. Such events clearly stipulate journalists have not attained freedom. In support of this Berger (1999), outlines that the media has not played a significant role from apartheid era to democracy.

2.4 CITIZEN JOURNALISM

2.4.1 Definition of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is a concept which shifted ordinary citizen from being passive to active audience who voice out their stories without the help of media houses (Rosen, 2006). Most of these citizens operate without professionalism and within geographically restricted areas as Duffy, Thorson and Jahng (2010), explain that citizen journalist is a person who is not qualified as a professional journalist, but reports in their society. Similarly, Bowman and Willis (2013), in their definition outline the unprofessional

character that these journalists have. Hence, they define citizen journalism as a practice of gathering, communicating, examining and distributing news. The word "producers" is used by Bruns (2005), to define citizen journalists. He outlines that the terms refer to "users of news websites who engage with such sites interchangeably in consumptive and productive modes (and often both at the same time)". In their view, Quinn and Lamble (2008), citizen journalism happens in two practices: citizens who are not trained journalists provide news items to traditional media houses. Another practice is when citizens produce websites and other platforms to disseminate news or information.

According to Bowman and Willis (2003), citizen journalism plays a role in news production. Hence, such participation enhances democratic participation. According to Jurrat (2011), citizen journalists are in different forms:

> In practice, this can range from commenting on an existing news piece to publishing an article, podcast, photo or video on a personal blog or on Twitter, a dedicated citizen journalism website like The Huffington Post or on YouTube, or on interactive websites that work as extensions to mainstream media, such as Cable News Network's (CNN) iReport.

In their definition Kaufhold, Valenzuela and Gil de Zuniga (2010), provide levels of citizen journalism:

> "Citizen journalism is defined more by *what* it is than *where* it is. That is, it can exist within the framework of a mainstream media outlet and it can exist on its own, a posting by an independent blogger or an image on a photo-sharing website. Also, the level of complexity of a user-generated

2.4.2 Historical Background of Citizen Journalism

According to Hughes (2011), citizen journalism is not a new phenomenon, but it existed prior professional journalism. This is evident during the late 1600 and early 1700 when the owner of *Public Occurrences* was a bookseller. He used to leave the last page to allow the public to fill in their handwritten content and notes. In his opinion, Schudson (2003: 73), notes that citizen journalism started in United State of America in 1940, through political pamphlets. Citizens wrote stories that were having journalistic elements even though they were not professionally recognised. For Kawamoto (2013), in the early centuries editors and journalists did not have formal training in journalism, that it self-indicated traits of citizen journalism.

In the 21th century citizen journalism gained its momentum because of its low cost, high speed and the collapse of some traditional newspapers (Jurrat, 2011). However, Okoro, Christian and Chijioke (2013), argue that the history of citizen journalism can be traced back to the arrival of the internet, and its significance could be noticed around 2004. In agreement, Hinton and Hjorth (2013), state that citizen journalism has been inspired by the intersection among traditional news hurdles and the internet. Moreover, The Open News Room (2008), concurs that the initiation of Web.2.0 contributed to the formation of citizen journalism, because it offered features such as WordPress which gave audiences the ability to distribute their own news content.

2.4.3 Types of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is a complex concept that is not applied generally. Thus, Outing (2005), provides layers of citizen journalism:

- **The Citizen Add-On Reporter**

These are citizens who add their views, photos and experiences to a provided article written by a professional journalist. This mostly occurs in social media platforms. It helps to enhance professionally written stories, strengthens the relationship between news organisations and users. Moreover, it is helpful in creating awareness about crime and other important social events.

- **Open-Source Reporting**

This type of citizen journalism can be practiced in various platforms, in blogs, where a reporter publishes their draft article. By doing this they allow readers to contribute their expert knowledge concerning the article. Then later, the reporter issues a refined version of the article with the reader's contribution. Alternatively, a reporter can make a public notice to their readers about the story they are about to work on. Hence, they will ask readers for guidance or contributions. Another approach is for reporters to consult reader panel. A data base which consists of readers who are willing to offer interviews or expert information to reporters. These volunteers can also collaborate with professional journalists in writing articles.

- **The Citizen Blog House**

These are bloggers who operate under news organisations, some formerly had their own blogs. They play a crucial role filing up minute coverage by professional journalists. However, this type of journalism does not last. Hence, this requires news organisations to provide motivations such as payment or token of appreciation for the citizen bloggers. Also, news organisations are advised not to rely on these journalists because it may discredit their professionalism.

- **Newsroom Citizen 'Transparency' Blogs**

This category of citizen journalism comments about the operations of the news organisations through blogs. They communicate their grievances, condemn or compliment the organisation. This helps news organisations to reflect and improve their services. An example, Spokeman Review.com's "News is a Conversation" blog.

- **The Stand–Alone Citizen Journalism Site: Edited Version**

In this category community members submit their news content such as wedding celebrations, graduations celebrations and other events within the community. However, the website they submit in is not linked with the central news website brand. Editors perform minor editing activities. Also they play a role in guiding contributors on how to submit quality news content.

- **The Stand-Alone Citizen Journalism Site: Unedited Version**

These groups of people submit their content to websites and there is no editorial application. However, issues that may temper with legality are monitored through misconduct button. This button enables audiences to report news content that is inappropriate. This type of citizen journalism allows community members to freely post their content without being censored or turned into professional journalists. An example of website that caters for these journalists is: Backfence.com and GoSkokie.

- **Printed Version**

This is a combination of stand-alone citizen-journalism edited and unedited in a form of print. The content of thhe print version consist of, weddings, sports, features and opinions contributed by citizens. However, editors practice minimum editing such as spelling check and grammar. The print edition helps to attract more contributors. On the other hand,

there are arguments that this type of citizen journalism escalates costs for print media and alters the characteristic which is non-two-way communication medium.

- **The Hybrid: Pro+ Citizen Journalism**

In this case, an online site is created for professional and citizen journalists to contribute their news content. Yet, citizen reporters contribute most of the content. Citizens who offer quality content a small fee is paid to them. However, some news organizations don't prefer to pay their citizen contributors. A high level of editing is practiced towards citizen journalism content. In OhmyNews, this collaboration has produced good results in terms of profit, their profit has increased significantly.

- **Integrating Citizen and Pro Journalism Under One Roof**

This is a news website where every professional journalism content is accompanied by citizen journalism. A difference is made between the content by indicating that the writer is a staff member or a citizen reporter. Critics have outlined that professional journalism content should not be polluted with immature journalism. This diminishes the high quality and professionalism of journalism.

There are different names that address the concept of citizen journalism. Hence, Noor (2017), provides alternative words of citizen journalism: public journalism, civic journalism, stand-alone journalism, networked journalism, open source journalism, crowed-sourced journalism, collaborative journalism, grassroots journalism, community journalism and bridge media.

2.4.4 Disadvantages of Citizen Journalism

One of the disadvantages of citizen journalism is that it is "not bound by professional ethics". It is therefore, more likely to be unreliable, does not apply fundamental aspects that define quality journalism, and does not have characteristics such as objectivity, respect for human dignity and truthfulness (Vijaspaul, 2015). Moreover, Riaz and Pasha (2011), state that there are blare lines between facts opinions in the content of citizen journalism particularly bloggers. Hence this creates lack of credibility.

Citizens who take photographs and videos during incidents do not consider ethics, but are focused on the financial gain that they will receive after submitting the content (Fox, 2015). Yet, Rioba (2008), outlines that journalists should treat sources, and subjects as human beings, worthy of respect, not just as means of journalistic gain. It is believed that citizen journalism promotes voices of the marginalized group. Nevertheless, since citizen journalism is technology bound it does not represent voices of the illiterate. For instant elderly people who cannot operate technological tools such as cellphones and computers (Riaz and Pasha, 2011).

- **Biasness**

Since citizen journalism does not practice full- time, they tend to report stories that are easily available to them and impose their opinions. This leads to reporting that is bias. However, with professional journalism despite the distance, they are expected to present to cover a story. Moreover, they are not expected to voice out their opinions.

- **Absence of Understanding and Training**

Majority of citizen journalists are not trained and are not aware of journalistic practice. This poses challenges for media houses. Even though there are training programs on-

line, there are concerns that they do not finish course because of they lack consistency and commitment.

- **Lack of Recognition**

Most of citizen journalists work independently; they are not associated with media houses. As a result, whatever they are reporting lacks accreditation. Moreover, it is challenging for them to get interviews and attend exclusive events.

2.4.5 Advantages of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism provides essential news content such as on-the-spot photos and videos. An example, is a video taken on the 26 February 2013, in Daveyton in which a taxi driver, Mr. Medio Marcia was handcuffed and dragged by a police van. An ordinary citizen who witnessed the incident took the footage and handed it in some news organizations including SABC and etv. The footage played a vital role in identifying the police who were responsible for the crime. Eight police officers involved in the crime were sentenced to 15 years each for the murder of Mr Medio Macia (Rahlanga, 2015). Also, citizen journalism adds in-depth content to a story through polls and blogs (Jamiespud, 2013). Moreover, Kelly (2009) discusses the following advantages.

- **Easy Access to News Stories Everywhere**

Citizens can capture interesting stories anywhere because of advanced mobile devices such smartphone and laptops. Such devices are updated for better operation, as a result citizen journalists capture excellent images and sounds. Also, this puts citizen journalism on an advantageous position because they are in a lead in terms of getting stories compared to professional journalism.

- **Coverage of Stories Neglected by Traditional News Media**

some news items are left out because of space. Particularly in newspapers. Moreover, more space is allocated to advertising over news items for newspaper houses to generate revenue. Therefore, citizen journalists fill in the gap by providing news items such as community development programs and council meetings among others. This indicates that citizen journalism plays a complementary role towards traditional news coverage.

- **Offers Multiple Participatory Platforms**

Social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs enable discussions about the latest news. This gives a signal to news organizations about public's news preference. Unlike, traditional news portals which offer few interaction platforms such as letter to the editor. Such participatory promotes democratic participatory which plays an important role in a society.

2.4.6 Citizen Journalism Ethics

Citizen journalists appear to be interesting in their reporting rather than to be accurate. This leads them to be unethical (Brown, 2005). It is suggested by Dube (2013), that ethical codes such: honesty, fairness, minimizing harm and accountability for professional journalsists outlined by the Society of Professional Journalists should be applicable to citizen journalists also.

Other countries within the African continent share the sentiment that because of the absence of teaching, citizen journalists are oblivious of protocols that govern journalism (Riaz and Pasha, 2011). The picture taken by an ordinary citizen which portrayed President Robert Mogabe falling at the airport is an example of citizen journalism lacking morals particularly humanism (Ubuntu) which is the most valued principle in Africa. In an online site called "Album of terror" where bloggers in Zimbabwe post gruesome depictions, pictures of seriously bruised individuals such as Wilson Jori among others are easily accessible (Moyo, 2017). Furthermore, Zuberi (2001), state that when uploading occurrences particularly shocking ones, citizen journalists neglect to acknowledge human dignity and age restriction. These horrific images capture the highest level of truth,

however there should be a moral manner in which they can be told (Pojman, 1993). However, Moyo (2017), asks to what an extent should citizen journalists show shocking pictures online before overpassing ethical boundaries which are quality and caution?

The challenge with citizen journalism particularly bloggers is that their news content cannot be trusted. However, bloggers deem moral behavior as an individual decision (Paulussen, Heinonen, Singer, Domingo, Quandt and Vujnovic, 2008). Furthermore, since there is easy access for everyone to create and distribute news, this queries the validity and credibility of citizen journalism (Hughes, 2011). In agreement Keen (2007), state that:

> "Corruption and confusion popular opinion about everything from political and commerce, to arts and culture. Blogs have become so dizzingly infinite that they have undermined our sense of what is true and what is false, what is real and what is imaginary. These days, kids can tell what the difference between credible news by objective professional journalists and what they read [from blogs]".

Citizen journalists have the advantage of being the first to break stories ahead of professional journalists. However, this allows plagiarism, where one can take someone's story without acknowledging them (Reinardy, 2009).

In his study, Kuhn (2007), discovered that factual truth, transparency, minimizing harm among others are the most valued ethics. However, Hughes (2011), outlines that professionalism and credibility are the most important morals in journalism without them journalism amounts to naught.

In an African context there is less research conducted about the concept of citizen journalism. The few available portray ethical aspect of citizen journalism negatively. Thus, Kasoma (2002), suggests that, "if untrained citizen become journalists, they are oblivious about principles". Furthermore, Moyo (2009), outlines that when the bloggers refer to "the

news in now" or "unconfirmed reports" they have not done some investigation in the manner professional journalist verify facts, but merely to indicate that the information has been derived from the grapevine and hence suggests that the readers should do their own cross-checking and verification of stories published.

According to Wall (2005), there should be an amendment of ethics because citizen journalism brings a different aspect towards journalism. Despite the ethical debates, some professional journalists and citizen journalists are working collectively to establish rules for citizen journalists. However, there is criticism that professional journalism ethics will not be applicable to citizen journalism (Dugan, 2008). Avoiding too much independence can be a solution in solving ethical consideration challenges among citizen journalism. They should connect with media houses. It is also important for them to double check information with sources and readers. Moreover, communicate their records with professionals (Friend and Singer, 2007). There is a need for immediate search of ethical practices in order to expand journalism ethics to accommodate citizen journalism practice (Moyo, 1993).

2.5 NEWSPAPER EDITORS OPINION ABOUT CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Despite the trend of citizen journalism, community newspaper editors still hold high esteem towards the functions of professional journalism over the role of citizen journalism (Nah and Chung, 2009). Various scholars such as: Philip Hindman, Ernst and Richardson (2001) have conducted studies that focus on community newspapers, particularly on the following levels:

- Macro level - the nature of community newspapers
- Meso level - the identity of community newspapers
- Micro level – the personalities of both journalists and editors in a community newspaper

Significantly, Nah et al (2009), suggest that a forth level can be added that focuses on the relationship between traditional and citizen journalists in the body of research. Since there is a significant impact that digital media has towards community newspapers.

Hence, they conducted a study that aims to depict the views that editors of community newspapers have towards citizen journalism. Various concepts were outlined from editors' opinions regarding citizen journalism, mainly the comprehension of the concept, and the operational methods amongst others. When the editors were asked to provide their opinion regarding what citizen journalism the following ideas emerged:

- **Lack of Training**

From their opinions lack of training was the major theme expressed. This means they perceive citizen journalists as individuals who have no journalist training, yet they perform duties similar to professional journalism.

- **Amateurs/ non-professionals**

The editors mentioned that any content that is not written by a professional journalism cannot be classified as professional.

- **Community Engagement**

Citizen journalism was positively considered as a concept that promotes community engagement. The platform for community members to report about their own stories strengthens democratic participation which is one of the important values, particularly in community media. In a study conducted by O'Sullina and Heinonen (2008), 293 journalists were asked to voice out their opinion concerning the concept of citizen journalism. Majority of the editors disagreed that citizen journalism poses a treat towards professional journalism. This indicates that there is flexibility towards journalistic developments. Apart from this, a high percentage of the journalists are of the view that citizen journalism is not genuine journalism because it is not foundered by professional journalistic values.

2.6 THE APPLICATION OF GATEKEEPING TO USER GENERATED CONTENT BY COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

According to Canter (2013), community newspapers are not willing to change their gatekeeping process in dealing with user generated news content because of their concern about accuracy, credibility, and quality content. In an example of "Leicester *Mercury"*, a community newspaper in Britain practices gatekeeping with Citizens' Eye (a citizen journalism initiative), in a following manner:

- **Editing**

News content from Citizens' Eye comes with no traditional journalistic style of writing. For example, there will be no quotes, and high level of subjectivity. Then a professional journalist comes in to adjust the content according to the gatekeeping standards such as accuracy, legal issues and decency among others. Finally, the story is located near the end of the paper.

- **Categorising Story Coverage**

Professional journalists cover court cases, council meetings, investigative journalism, major events and breakings news. Citizens' Eye reports community and charity events, bottom tier council meetings and other events of their interest.

2.7 GATEKEEPING AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Gatekeeping is the process which includes media workers who select from a vast of events happening, thoughts, and challenging views to produce news (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). According to Lidner (2017), for gatekeeping to be effective there should be a routine. For example, newsgathering activity is shared amongst journalists as beats. Scholars in the field of citizen journalism, professional journalism and gatekeeping (Livingston and Bennett, 2003, Harrison 2010, Karlsson, 2011), are debating whether traditional gatekeeping is still applicable in citizen journalism content. The practice of citizen journalism comes in different forms. There are citizens who gather and report news in their smart phones, those who establish blogging sites to post stories and those who gather news and submit them to news organisations.

Online community newspapers draw most of their content from community print newspapers. Though they do not take everything, they are likely to take information that is closely related to the members of their community (Singer, 2004). According to Zimikly and Tyree (2007), there are similarities and differences between online gatekeeping and traditional gatekeeping:

- **Gathering of News**

Both traditional and online community newspapers gather news in the same manner. However, online editors go beyond timeliness and proximity in gathering their news stories. They look for stories that will provoke response from their readers and are frequently updated.

- **Distribution of News**

The dissemination of news differs in community print and online newspapers. Online community newspapers distribute news content in social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter among others, while community print newspapers still rely on newsprint or hard copy printing.

- **Editing**

Like traditional community newspaper editors, online community newspaper editors still need to modify comments and articles before publishing them. Letter to the editor in community print newspapers are similar to internet blogs, and comments. News judgement also plays a role in the selection of news stories. Editors, internet specialist and journalists work collectively to decide on news stories (Lambert, 2007). For example, in the United Kingdom, community newspaper editors select 97 per cent of community events, 86 per cent of entertainment and culture and 75 per cent of community business, to publish in their online news pages (Wiliams, Harte and Turner, 2014).

2.8. CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN BROADCASTING (TELEVISION) MEDIA

According to Diana (2012), social media through Facebook and Twitter has formed basis for television news. This means citizen journalism has the potential to contribute significantly television organizations through videos, photos even stories they gather through their smart phone. Citizen journalism has rich and diverse news categories. In support of this, New York Film Academy (2015), a recent Tow center study indicates that 44% of user generated content is about conflict/ war/ military, 21% it's about vehicle crashes and 17% it's about protest. Therefore, television organizations benefit a lot from citizen journalism content. Furthermore, Diana (2012), state that television organizations are even going to an extent of training citizens on how to be effective collectors of content in order to report back to their news organizations. In addition, Volotta (2013), state that by teaching citizen journalism to collect and report news indicates that broadcasting agencies are re-inventing themselves in order to be relevant. In agreement, Ponnan and Ali (2015), suggests that social media is providing a new dimension to the way mainstream broadcasting present their news, by making available rich content from citizen journalists that professional journalism would have not be able to attain. For example, Cable News Network (CNN) reported the human massacre in Havia Syria on 28 May 2012, 9pm local time, using graphic images from Twitter contributions. Citizen

journalism initiatives such as the IReport.com established by the Cable News Network, The British Broadcasting Corporation's Action (formerly called Icon) established by BCC and The Stream established by AlJazeera, play an important role which is to provide an opportunity for ordinary citizens to submit unedited, unfiltered and uncensored videos and text-based news and reports (Kperogi, 2011, Nieman, 2012).

According to Estes (2012), the impact of the establishment of these citizen journalism initiatives is security. In November 2011, 50 staff members were relocated, majority of them were photojournalists. This is because the company would rely more on citizen journalism outlet for news. Moreover, the British Broadcasting Corporation went through a restructuring that resulted in the loss of 3,000 jobs which allowed then savings to be invested in transforming the entire news organization ibid. Kiperogi (2011), contends that the establishment of citizen journalism has resulted into cheap labor. Majority of citizen journalists contribute content for broadcasting agencies without being paid. They only get copyrights to their contributions. On another note, Kiperogi state that the association of citizen journalists with broadcasting organizations puts their lives in jeopardy. They are killed and arrested. For example, Abdelmawla a citizen journalists based in Syria reporting for ALJazeera, was arrested.

Therefore, it is evident that citizen journalism it's a phenomenon that plays a significant phenomenon that contributes significantly towards television organizations. This is evident through the training of citizen journalists with the aim of contributing news content to television organizations. However, it seems like television organizations find it hard to maintain both citizen and professional journalism. Hence, other organizations resort to cut the number of professional journalism. Consequently, it is important to challenge such decisions, because there is a preference of unskillful individuals who only have advance tools to gather news over skillful professionally trained individuals. This degrades the standards and quality of journalism. The matter of citizen journalism not getting paid for their contributions and not protected by television organizations indicates human exploitation.

In his study, Wang (2014), investigated how professional broadcasting journalists and citizen journalists reported the bullet train accident in Wenzhou, 2011. His findings indicated the following:

- Videos about the accident made by citizen journalists were subjective and sensational compared to professional journalists.

- Also, the narration of the event by citizen journalists was not properly done because they lack the necessary skills to narrate.

- Citizen journalists were able to bring up images and narratives that are closer to ordinary people. They positioned themselves inside the scene and among other witness. Their ability to represent the public in their videos and reporting is still very limited when compared to professional, due to a limited access to information.

- Professional journalists were able to edit video about the accident. Every shot was cut and arranged neatly. On the other hand, citizen journalists had unedited and long videos.

- Citizen journalists used camera panning or zooming vey frequently which resulted into pictures showing many things that were happening around. On a contrary, professional journalists used still shots, this provided much better information from pictures. Papadopoulos, Anden and Pantti (2013), terms a large amount of camera movement in user-generated contents as camera "hyper-mobility"

- Professional journalist's videos contained in-depth reporting through including interviews from not only the witnesses, victims and survivors of the accident. They also included expert advice from the engineers, minister of transport. Citizen journalism videos consisted of survivors and witness only.

- The editing of sound was cautiously and successfully executed by professional journalists. However, citizen journalism videos came with raw sound, which caused distractions for audience.

The study by Wang (2014) captures a relationship between citizen and professional journalism. Moreover it offers a clear understanding on how the operation of citizen and professional journalism differ. Therefore, it can be concluded that in their operation citizen

journalists capture events with an aim extracting the reality of an event making easy for audiences to relate. While professional journalism captures news with high professionalism yet, not relating to its audiences compared to citizen journalism.

2.9 THE ROLE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN SUSTAINING COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

2.9.1 Promotion of Freedom of Expression

Citizen journalism plays various important roles. For instance, it spread public opinion, and influenced the manner in which mainstream media reported the post-election period in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2015). In Kibera, Kenya, a citizen journalism project called *Voice of Kibera (VoK),* played a role in poverty improvement by producing community and timely slum-orientated reports and news items that affects residents' lives (Desta, Fitzgibbon and Byrne, 2014).

Citizen journalism initiatives can also fill gaps in regions where mainstream media cannot fully cover the news (Jurrat, 2011). Furthermore, social trust can be associated with the roles of citizen journalists (Chung, 2012). According to Chanter (2013), the usage of public content has become a vital process in the production of community news for both civic and economic purposes. For Rhinesmith, Wolske, and Kehoe, (2011), there is hope that citizen journalism initiatives will address important community issues and create awareness about challenges facing the society.

Community newspapers are facing challenges, and are shutting down because of shortage of news content. However, the emergence of citizen journalism has brought hope for community newspapers since it gives citizens the opportunity to create and add news content to community news (Timmer, 2010). Additionally, residences who are sharing their community stories promote cohesion in their society (Sheppard, 2012). In all these, community newspapers editors have realized that citizen journalism should not

be deemed as a cheap replacement for professional journalism, but as a complementary element (D'heer and Paulussen, 2013).

A study conducted by Nah and Chung (2009), investigated opinions of community editors on their roles as professional journalists in light of the role of citizen journalism, indicates the following:

- **Disseminator**

The editors are of the opinion that professional journalism has the potential to deliver news faster compared to citizen journalism. However, this can be challenged.

> The internet and cell phones have given most people the ability to report on events they run into in their everyday lives. We no longer need to wait for a news crew or professional journalists to drive to the scene of a newsworthy event. The public is always there ahead of them with the physical evidence already recorded (Ali, 2012).

In the same way, Lombardo (2016), states that Facebook and Twitter among others deliver news faster compared to traditional media (television, newspapers and radio). It is therefore evident that there are different views concerning citizen journalism and professional journalism's news disseminating role.

- **Interpreter**

Concerning the role of both citizen and professional journalism in giving clear interpretations in complex issues, editors outlined that professional journalism plays an important role in breaking down complex issues compared to citizen journalism. This could be true in cases where reports about policies need to be simplified and other issues that needs expert opinions. On the other hand, citizen journalism also plays a significant

role. in interpreting community issues that represents values of a certain community such cultural gatherings.

2.10. This is a great way to hear from random citizens regarding their personal lives and what simply happens in their communities on a daily basis. In fact, this can get community citizens to be more engaged regarding issues that can positively affect their lives or otherwise (Lombardo, 2016). **THE**

ROLE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN DEVELOPING THE SOCIETY

The results of citizen journalism are not only evident in the media, but also within the community. This means that citizen journalism has changed the state of the community. Hence, Dare (2010), indicates that the emergence of citizen journalism has inspired community members by widening gates for them to be involved in shaping civil issues and playing a watchdog role." It is already playing a big role in promoting and conveying the problems of the society to the government" (Riaz and Pasha, 2011). The media are rich platforms with political information. Moreover, they stimulate debates and allow citizens to have political stance (Hernado, Irma and Homero, 2010).

2.10.1 Enhancement of Civil Engagement

The privilege for ordinary citizens to be involved in the professional journalism practice enhance sense of belonging and gratification (Riaz and Pasha, 2011). Therefore, if citizens feel important in their communities they become influenced for positive change.

2.11 GATEKEEPING

2.11.1 Reasons for Gatekeeping in the Media Industry

Gatekeeping is an integral practice within media organizations. Traditional media channels have their own ethics and policies through which editors decide which news

items qualify to be published or aired. Gatekeeping occurs at all levels of the media structure from a reporter deciding which sources are chosen to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed or covered, and includes media outlet owners and even advertisers (Monica, 2005). According to Shabir, Safdar, Imran, Mumtaz and Anjum (2015), individuals can also act as gatekeepers, deciding what information to include in an e-mail or in a blog. There are numerous reasons for gatekeeping in the media industry, Shabir, et al (2015), provides the following reasons for gatekeeping:

- **Large Amount of News**

Gatekeeping helps to reduce huge quantity of news. Each media house has a lot of news items that requires attention coming from different source and staff members. Gatekeeping helps to reduce them to manageable and useful size.

- **Limited Time or Space**

There is inadequate time (broadcast media) or space (print media) as a result of several daily matters. The available gaps are first allocated to advertising and other content. Hence, gatekeeping ensures that only important and trending news items make it into the limited space.

Criteria for judging particular news

There are criteria for selecting news items. Factors that influence the selection of news among others are: economic factors, newspaper house style, organization policy, audience's expectations and journalists' responsibility. Above these, the economic factor is rated as an important aspect.

- **Audience's Preference**

Audiences do not prefer the same type of news items. Sophisticated audiences' preference will include entertainment and sports among others, while others will favor civil and societal news. The working class audiences favor entertainment news. The process of gatekeeping ensures that all stories are available for the variety of audience.

2.11.2 Gatekeeping Today

Gatekeeping is a practice of removing and fashioning information into narrowed number of messages that reach people daily (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). In the present digital society gatekeeping is changing into gate watching. This process happens because media audiences collect and distribute high volume of news content. Since the internet empowers readers to choose what is newsworthy, professional journalists could be abandoning their traditional gatekeeping role (Channel, 2010). However, Ali and Fahmy (2013) suggest that, gatekeeping process still governs digital media activities such as citizen Journalism through selecting specific user generated content. Despite incorporating citizen journalism into their news content, traditional gatekeeping barriers at BBC have advanced over time to ensure the maintenance of the station's news values (Harrison, 2010).

2.12. COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Community newspapers function as a fundamental aspect of mass media. An important value that is dominant in this medium is proximity, because it offers news about community sports clubs, community schools and community crimes among others. These stories are about the community hence the medium becomes personal to the members of the community (Diederichs and de Beer, 1998). In South Africa, as at 1997, community newspapers had increased in circulation, their growth overtook that of mainstream newspapers.

These types of newspapers are categorized by free distribution and sequence of publication, and are found where their audiences are situated (Aldridge, 2007:26). The Newspaper Society describes community newspaper as:

> Any publication in written form on newsprint or similar medium, published at regular intervals not exceeding seven days, and available regionally rather than nationally (i.e. not available throughout all or of the British Isles). It should contain offering a news and information of a general nature, update regularly, rather than being devoted to a specific interest or topic (The Newspaper Society, 2004).

It is a mandate of community newspapers to communicate the heritage and distresses for their communities and promote community freedom by creating a platform for civic discussion (Franklin, 1997:114). Community newspapers bring about community journalism. This type of journalism intensely deals with the standards and consequences of interdependence between journalism and group of people within a small area. Moreover, it strengthens relations and communal lives. It offers close surveillance on those who are in power. The nearby existence of professional journalists who work in communities provides a sense of trust and social peace among the members of the community. Moreover, there has been a transformation in community journalism from a profession that covers stories of small geographical area to a profession that covers stories in multiple media channels

However, the true essence of traditional community media is being overshadowed by digital inventions such as cellphones and social media (Hess and Walter, 2015). Some people have voiced out various opinions concerning professional journalism in community newspapers. They believe that there is a rise of business worth (advertising) over excellent journalism, and that community journalism is losing their watchdog function because they put advertising as their first priority. Young people are able to relate to community journalists because they find positive stories about them such as, victory of

their community soccer team, best students around the town and other positive events (Leverhulme, 2008).

In general, traditional newspaper circulation has declined due to technological inventions (Kung, Picard and Towse, 2008:149). The availability of multiple media sources such as community radio and community television puts community newspapers as the least preferred community medium (Franklin, 1997:104-108). Newspapers in particular (community ones) have lost readership because of the media shift from traditional to digital media (Kaufhold *et.al,* 2010). According to Singer (2010), some of the concerns voiced by British community newspaper editors against citizen journalism include staffing resources, quality control and legal liability. In other words, they share similar views with editors of mainstream newspapers on the impact of citizen journalism on the newspaper industry generally.

2.13. CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

News organizations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and Reuters had incorporated ideas on how to respond to the emergence of citizen journalism. One of the emerging ideas was the implementation of collaboration between the society and news organizations in order to enhance the quality of reporting. Citizen journalists played a vital role in the mainstream media by instantly capturing events such as the bombing in London 2007 and the Abuja bomb in Nigeria 2010 (British Broadcasting Coporation, 2011). Notwithstanding the rise of citizen journalism, traditional media with professional journalism continues to exist as a profession. (Nikkanen, 2012). According to Gabouryon (2011), citizen journalists are able to acquire news faster than mainstream media, but they make more mistakes compared to mainstream media.

2.14. NEWSROOM

Newsroom is a place where media staff members discuss and practice news production (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey and Richardson, 2005). News structures are a

significant aspect because they create a relationship with the public (Cressman, 2009). Locations where news is produced aid to create a public awareness (Mersey, 2009). According to Hoyer (2003), prior to the mid-nineteenth century, newsrooms were not utilized for negotiations and production planning.

2.14.1 Newsroom in a Digital Era

Currently, the old-style layout of newsroom is incapable to adjust to the current news construction techniques. This is because stories are disseminated to different platforms such as cellphones and other gadgets. Newspapers are striving to adapt to digital era. Gade (2004), offers an explanation for this attempt as an organizational development, which is a way organizations advance, study and familiarize into a new environment. Digitization and convergence has led to a shift in newsrooms. Yet, Paterson and Domingo (2008), argue that convergence within the newsroom cannot be attributed to new technology, but factors such as economic and social factors among others are contributors. In agreement, Rappley (1998), states that the inspiration behind the change in the newsroom is to transform the culture of newsrooms. This change positively contributes towards readership and revenue.

However, culture change in the newsroom cannot be simply achieved because resistance among workers can make the process difficult (Gentry, 1996). According to Zhang (2012), newspaper rooms have been upgraded in order to overcome decreasing avenues. Moreover, newsroom alteration has been a chief tool for an effective implementation of convergence (Quin, 2002). According to Garrison (1999), technological invention in newspaper newsrooms such as computers increased duties for both journalists and editors and made certain traditional roles irrelevant. Hence, there has been an extension of newspaper platforms, from print to websites and mobile cell phones. Subsequently, this affects the nature of newspaper newsrooms (Zhang, 2009).

2.14.2 Challenges within Newsroom

Digital inventions have brought disconnection between readers and journalists within the newsrooms (Wilson, 2008). Journalists can now finalize their stories without using newsrooms. Hence, they do not interact with their colleagues. Furthermore, they can easily lose association with their readers because of citizen journalism which now compete with their readers. However, Domingo (2008), argues that there is communication interaction within online newsrooms. Models have been designed to explain the convergence in newsrooms. Jose, Alviles, Kaltenbrunner, and Meier, (2014), provide three models of newsrooms:

Full integration- This model explains the change in office structures and building to accommodate multiple news production strategies. Moreover, journalists are offered training in order to facilitate new ways of production. The disadvantage about this model is that it is costly. The advantage about it is that it enables media houses to fully participate in the digital era, and also be relevant.

Isolated platform- Digital integration is not the ultimate goal in this model, only few parts of the newsrooms are integrated or no integration. This provides disadvantageous circumstance and weakens the organisation's effort to operate in a competitive level. Yet, it could save media organizations money in terms of expenditure but not revenue making.

Cross media- Convergence is not a need in this model. However, it is deemed as an instrument. This means that it is not forced on workers. This does not mean there is resistance towards convergence. However, there is an acknowledgement about it but it is not seen as an important aspect that can replace traditional operations. However, as a complementary aspect towards news operations, journalists maintain their positions but use the multiple devices to enhance communication between themselves. Convergence in this case is used as a tool that helps in communication within a media organization.

2.15 ETHICS

According to Patterson and Wilkins (1994:3), the word ethics came after Greek philosophers separated the world into three portions: aesthetics, epistemology and ethics. Aesthetics deals with the analysis of beauty, epistemology was dedicated to knowledge, and chiefly, ethics focused on the study of what is good for people and the community. Their main focus on ethics was bravery and liberty among others. All individuals obtain ethical intuit through social exchange with others. However, it also argued that one can be born with ethical sense (Snyman and Van Belle, 1994:45). In their definition, Merrill and Odell (1983:78), outline two fundamentals of ethics: appropriate and inappropriate. This means that ethics is a principle that allows individuals to reflect whether their actions are permissible or impermissible. However, there are actions which are more permitted than others (Patterson Wilkins and Jurney, 1994:3).

2.15.1 Media Ethics

Media ethics encompasses journalism ethics. Oosthuizen (2002:11) provides Lowenstein and Merrill's (1990:186) definition of media ethics as:

"A branch of philosophy (or mass communication) concerned with actions that are morally permissible and those that are not. It assists media workers in determining what is right and how to choose the best from several alternatives". It is a fact that whatever a journalist does or writes has impact and the impact can be good or bad. Hence, there is a need for ethical consideration in every activity they perform (Retief, 2002:04). "If we as journalists see ourselves as the public's "watchdog" to guard against corruption and exploitation, we must make sure that our own morals and values are in order. We have to watch our own behavior constantly" (Greer and Ross, 2008). Journalists should ensure that they are cautious in the manner they carry out their duties and be conscious of their responsibilities (Christians, Flackler and Rotzoll, 1995). Media ethics play an important role within the media arena. Hence, Day (1991:7) provides reasons why ethics should be studied in journalism:

Stimulation of Moral Imagination

This means motivating media workers to be able to priorities good decisions and principled actions in their mind. In this way, they will quickly and easily apply ethics without any struggle. This will also help them to have compassion for people. Moreover, if they have compassion they will minimize harm.

Recognizing Ethical Issues

Some situations make it difficult for one to know which ethical aspect is required. Therefore, it is important for media workers to have the ability to apply ethics adaptably in any given condition.

Developing Analytical Skills

Analytical thinking concerning ethics is a fundamental tool when making a judgement. For someone to be able to perform ethical values such as minimizing harm and fairness among others, they should be able to scrutinize these values in order to perform them steadily and purposefully. Chiefly, the study of ethics develops the ability to reason. An individual should be able to clearly motivate their ethical decisions.

Eliciting a Sense of Moral Obligation and Personal Responsibility

Freedom of the media has a potential of diverting journalists from conducting their duties responsibly. Consequently, the study of ethics ensures that journalists tame themselves by exercising freedom of the media simultaneously with responsibilities. Moreover, ethics will act as tool that helps journalists to keep the balance between freedom and accountability.

Tolerating Disagreement

It is vital for journalists to be balanced at all times. However, the virtue of being balanced can be achieved through acknowledging other people's point of view as significant even though they differ with yours. The study of ethics therefore, helps media workers to acknowledge different opinions before arriving to a point of making ethical decisions.

Ethical journalism is a branch of study that provides guidance on how to ponder about ethical issues in an organized fashion and how to positively debate about challenging decisions. It is stimulated in certain situations but varies from rational principles of a journalist (Francois, 2001). He further outlines that there is a debate whether African journalists should keep their African ethics or they should embrace ethics from the Western countries in order to be relevant to the world.

Following the first World War journalism transformed and strengthened its ethical practice. There were strategies that were discussed in order to stop the media to be used as a tool to stimulate battle, hate and propaganda. This was evident through the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers Association which begun International Court of Honour in 1930. It should be noted that media principles require transformation in the current digital era. Journalists are obliged to be ethical. Hence, they are expected to respect professional standards even in the challenging digital era, which is posing a challenge towards traditional journalism principles. Since technology has shifted the media to digital platforms, this does not mean there should be an exception to ethics as Riordank, (2014) states that: … "a media site should have the highest standards of ethics and accuracy". There are some cases where the media is requested not to publish a story due to safety reasons. This causes a dilemma for most media houses. According to International Center for Journalism (2009), such matters should be debated soberly within the newsroom; this will help media organizations to make ethical decisions. In some cases, it is deemed moral to lie hence we have prohibition on lying and the primacy of truth-telling. Such instance is where a journalist lies in order to help the police with an investigation. However, such should not be done in consideration of credibility and the

harm towards readers. Moreover, this skill can be attained to by consistent practice. According to Hodges (1983), when faced with ethical challenges, journalists should ask themselves the following questions:

- What are the matters at risk?
- Are all important actualities at my disposal?
- What are the potential consequences of my action?
- What are the possible implications of a single act?
- Which outcome is more beneficial?

The emphasis in the overall questions that Hodges outlined above focuses on the outcome of an action that one decides to execute. Moreover, they highlight the importance of analyzing each option of actions and the consequences. If an individual develops the ability to carefully reflect on themselves through these questions, there will be no harm and legal implications that will occur after their reporting. In addition, Bryrd (2002), suggests other questions that journalists should ask in a case of ethical predicament:

- Was good reporting performed?
- What are we informed about and how did we get informed about it know?
- Who are our informers and what are they expecting to gain?
- Was the information confirmed?
- Is it sensible to assume facts centred on what we are informed of?
- Will the report bring about an impact, What type?

In these questions there is a consideration of effects of deciding to report the nature of the effect. However, the major aspect outlined in these questions is validity. These questions challenge the journalist to question the legitimacy of their source, the motive of their source. Both the sets of questions that Hodges (1983) and Bryrd (2002) aims to enable a journalist to achieve harmless reporting and disruptive reporting is one of the

constituents of quality reporting. Chiefly, these practices of ethics it is not an activity that one can master instantly. Nevertheless, it needs one to consistently practice it.

2.16. ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

A theoretical framework serves to clarify the concepts and provides a guide within a study. According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), a theory functions as a structure and support of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance and the research questions. The study employed two theories: Disruptive Innovative by Christensen and the democratic participation theory by McQuail. These theories provide an important aspect of the study. The disruptive innovation in particular clarifies and offers a foundation of knowledge about the concept of citizen journalism, how did it come about and how it has affected traditional journalism and professional journalism. The democratic participation theory provides a description of how democratic participation in traditional media came to existence and how it benefited the society. Both these theories (disruptive innovation and democratic participation) are intertwined in the context of this study, because they explain how the roles between audience and professional journalism in disseminating news have changed. Citizen journalists are more empowered through technological tools to write their own stories.

2.16.1 Disruptive Innovation Theory

The disruptive innovation theory explains the effects of any low cost technology with high performance and convenience, which invades traditional technology. According to Christensten (2006), who propounded this theory, there are two fundamentals that constitute to the theory: the low-end and new-market disruptions. The low-end market represents traditional technologies and the new-market represents the new digital technology which disrupts the operations of traditional technology. The absence of regulation in the new technology makes it easy to instantly satisfy the customer's needs, and appears attractive to a certain group of individuals. Subsequently, there is alteration and overtaking of the fundamentals of the existing technology. However, the effects of such technology do not result in the replacement of the old technology (Yu and Hang, 2010: 230). According to Wooldridge (2015), disruptive innovations (i.e. new and improved technologies) pose challenges to traditional technologies. For example, it is

difficult for individuals and organisations using traditional technologies to choose between improving their existing operations and embracing the new technology. Disruptive innovative theory has the following assumptions:

- Traditional businesses innovate and develop their products or services in order to appeal to their most demanding and/or profitable customers, ignoring the needs of those downmarket.

- New businesses target this ignored market segment and gain traction by meeting their needs at a reduced cost compared to what is offered by the incumbent.

- Incumbents don't respond to the new entrant, continuing to focus on their more profitable segments.

- Entrants eventually move upmarket by offering solutions that appeal to the incumbent's "mainstream" customers.

- Once the new entrant has begun to attract the incumbent business's mainstream customers, disruption has occurred.

The relevance of the Disruptive theory to the study:

- In the context of this study, traditional business refers to traditional journalism (for mass media). One of the aims of traditional journalism through the mass media is to ensure that information is available to audiences in various channels such as mainstream media and community media. Audiences of the mass media were passive receivers of information. Their participation in the media was limited to letter to the editor through print media, studio phone in through broadcasting media, which was expensive and only those who were who were financially stable and are in developed areas could participate. Therefore, audiences who were based in remote areas cannot access media and are economically unprivileged are "downmarket" because they are passive mass media audiences compared to those who were able to participate in mass media platforms.

- Citizen journalism as a new business (entrant), allows the "downmarket" (those who were passive receivers and non-participants of the media) to be active collectors of stories and disseminators information and news similar to traditional media journalists, through their smartphones and social media cites such as

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Facebook and Twitter. Moreover, comment on social media sites about articles that have been published.

- Citizen journalism as a new entrant (new business) dominates the through social media. This result into traditional journalists to depend on citizen journalist for stories, because of their ability to access news content and distribute it through social media platforms.

- Citizen journalism is on a rise. Therefore, this indicates that traditional journalism and its operations have been disrupted by citizen journalism, which allows ordinary citizens to be active news collectors and distributors.

Newspapers initially offered their audiences news content without allowing them to take part in the process of producing news items. Currently, newspapers are being overrun by new technological operations like citizen journalism. With its non-journalistic background, citizen journalism offers audiences the ability to play the role of a professional journalist. This phenomenon undermines the fundamentals of journalism such as gatekeeping, ethics and professionalism. The ability to capture events that are happening instantly ahead of a professional journalist makes citizen journalism outstanding and appealing.

2.16.2 The Democratic Participation Theory

According to Roeloftse (1996) " the practical realisation of this theory is encountered primarily in developed societies. Chiefly, Fourie (2007:199) state that the democratic participation theory came as counter action against commercialisation and monopolisation of mass media. McQuail (=== CITATION HERE ===) provides the following basic assumptions of the democratic participation theory:

- Individuals and minory groups should be able to enforce their claim to:
    a. The right of access to the media
    b. The right to have their needs served by the media
- The organisations of the media and the content of the messages should not be influenced by political or bureaucratic control.
- The existence of media must be justified in terms of the needs and interests of recipients, and not exclusively in terms of those of the media organisation, professional media workers or advertisers.
- Small-scale, interactive and participatory forms of media are regarded as more beneficial than large – scale, unidirectional media that are used only by professional media workers.
- In general social needs are neglected by established media,
- This theory regards communication as too important to be left to the professionals.

Overall, the two theories in this study (technological disruptive and democratic participation theory) elucidate how audiences has taken the role of reporting their own stories, causing a change of pattern in traditional journalism and media organisations in the collection and reporting of news. Also, it outlines how media audiences moved from audiences who receive information from the media to active news reporters which reinforces the notion of democratic participation.

2.17. SUMMARY

The literature review chapter began with the introduction, which provided subheadings for thorough discussion. The chapter focused on the revolution of journalism, defined the concept of citizen journalism, its historical background, characteristics, disadvantages and advantages. Moreover, the chapter outlined how citizen journalism which came as a result of technology has changed the state newsrooms, the identity and operation of journalism. The chapter also discussed how citizen journalism has affected the concept of gatekeeping. Furthermore, the literature in this study discussed on what opinions editors have concerning citizen journalism. As the study focused on community newspapers, a description of community newspapers was given. The chapter also discussed theoretical framework for this study which are: Disruptive theory and Democratic participation theory. Democratic participation described how initially audiences were passively receiving information from the media. Disruptive theory provided an insight on how new technological innovation disturb the traditional operations and empowered users of the products to take control and actively participate in the manufacturing of such products.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed plan on how the research objectives were accomplished, the type of research methodology, population, sampling procedure, data collection, and the data analysis that was preferred among others. Moreover, it explains and accounts for the preferences. It further outlines the steps that were taken to ensure quality criteria.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011), a research design is a navigation plan which outlines steps taken in data collection technique. These steps are clearly articulated in the research methodologies (e.g. qualitative, quantitative and methodological triangulation). A research design is an overall programme that aims for the attainment of correct research findings (Whittemore and Melkus, 2008). An extensive explanation of a research design is provided by Kothari (2004), who defines it as a framework of ideas bound in an investigation. It comprises a plan on how information will be gathered, calculated and scrutinize, since there are numerous activities that occurs in a research project. A research design allows advance preparation and careful planning which will assist the investigator to identify possible potential risks and treats. Failure to properly plan may lead to haphazard actions which may lead to incorrect data and incorrect findings (ibid).

Therefore, from the definitions above it is evident that a research design plays an important role in ensuring that a research project is meticulously formulated and executed. The study outlined steps taken to ensure quality and correct results through

choosing relevant research methodology, population, sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis techniques. Primarily, a qualitative method was applied in this study.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

A qualitative method and exploratory approach were applied in the study. According to Henning (2004:03), a qualitative study is a study that is applied in theme-bound surroundings. This means that most of the focus is on the respondents' views and opinions. Therefore, this study focused on editors' judgements and thoughts about citizen journalism. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative study is a method that strives to discover how communities, and organizations comprehend a certain social subject. Therefore, in relation to this study, editors of community newspapers and their perceptions and attitudes towards citizen journalism were investigated. Moreover, the study investigated how the editors of community newspaper organizations in Limpopo province understand the role of citizen journalism, and how they apply gatekeeping to user generated content. Overall, a qualitative research is characterized by in-depth analysis of the society concerning views, attitudes and coping mechanism they attach to a particular communal phenomenon (Atieno, 2009).

3.2.2 Advantages of Qualitative Methodology

This type of a research is not rigid and allows gathering of abundant information (Whittemore and Melkus, 2008). In other words, qualitative research allows the researcher to inquire about information without any limitations. For instance, the use of interviews provides liberty for the researcher to obtain information not only through prepared or unprepared questions, but also through body language. Moreover, qualitative research is an effective tool for breaking down and managing compound concepts (Atieno, 2009). Furthermore, Choy (2014), state that qualitative research captures an interpretation of actions, principles, philosophies and traditions. In general, qualitative research has a unique character which is the ability to promote human interaction. Researchers get the opportunity to interact with their respondents on a social and

emotional level. This allows the possibility for change particularly in situations where there is crisis. Therefore, qualitative research contributes towards social change and in creating social awareness.

3.2.3 Disadvantages of Qualitative Methodology

"Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior" (Kothari, 2004). There is a need for a researcher to acquire expertise for conducting interviews. Moreover, interview in a qualitative research is time exhausting (Atieno, 2009). In addition, Berg (2004), argues that analyzing qualitative data is also time consuming. Also findings of a qualitative research may not be significant in policy drafting because of its high level subjectivity (Rahman, 2017). Clearly, one of the outstanding disadvantages of qualitative research is time demand. However, it can be argued that this disadvantage allows the researcher to carefully identify mistakes particularly in analyzing data.

Importantly, this study employed qualitative method because it seeks to investigate how gatekeeping is applied against citizen journalism and how citizen journalism is perceived by editors of community newspapers in Limpopo province. Hence, Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2007), state that if the research objectives are to explore how people encounter something or the views concerning a new concept, then a qualitative study is applicable.

3.2.4 Explorative Research Design

An exploratory approach was used in this study. It offers understanding and adds awareness on a certain subject (Burns and Grooves, 2001:374). Also, Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:60), state that when the purpose of a scientific study is to attain a broader understanding a certain phenomenon, situation or community, then an exploratory study will be effective. Therefore, in this study an exploratory study was effective because it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of citizen journalism, how it affects the community newspapers in Limpopo province and how the organizations are

coping with it. Moreover, the application of citizen journalism and gatekeeping in community newspapers in Limpopo province was investigated in order to provide more understanding on how they affect each other, as well as how citizen journalism is embraced within those newspaper organizations. According to Brink and Wood (1988:283-286), an exploratory study carefully investigates components of a subject in order to attain an overview understanding. Chiefly, the study used a Cross-Sectional Research method. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:132), this is the type of research where data is collected over a short period of time and it occurs over a once-off basis. In this study, data was collected over the period of four (4) months 2017-November to 2018 April).

3.3 PROFILE OF SAMPLED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AND AREAS OF STUDY

The study was conducted in Limpopo province. According to Siyabona Africa (2017), Limpopo province is situated Northern part of South Africa. Furthermore, Statics South Africa (2012), state that Limpopo province is separated into five (5) district municipalities (Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg). "The district municipality with the largest share of households in the province is Vhembe (382 346), followed by Capricorn (378 272), Mopani (338 385), Greater Sekhukhune (290 489), and Waterberg (211 452) (Statistic South Africa, 2016). The study engaged Four (4) districts in Limpopo province.

According to Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2015), in order to strengthen democratic media in South Africa, community media was developed by providing funds for their enhancement and sustainability through the MDDA (Media Development and Diversity Agency). Thus, Limpopo benefited from this. Currently, there are approximately 27 (twenty-seven) community newspapers. Out of the 27 (twenty-seven) community newspapers the following newspapers were contacted and letter of requests were sent to them:
- *Capricorn*
- *Die Pos*

- *Hoedspruit Herald Newspapers*
- *Informant*
- *Letaba Herald*
- *Limpopo Mirror*
- *Mogol Post*
- *Mopani Herald*
- *Northern Review*
- *Phalaborwa Herald*
- *Polokwane Express*
- *Seipone*
- *Capricorn voice*
- *Bosveld Review*
- *The Bonus Review*
- *Zoutnet*

Some tittles mentioned above operate under one publishing group, such as the Northern Media Group which publishes for 7 (Seven) publications (including The Review, Capricorn Voice, Review Makhado, Polokwane Express). Mopani Herald, Phalaborwa Herald and Hoedspruit Herald operates under Lumedia publishing company. The editors of all the above listed (16) newspapers were contacted for this study but only 7 (seven) of them agreed to participate in the study. Some publications declined to participate and others did not respond at all. The following table 1 provides profiles of publications which participated in the study:

Publication	Copies distributed	Distribution area	Readership	Frequency	Living Standard Measurement (LSM)
Limpopo Mirror	10 500	Thohoyandou	42 000	Weekly (Fridays)	4-9

The Beat	6 000	Bela (Warmbaths)	24 000	Weekly	3-7
Nthavela	10 000	Elim, Malamulele, Giyani, Tzaneen and Phalaborwa	15 000	Fortnightly	4-9
Letaba Herald	5 300	Greater Tzaneen Area	15 900	Weekly (Thursdays)	5-9
Seipone	10 00	Polokwane	40 000	Fortnightly	4-7
Mogol Post	5 050	Lephalale Elisras	20 200	Twice a month	6-10

Table 1: Limpopo Community Newspapers that Participated in the Study. (*AFRICANADVICE.COM*)

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

3.4.1 Population

"At an early stage in the planning of any investigation decisions must be made concerning the study population" (Degu and Yigzaw, 2006). Population is the overall number of people or items that a researcher intends to investigate (Hanlon and Larget, 2011). According to Mcmillan and (1996), population are constituents that meet the requirements of the researcher in order to attain findings that concern those elements. They are also known as universe. The identified population should have elements such as: location and gender among others (Degu and Yigzaw, 2006). The population of this study are editors of Limpopo community newspapers. They have characteristics that will enable the researcher to achieve the set objectives as stated by Mcmillan (1996).

3.4.2 Sample

"A sample is subgroup within the population (Hanlon and Larget, 2011). A group of subjects from whom data are collected" (Mcmillan, 1996). Moreover, Leedy and Ormord (2005:197) state that a sample is a group of the population that stand for the entire whole population.

In this study, twenty-eight (28) editors of community newspapers were identified in four out of five districts (Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe districts) in Limpopo Province through internet searches. Newspaper editors which had their contact details on their online pages were sent introductory emails inviting them to participate in the study. A follow up telephone was made to those who did not respond to the emails. Out of the twenty- eight (28) identified editors, only Seven (07) agreed to participate from four out of five districts (Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe districts) in Limpopo Province. All the districts of Limpopo Province are culturally, socially, educationally and developmentally similar. Sekhukhune district (which is the fifth district) is far from where the researcher is based. Hence, the district was not selected. The total number of community newspapers in Limpopo province is 75 (seventy-five) and distributed among the districts as follows: Capricorn 17 (seventeen), Waterberg 19 (nineteen), Mopani 18 (eighteen), Vhembe 8 (eight) and Sekhukhune 13 (thirteen) (Media Development Agency, 2009). Editors of 7 (seven) community newspapers from each of the four selected districts above were sampled from the list of Limpopo province based community newspapers and interviewed in this study.

3.4.3 Sampling Procedure

The function of sampling is to allow the researcher to take a collection of items which will be characterising a bigger population. Moreover, the amount of characterization of the bigger group will be determined by the sampling procedure used (Mcmillan, 1996).

3.4.4 Non-probability Sampling

One of the distinguishing factors of a non-probability sampling form probability sampling is that it does not use a random method to select a population. Moreover, it uses intuition to conduct the population selection (Batttaglia, 2011). The advantages of this type of a sampling are that it is cheap and less complicated (Babbie, 1990). However, Henry (1990) warns that the results obtained from a non-probability sampling should not be generalized.

3.4.5 Purposive Non-probability Sampling

A purposive non-probability sampling procedure was applied in this study because the researcher consciously selected editors from community newspapers within Limpopo Province. As Latham (2007) indicates, in purposive non-probability sampling, the researcher has the ability to select participants based on internal knowledge of the already identified characteristic. According to (Batttaglia (2011), the use of judgement to identify characteristics that will be relevant to the study outlines the outstanding characteristic of a purposive sampling. Therefore, editors share common characteristics such as the daily practise of gatekeeping within the newsroom. Therefore, they are a suitable population for this study.

> Purposive sampling techniques are primary used in qualitative studies and maybe defined as selected units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's question (Teddlie and Tashakkori,2009).

Thus, the gatekeeping experience that editors of Limpopo community newspapers have assisted in addressing the objectives of this study as Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) indicated.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Unlike structured interviews, where questions are already prepared in a predetermined manner, semi-structured interviews involve open-ended questions and allow the interviewer the freedom to ask for further elaboration (Hancock et al, 2009). According to Hashemnezhad (2015), individuals who conduct semi-structured interview have set of expectations about the direction and outcome of the interview. Therefore, the method was useful to the researcher because it allowed collection of adequate information without limitation due to the use of open-ended questions. Face-to-face interview was conducted using semi-structured interview schedule. Editors were asked questions based on relevant research themes relating to the research objectives. This included their perceptions towards the inclusion of citizen journalism in community newspaper production, how they practise gatekeeping with user-generated content, as well as the relevance of citizen journalism in Limpopo community newspaper industry. Follow up questions were asked where appropriate in order to sufficiently collect necessary information for this study, and was based on relevant research themes. Face-to-face interview helps the researcher to obtain body language from their respondents, which were extra information for the researcher (Opdenakker, 2006).

3.5.1 Advantages of Interviews

An interview offers extra information besides spoken words from the respondents. "Social cues, such as voice, intonation and body language" (Opdenakker, 2006). Moreover, there is instant answering from the interviewee, hence this allows for a fast way of collecting data (ibid). The Business Communication (2013), provides the following advantages of an interview:

- Allows an opportunity for clarification in a case of confusion
- Offers first-hand information which is important for a research project
- It is an affordable means of communication

- It creates platform for both interviewer and interviewee to exchange information, therefore enlightening one another
- It is a suitable tool for extracting detailed information

3.5.2 Disadvantages of Interviews

According to the Business Communication (2013), an interview is a demanding activity, an interviewer is expected to master interview skills. Most of the time interviews are subjective. Moreover, preparing and conducting an interview is a lengthy process. An interview can be expensive particularly in a case where the interviewer has to travel a long distance (Opdenakker, 2006). There is no guarantee of anonymity and it has inconsistency (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

3.5.3 Interview Guide Design

The interview guide had overall 32 open-ended questions, with three sections. Section A dealt with the perceptions of editors of community newspapers towards citizen journalism. Section B dealt with the role of citizen journalism in community newspapers. The last section (section C) dealt with the application of gatekeeping to citizen journalism.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was analysed thematically. This involves pattern recognition where themes form part of analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In agreement, Vaismoradi (2013), states that thematic analysis is a process that includes the description and interpretation of themes. Themes were developed according to the response from the participants and the themes were also thoroughly analysed.

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

3.7.1 Dependability

According to Annay (2014), dependability refers to the stability of results over time. This means evaluating the findings of the study and ensuring that they are in line with the data collected. Audio recorder and field journal were used for data collection. These assisted to reflect whether the results correspond with the data collected from the participants. Moreover, it eliminated biasness through these tools. Stepwise replication was also applied to ensure dependability of the results. Stepwise replication is a process where other researchers analyse similar data separately and relate the results (Chilisa and Preece, 2005). Moreover, the researcher coded the data twice to ensure that the results are correct. "The code-recode strategy is whereby the research process allows multiple observation by the researcher, suggesting that the inter-rater or inter-observer code the data and compare the coding done by the inter-raterly" (Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2012).

3.7.2 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the process of reflecting the original sources in documents, journals and field notes. Through this process, the influence of the researcher is reduced (Mertens, 2005). Similar to dependability, confirmability can be achieved by an audit trial. This occurs where all the data collection activities are recorded either by a recorder or a journal (Bromley, Dockery, Fenton, Nhlema, Smith, Tolhurst and Theobald, 2006). The researcher will record the data collection activities in order to achieve confirmability.

3.7.3 Credibility

According to Trachim (2006), this criterion involves ensuring that the results of the study are believable from the viewpoint of the participants in the research. Direct quotations were used to ensure that original voices of the participants are reflected (Annay, 2014).

Furthermore, where necessary, follow up through email and telephone were made to the respondents to ensure that quality data is obtained.

3.7.4 Transferability

To ensure transferability of the results of this study, an in-depth and clear explanation of the research methodology and settings of the study was provided. This will help other scholars to duplicate the study in other contexts. "Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings" (Trachim, 2006). Moreover, Bitsch (2005), state that a researcher can achieve transferability by applying purposeful sampling. A detailed description of the participants will ensure replication of the study. Hence, the researcher applied purposive sampling by specifically selecting editors from community newspapers in Limpopo as participants.

3.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The chapter outlined the research methodology by providing a step by step discussion on how the research design was chosen, sampling was done, sample population was selected, and data were collected and analysed. Moreover, the study provided a profile of sampled community newspapers and areas of the study. An attempt was made to provide assurance on how the quality of the study would be enhanced through a discussion of the quality criteria. This was followed by a presentation of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the presentation and analysis of data collected for this study. It is separated into four sections. Section A consists of the respondent's demographics, section B covers respondent's perceptions towards citizen journalism. Section C deals with the role of citizen journalism in Limpopo community newspapers, while section D covers the respondent's application of gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content. Community newspaper editors in Limpopo province, (South Africa) were respondents in this study. As part of the confidentiality requirements, the respondents were addressed by their profession tittle (editor) and the first letter of their names (For example, Editor D, Editor W, Editor J, Editor E, Editor Y and Editor B). However, the first letter of editor DP's name is similar to that of Editor D. Therefore, Editor DP is differentiated from Editor D with the first letter of his name and the first letter of his surname.

4.1 SECTION A: PARTICIPANT'S DEMOGRAPHICS

Names of respondents	Gender	Age	Race	Years as an editor	Number of publications editing for
Editor D	Male	52	Black	7	1
Editor B	Male	39	White	7	3
Editor J	Male	60	Black	20	1
Editor E	Female	52	White	9	3
Editor Y	Female	48	White	6	3
Editor W	Male	50	White	15	2
Editor DP	Male	61	Black	18	1

Figure 2: Profile of Limpopo Community Newspapers Editors.

A total of seven community newspaper editors comprising of two (2) white female editors, two (2) white male editors and three (3) Black male editors participated in this study. The total number of editors could have been fourteen (14). However, four of the editors (Editor B, Editor E, Editor Y, and Editor W) are group editors editing for 3, 3, 3 and 2 titles in their respective media organizations. Their age range from 50 (fifty) to 62 (sixty-two) years. Their years of experience as editors range from 5 (five) to 20 (twenty) years.

3 SECTION B: EDITORS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

4.3.1 Advantages of Citizen Journalism

Few of the editors are of the view that citizen journalism has advantages, because of the ability of citizen journalists to access stories quickly and effortlessly compared to professional journalists. In support of this, Oyango (2014), explains that the death of Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet was firstly announced by citizen journalists. Traditional media only announced the news after the story broke. In response to the question on the advantages of citizen journalism to community newspapers, editors in this study expressed the following views concerning citizen journalism, particularly in accessing stories easily and fast:

> "Well you see, it might be helpful if you have a small newspaper like ours where we have few journalists and there are people elsewhere in the province who want their stories to be told. Since our newspaper is in Sepedi language, this makes it easy for our audiences to write stories. This way, we are able to get news as far as Jane-Furse. Also, with the help of technology someone can snap a picture and write what happened and send it to us. Our part would be to correct the story and make validations in order to have a balanced story." (Editor DP).

On a similar note, Editor D states that:
> "Citizen journalism has an advantage because it allows community members to help gather news anywhere. This means that at any time, they can take pictures and note important details of a certain events and make them available to journalists through cell phones".

Since citizen journalists are able to capture stories everywhere and at any time, they sort of make community newspapers to benefit fron citizen journalism. In agreement, Ali and Fahmy (2013), state that the active operation of social media results into ongoing production of news. As a result, some traditional media currently gain from citizen

journalists, who regularly deliver immediate stories as they develop. Moreover, Nguyen (2009), state that the high volume of stories captured through social media calls for the need to instantly report events and citizen journalists effectively fulfil this need of immediate reporting.

Editor J gives a different perspective concerning the advantage of citizen journalism by stating the following:

"Citizen journalism promotes regional news which allows a group of small community to tell their stories about their culture and other issues that makes them form part of a diverse nation".

Therefore, participants (editors) in this study outlined easy access to news at any time without limitation associated with location, and the promotion of regional news as advantages of citizen journalism. These views indicate that the participants are innovative, meaning they are open to new journalistic operations and ideas and are not resistant to change by holding on to their old journalistic practices and patterns.

Easy accessibility of stories plays a crucial role in all spheres of mass media. One of the ways community newspapers used to access stories is through news sources. However, the introduction of citizen journalism makes it possible for ordinary citizens to capture events as they happen through their smart phones and send them to news organisations, enhancing accessibility of stories. A typical example is the 2011 Arab Spring which was best captured and reported through social media. One of the reporters, who reported on the event using citizen journalist's content (Twitter), explained how it felt to report the event using citizen journalism content:

"It's a form of situational awareness, something I noticed in late June when I was in Tahrir Square in Cairo and hundreds of people were injured when the police attacked. I could only tell what was going on immediately in front of me. I could smell it, see it, feel it, hear it, but I didn't know what was truly going on, whereas when I was using social media I felt I had a better sense of what was happening on the ground. (Carvin, 2011)."

Despite the ability of citizen journalists to access news easily and fast, and to generate high news volumes, it is important to tackle the issue of the quality of such news from the professional journalistic point of view which deals with newsworthiness, credibility, authenticity, objectivity and balance. This is due to the fact that this ability alone cannot guarantee quality news. Citizen journalists are not aware of the importance of news quality and issues around it. Therefore, they might report any occurrence in their environment as news unlike the professional journalists who can easily distinguish between newsworthy and uninteresting stories based on the professional skills they have acquired over the years through academic learning, training and practice.

The promotion of regional news is another advantage that has been outlined by one of the editors. Therefore, citizen journalism acts as an enhancing tool towards community media because the main aim of community media is to promote community based issues. "Community media outlets support and contribute to their community's social, economic and cultural development" (Dorn-Fellermann, 2015). Citizen journalism strengthens this character by allowing citizens themselves to gather and write their own stories. Generally, young people have the potential to promote issues about their community through easy access to smart phones. They easily pick up events and share them through social media platforms. Therefore, this further indicates that citizen journalism does not only promote regional news, but it also encourages the youth to be active in civic engagements, which professional journalism failed to achieve. The report titled "Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (2015)", outline intertwined factors that account for the lack of youth participation within communities such as:

- Insufficient guide on how to participate in their communities.

- Lack of enthusiasm to voice out their opinions.

- Absence of platforms for young people to engage on community issues.

Other countries already have citizen journalism projects that encourage young people to promote their community issues such as the Arab Renaissance for Democracy in Tunisia and the Mustqbal Sahafatuna in Zarqa. Chiefly, it is important to note that young people should be at the forefront in driving the promotion of community issues through citizen journalism.

4.3.2 Disadvantages of Citizen Journalism

The majority of the editors are of the view that citizen journalism is disadvantageous to their profession because citizen journalists are not equipped with journalistic operational guidelines. For them, the liberty of practicing journalism without adhering to its guidelines puts citizen journalism at a disadvantageous position. They regard citizen journalists as amateurs and emphasized on their lack of professional journalistic skills such as confidentiality of news sources among others. Some of the responses from the editors are:

"…You find that there are some norms that have to be observed in journalism. For instances, there should be no mentioning of suspect's names until they appear in court and there should be no mention of minor's names because they might be exposed to trauma and abuse. These are some aspect of journalism citizen journalists are not aware of "(Editor DP).

"Citizen journalism consists of individuals who are immature, who know nothing about journalistic principles they need to adhere to in order to write a good story. The likelihood is that you are going to get people who aspire to be journalists and they will write stories as if they are writing an essay without any journalistic writing style" (Editor B).

For editor W, "Journalism is not like passing your opinion, but it is a professional job which requires one to use journalistic knowledge and codes, for example, confidentiality and fairness. Any other practice without journalistic guidelines is not quality journalism and it compromises the standard of journalism".

Editor W is of the view that: "There are ethics in journalism, policies and codes of conducts that one has to adhere to just like in every profession. Therefore, in journalism it is a journalist's responsibility to present news with responsibility and factual correctness. I don't think citizen journalism can always adhere to these requirements and guidelines. Consequently, the lack of journalistic guidance puts citizen journalism practice at a disadvantageous state".

Therefore, the main reason editors in this study are of the view that citizen journalism will impact negatively on traditional journalism is due to its lack of journalistic ethics. Ethics is an important aspect in any organisation. Hodges (1994), defines ethics as: "…branch of philosophy whose purpose is to describe moral sentiment, as well as to establish norms for good and fair behaviour". Hodges (ibid) further stipulates that ethics in journalism enables journalists to distinguish between what is wrong and what is right in the course of practicing their profession. In addition, Yang and Arant (2014), state that lack of journalistic ethical practice eradicates trust between news organisations and the public. This is currently evident through fake news found in the internet, which makes it difficult for audiences to trust most stories. Therefore, this indicates that participants in this study understand the importance of ethics and its role as a defining factor for professional journalism.

In agreement, Mustvairo (2014), notes that citizen journalists are highly associated with unprincipled operations. The above study is similar to a study conducted by Seth, Lewis and Dominic (2010), where 29 editors of community newspapers around the State of Texas were asked to express their opinions regarding citizen journalism. Some of the editors deemed citizen contribution as mismatched with the news production practice,

and they further pointed out that journalism should be left to the experts as the business of professionals only.

Lack of adherence to ethics in citizen journalism operations is a major concern to professional journalists. Despite this, citizen journalism is a concept that cannot be overlooked because it comes with digital revolution and advance operations. Therefore, this requires that there should be ethical guidelines that will govern the operation of citizen journalism. According to Roberts and Steiner (2012), there are existing principles for citizen journalism from Cyberjournalists.Net which are: Honesty, fairness, accountability and minimizing harm. Furthermore, Kuhn (2007), outlines the following ethical conducts for citizen journalist; truthfulness, and transparency. However, these ethics are seemingly not strictly practised in citizen journalism because there is no officially organised body to oversee their implementation by citizen journalists; everyone does as he or she deems fit. Also, there is a strong presence of online fake news and other unethical stories in social media. This further indicates that citizen journalists seem not to be awareness of the existence and importance of these ethics in their "journalism" practices. Consequently, citizen journalism operates under the motivation of civic participation but ignores the ethical issues within journalism.

Another possible reason for the editors to think that citizen journalism is disadvantageous to professional journalism could be due to their level of experience as editors in the community newspaper industry. These editors fall within the highest bracket (15-20 years) for professional years of experience. They are much concerned about sustaining the important values of journalism such as ethics rather than to accept or allow any practices that will threaten the values and standard of the profession. This may indicate the extent of their love for their profession and their willingness to defend it against any undue external influence, particularly from technological innovations. They may have also been interested in preserving traditional practices which strengthen and sustain journalism profession. However, it is important to acknowledge the benefits of citizen journalism which can be of great advantage to their organisations. Also, age may possibly have played a role in their opinion (52-60 years). Senior staff members find it hard to embrace

new ideas and break away from their routines within organisations. Fear of change and innovation and the need to preserve old patterns could be contributors to their unwillingness to adjustment.

4.3.3 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Enhancing Professional Journalism in Community Newspapers

When asked whether citizen journalism can play a positive role towards enhancing the identity of professional journalism. Majority of the editors expressed that citizen journalism can change and strengthen professional journalism within community newspapers for the best. They express the following views:

"… it can have a positive impact towards journalism, because it has a way of promoting democratic participation and that value is the most important in community newspapers" (Editor DP).

In his opinion, Editor J states that: "Young first-entry inexperienced aspirant reporters can be easily drawn to professional journalism through citizen journalism because the more they participate in collecting and writing stories the easier it will be for them to slowly develop passion for journalism".

According Editor, B "Citizen journalism promotes challenges and issues that small communities face. Issues such as: lack of service delivery and crime that is happening around the neighbourhood can be dealt with through citizen journalists writing". Also, "Citizen journalism can help community newspapers to strengthen the values of the community, since community newspapers aim at reflecting the diversity of a society" (Editor W).

Therefore, the main issues that editors of Limpopo community newspapers express in support of citizen journalism as a tool that enhances professional journalism are:

democratic participation, in-depth reflection of status quo of communities and promotion of diversity.

Community media is an effective tool that allows community members to fully participate and own their media. "Participation is possible for all community members and at all levels – programming, operating and even financing" (Dom-fellermann, 2015). However, the emergence of citizen journalism has taken the concept of community participation in community media particularly community newspapers into a new level, by allowing ordinary citizens to play a similar role as professional journalists through writing stories which they either send to news organisations or post them in the internet. This supports one of the corner stones of community media, which is democratic participation.

It is undeniable that the advancement of technology is channelling both the mainstream and community media towards expanding public participation. This direction is drastic and challenges fundamental traditional media operations. However, it is necessary for the survival and relevance of the media. At a mainstream level, professional journalists get to interact with mass audience and hear their views through social media particularly on comments about articles they publish online. Through these comments professional journalists are able to identify informational needs of the society. The unchanging characteristics of professional journalism is that it still communicates with large audiences. However, the difference with their current audiences in the digital era is that they are no longer passive like before, but are actively having a say on how news are presented to them, and are contributing in shaping the idea of news. Moreover, when audiences participate towards news production either through social media or article submission to media houses, they help professional journalists with breaking news which assists them to be ahead of news development.

At the community media level, professional journalism benefits from citizen journalism participation more than at the mainstream level. Apart from helping the community media to identify informational needs of the community, the relationship between community media and its audience is more intimate because audiences are more involved in their

media through ownership and control. Therefore, citizen journalism helps professional journalism at a community level to strengthen the relationship between the community media and its audience. Citizen journalism participation is a gate way to the promotion and, strengthening of diversity within the community, and assists in revealing the current situations within the community. Overall, the idea of citizen journalism participation puts citizens at the forefront in terms of shaping what is news according to them and this challenges professional journalists to ensure that the news picked up by the public is true and harmless.

In a study conducted by Seth et al (2010), editors who participated in a study are of the view that the concept of citizen journalism enhances participatory relationship between the society and its media. Editors of Limpopo community newspapers not only consider the concept of citizen journalism as an effective tool that enhances community contribution, but also as a tool that inspire young people to pursue journalism as a career. This indicates that they are aware of the shift in participatory roles brought by technology and they are ready to embrace the changes.

There are challenges that small community face and community media plays an important role in creating awareness about those challenges, particularly community newspapers. As Donohue, Philip, Techenor and Olien (1995) state, community newspapers are essential constituents of the community that are likely to mirror both the agenda and the tactics of the community power structure. In addition, Lauterer (2006), state that community newspapers as part of community media create a platform for audiences to play a vital role to an extent where they express their opinion on what they want to see in their media content. Therefore, citizen journalism does not only improve the privilege that community members have regarding their media, but also moves them from expressing their opinions about what content they want to see to a position where they can produce their content. This allows them to actively participate in the news production of their media.

Chiefly, editors in this study are of the view that citizen journalism improves the quality of journalism because it helps in reflecting current community issues through community members writing about their own issues. This indicates that editors acknowledge the potential that citizen journalism has in helping community members to further propagate and enhance important issues to them such as service delivery, crime, human development, and general development within their community.

4.3.4 Citizen Journalism as a Challenge to Professional Journalism

Editors were asked whether citizen journalism can change professional journalism for better or worse. Despite their responses above, majority of the editors believe that the present state of citizen journalism and its practices negatively impacts on the true identity of citizen journalism. Hence, it tends to rob-off on professional journalism accordingly as well.

According to Editor D: "Citizen journalism elevates immatures into the same level as professional journalism. By giving ordinary citizens the same status as professional journalists, it contaminates the concept of journalism".

For Editor B: "Citizen journalism depreciates the value of journalism because it allows everyone to practice journalism without any form of training and practice. What is needed is just for the citizen to have the right electronic garget and know how to use its features to record news events and disseminate them".

"It cannot be ignored that citizen journalism has lots of challenges such as lack of truth and objectivity. That is not good in journalism be it community or mainstream journalism". Thus, editors in this study are of the view that citizen journalism challenges pose a threat to the authenticity of professional journalism. Therefore, it is important to define professional journalism and what contributes to its originality. According to Adam (1993), journalism is a platform in which trained individuals capture and depict events that are happening. Deuze, (2005), outlines values of journalism as:

●Public service

●Objectivity

●Autonomy

●Immediacy

●Ethics

These values create a distinguishing factor between journalism and other professions in general. Furthermore, they indicate that the mandate of journalism is to immediately serve the public with information as it unfolds, guided by morals without being influenced by the state. Citizen journalism imitates the operation of professional journalism, however it is not guided by journalism principles. Consequently, it poses a threat towards professional journalism values such as ethics and objectivity among others. However, it compliments professional journalism values to the society such as being the avenue through which the people voice out their concerns, and assisting to promote public service delivery and immediacy in news production and consumption.

The definition of citizen journalism clearly outlines its treats towards professional journalism. Most scholars in their definitions, indicate the lack of professionalism in citizen journalism. Particularly Duffy, Thorson and Jahng (2010) explain that a citizen journalist is an individual, who is not skilled as a qualified journalist, however disseminate stories in their society. In support of this, Bruns (2005), uses the word "produzers" instead of producers, and the reason for this term is to emphasize the lack of journalistic attributes inherent in citizen journalism. Therefore, these definitions indicate that the concept of citizen journalism pose a threat towards professional journalism.

Citizen journalism is not the only concept that has posed a challenge to professional journalism. In the early 2000s, the development of media technology brought about the concept of convergence. Ong (2010), defines convergence "as the ability of different network platforms to carry essentially similar kinds of services and the coming together of consumer devices such as the telephone, television, and personal computer". This concept challenged the culture and operation of media particularly journalism. Dueze and

Quandt (2007), explain the impact of media convergence. Convergence in news organizations is not so much a technological, but rather a cultural process, which is experienced by the professionals involved as a struggle over their professional identity. In other words: Multimedia journalism, in whatever shape or size it comes, influences, changes and challenges what it means to be a (good) journalist. Therefore, there is a clear indication that since the development and advancement of media technology, the operation of professional journalism has undergone a number of challenges. However, professional journalists strive to overcome these challenges, while at the same time, endeavour to adapt to such technology advancements.

As stated by editors in this study, the ability of ordinary citizens to occupy the same position and relevance as professional journalists devalues the concept of professional journalism, and works against the above values stated by Dueze (2005). Citizen journalists are not familiar with journalistic values. However, with the availability of, and access to the right technologies, they gather and disseminate news with immediacy without any form of guidance and guideline, similar to professional journalists who have the knowledge and the skills to apply and stick to journalistic guidelines in their practices.

4.3.5 Editor's Motivation to Incorporate Citizen Journalism Content

The majority of the editors state that they would advise other fellow editors to incorporate citizen journalism. They express the following views:
"Yes, I would advise others to incorporate citizen journalism, but I would also advise them to be cautious in doing this. I mean, they should be able to clearly distinguish the roles between citizen journalism and professional journalism" (Editor W).

"I would encourage that because, sometimes we want to cover some topics like, for instance, HIV. Now, I do not know much about HIV in our communities, but there are individuals in the community who can assist in the topic, for instance a nurse or a doctor or someone who has been working closely with HIV issues. They may be able to

contribute by writing articles that will enrich the knowledge of our readers. Our role would be to align the article according to our organisational guidelines" (Editor L).

Editor, J states that: "Citizen journalism will help to enhance democratic participation from the community". Editor B is of the view that: "Even though it may bring many challenges but it will help community newspapers to stay in touch with news that are happening within and around the community". "Yes, you cannot be everywhere all the time; the community can assist in being our eyes and ears" (Editor E).

The above expressions indicate that editors in this study encourage the incorporation of citizen journalism in newspaper organizations. This is based on their conviction that citizen journalism plays a better role as eyes and ears of the society by providing immediate access to news developments. This is evidenced in the incident that occurred in Dayveton South Africa, where a man was dragged by the police behind a police van. A video of the incident taken by an ordinary citizen which clearly captured the event was later useful to media houses particularly the SABC and etv (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). In a case where there was no citizen capturing the event on the spot, the possibility of a professional journalist arriving on time to capture the incident was slim. An eye witness was going to be useful to the professional journalist, but it was not going to have a powerful impact as the event recorded on spot by a citizen journalist. Media organizations benefit from citizen journalism stories through social media platforms, by observing what is trending and then do follow ups and in-depth research according to the public's preference (Kelly, 2009).

In conjunction with what is expressed by Editor L, some editors in a study conducted by Seth et al (2010) state that citizen journalism helps in contributing expertise on certain topics; hence they welcome consistent columns contributors. As suggested by Editor W, there should be caution when editors incorporate citizen journalism. Duarte (2017), supports this by stating that in the midst of high killing of journalists in Sonora, citizen journalism is strongly emerging, blurring the lines between it and professional ethics and

roles. Owing to this, Duarte (2017), believes there should be a clear ethical and role distinguishing strategy between citizen journalism and professional journalism.

If all editors of Limpopo community newspapers incorporate citizen journalism in their publications, they could benefit a lot. It will not only strengthen public participation but it will also help community newspaper organisations to establish a strong online presence. Citizen journalism is more effective when practised online. For example, if community members can get the opportunity to post their stories online and comment on everyday published stories, it will assist community newspaper organisations to attract more community members to advertise in their publications since online advertising is cheaper than print advertising. Consequently, online advertising will strengthen the already established advertising mode (print advertising) which will increase their profit. However, community newspapers should not do away with print advertising, but should operate both print and online operations in order to accommodate readers of all age groups. This will be beneficial for sustainability of the newspapers.

One editor said they would not advise other editors to incorporate citizen journalism in their content. However, they would advise them to come up with new strategies that will enhance the participation of audiences through opinion piece or letter to the editor. Moreover, Editor P also supports this view and stated that:

"I will not. Instead I would always advice community newspapers to rather have a broad spectrum of contacts from the communities because that is how they are supposed to get leads for news. However, I don't think allowing any citizen or member of a community to write a story for the media is appropriate unless it's in a form of a newsletter expressing a form of opinion or whatever".

4.3.6 The Possibility of Citizen Journalism Replacing Professional Journalism

Editors were asked whether citizen journalism will replace professional journalism. Majority of the editors believe that citizen journalism will not replace professional journalism. They expressed the following views:

"Professional journalism will always strive because people will always trust news created by professional journalists, since there is a lot of fake news" (Editor D). Editor W is of the view that "professional journalism will probably grow stronger because citizen journalism is just a stepping stone to professional journalism. It will reform itself and will adapt to technological changes without losing its professional status".

"No, professional journalism will not be replaced by citizen journalism. What I see is that these concepts can only work and complement each other" (Editor J).

Therefore, the opinions of the editors in this study indicate that despite the prevalence of citizen journalism and technological advancement, professional journalism will still strive by adapting to technical developments and enhancing its professional status. This depicts their understanding that journalism is at the heart of an evolving society and professional journalism will also evolve at the same time providing information without harm and exploitation of community members.

As indicated by Editor W, professional journalism will strive to keep itself relevant in the midst of technological advancements. Bowman (2008), explains how professional journalism is currently keeping itself relevant amongst high volume of news. He states that, irrespective of the persistence of citizen journalists, traditional media remains in control in terms distributing stories. They maintain their powerful position in the monitoring of social media content. In his findings, he articulates that traditional media is still relevant in a digital media because they do not neglect stories provided by citizen journalists. They ensure that the stories they select are in line with their organisation's traditions and routines. In agreement, Hamdy and Gomaa, (2012), state that traditional media regularly

select stories that are of high interest to the public from social media sites. Also, the manner in which professional journalists are trained to craft stories emphasises the protection and preservation of people's culture and dignity. On the other hand, citizen journalists are driven by sensationalism, controversy, pursuit of fame and money in their journalism practices at the expense of objectivity and accuracy. Some editors believe that journalism evolves over time; hence citizen journalism will help professional journalism to adapt to the technological changes (Seth, 2010).

Editor E states that "overtime, citizen journalism will replace professional journalism because weekly newspapers cannot compete with internet where, anyone can post anything". Kelly (2009), stipulates that most of the time traditional media leaves out some stories because of space. Citizen journalism through social media platforms gets multiple spaces to publish and capture high volume of stories that are of public interest such as community protest among others. Thus, community or traditional media finds itself at an advantageous position due to availability of space.

Generally, professional journalism will only strive if it adapts to current technology advances in media operations, and at the same time not compromising their ethical standard. Flexibility is required to make this possible. Technological revolution is changing the media landscape leaving them with the choice of either to embrace these technologies or remain with their traditional operations and be gradually out of business. However, the media is slowly adapting to technological changes but also maintaining some of their traditional mode of operations that play fundamental role in their functionalities such as ethics and gatekeeping among others.

4.3.7 Citizen Journalism as a Breeding Ground for Professional Journalism

When asked if they think citizen journalism can produce good journalism, editors expressed the following views:

"Good journalism comes through training and practice. Therefore, I don't think citizen journalism can produce good journalists" (editor D). "I don't think so. They need to get proper training" (Editor B).

"No, I believe the only way a good journalist can be produced is through professional journalistic training and consistently practicing what has been taught. You see training alone is not enough I am saying this because we still have professional journalists who still fail to practice what they have been taught particularly ethics" (Editor W).

In agreement Kasoma (cited in Tomaselli, 2009) writes: If untrained citizens become journalists, they are oblivious about principles of ethics. While it was generally acknowledged that citizen journalists might not be trained in journalistic ethics, traditional journalists were seen as being at least equally at fault. One respondent even claimed that "traditional journalists, although professional trained, are generally more unethical and biased than bloggers who usually disclose their position up front." Cela (2015), also emphasises the need for proper training for one to be a professional journalist, by stating that:

> "…other editors and reporters believe that because they have the experience and the required education and this is a task that should be carried by them and not the citizens. Journalists spend four to five years in university to become professionals. While in internet people with different educational background, sometimes inappropriate, can be part of news production via social media. Being a professional requires a lot of efforts and also a work culture is formed during these years of education and work. Ethics is also another value to consider. Journalism is a profession build on trust and people need to know that the content they are listening or reading is true and accurate. Hence honesty is a very important ethical value but citizens are not always loyal to the

Therefore, the opinions expressed by editors in this study centres around the need for training in order for one to be a good journalist. In other word, there is no proper journalism

without training. Editor W further elucidates this view by contributing that even professional journalists still struggle to consistently practice what they have been taught through tertiary institutions. Hence, citizen journalists without training cannot produce high quality journalism products or practice good journalism. Moreover, the editor's concerns also indicate that they understand the importance of acquiring journalistic skills. Few editors are of the view that citizen journalism can be a good foundation that can produce good journalists because it develops passion for journalism which later will lead them to pursue professional journalism. They express the following views:

"I think it could be a platform for somebody who has always been striving to be a journalist, may be, a youngster who wants to evolve in journalism career. However, it takes a very special person to be a journalist because journalism is not an average profession that you would want every person to embark on. Not every person has journalistic qualities" (Editor Y).

Editor DP is of the view that: "Citizen journalism can be a good foundation for journalists because people especially young ones get use to express their ideas".

Since citizen journalism emerged from the advancement of mobile and digital media, young people are likely to be active participants. Hence, editors in this study understand the potential that young people have to become professional journalists. As part of evoking passion for journalism among young people. A project called "*Iindaba Ziyafika*" a brain child of Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies was created to train young people to be effective citizen journalists through the use of Short Message Services (SMS) and submit their stories to *Grocotts's Mail* (Berger, 2011).

Journalism students have also helped citizen journalists to generate videos on the newspaper's website (see www.grocotts.co.za/CJvideos). The newsroom itself has been the hub of weekly free courses for young adults (mainly unemployed people). This category of learners, like the schools, has generated waves of journalistic content and appears to be somewhat more sustainable. Since March 2010, top performers in the

programme have been provided with informal status in the newsroom, where they attend news conferences and pitch their stories. A token of honorarium is paid in acknowledgement of any stories that get published. In this way, the paper also hopes that its co-option of citizens will not equate to simple exploitation of their energies (ibid). Through this project, young people can easily have the interest to pursue professional journalism. Importantly, the fact that they receive guidance from professional journalists means that they might have learnt and imbibe a bit of journalistic principles.

4.3.8 Cohesive Combination of Citizen Journalism and Professional Journalism

Editors were also asked if they think citizen journalism and professional journalism can work together harmoniously. Most of them believe that citizen journalism and professional journalism can work harmoniously. They express the following views:

Editor B is of the view that "community members know best where interesting events are, taking into account that they use to be sources before the development of concept of citizen journalism".

"Yes, the combination can work as long as there is a clear distinction between citizen journalism and professional journalism" (Editor W).

"Yes for sure, professional journalists can work with citizen journalists. I also think that to a certain extent, citizen journalism could contribute towards enhancing journalism by getting better news leads or stories" (Editor Y).

"Yes, the combination will result into more and faster news, and more photos of news scenes" (Editor E).

For editor L, the combination of professional journalism is possible because "citizen journalists are everywhere and professional journalists are able to craft stories, hence it can work".

All the editors acknowledge the role of citizen journalism in effectively enhancing journalism practice. and that it can be combined with professional journalism. This indicates that though citizen journalism has its disadvantages like any other human and technological endeavours, its advantages can be of great value to the media in general, and community media organisations in particular. However, it is critically important to clearly distinguish the roles of citizen journalism and professional journalism when combining the two types of journalism as stated by Editor E. Ornebring (2013), state that there are three fields where variance between qualified journalism and unprofessional journalism is evident.

Expertise: This refers to the understanding and expertise acquired from teaching, couching and background. Also Ornebring (2013), state that journalist choose what type or information should be published, summarize it, and write it in a language that the public will understand. Moreover, they critically analyse it then presents it to the public. Therefore, compared to citizen journalism, professional journalists have skills to filter information through the process gatekeeping which results go into quality news for the public. On the other hand, citizen journalism produces large volumes of news items which sometimes is harmful to the public.

Duty: This means the responsibility that professional journalists have in constantly providing information that is strongly founded on ethics. This means that before publishing a story, professional journalists conduct a thorough research about the story. This includes checking whether all parties involved in the story have told their side of the story. However, citizen journalist stories are often characterised by personal opinions and gossip.

Autonomy: This means professional journalism should be free from the control from either within themselves or outside. "However, autonomy is very difficult to be known and also is very difficult to determine whether citizen journalists are autonomous or not".

(Ornebring, 2013:38). Since citizen journalism doesn't have principles or ethics and an institution that they are affiliated to. They are therefore vulnerable to influence.

These distinguishing factors are in conjunction with the views of editors in this study since they are of the view that citizen journalism can work cohesively with professional journalism. Moreover, there is a need for clarification of roles between citizen journalism and professional journalism in order to prevent confusion and legal implications within community newspapers. However, it is also important to note that the distinguishing strategies do not temper with freedom of participation from citizen journalists.

The objective of this section was to find out the perceptions of editors of Limpopo community newspapers concerning the concept of citizen journalism. Overall, the editors do not view citizen journalism as advantageous, but as a concept that can enhance and not replace citizen journalism. Moreover, they believe that both citizen journalists and professional journalists can work together cohesively and that citizen journalism can play a positive role in inspiring young people to pursue journalism as their career. This means that, despite the disadvantages of citizen journalism, editors of Limpopo community newspapers are aware that citizen journalism can effectively contribute to great innovative and successful operations in their media houses.

4.4 SECTION C: THE ROLE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF LIMPOPO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS, AND THOSE OF THE COMMUNITY

4.4.1 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Promoting Freedom of Expression in Community Newspapers

Editors were asked how citizen journalism will help their organisation to promote freedom of expression. The following opinions were expressed by the editors:

"Well, the basis of community newspapers is to promote freedom of expression at the grassroots level. However, with the help of citizen journalism there will be an enhancement of freedom of expression because community members will not be limited to participating through 'Letter to the Editor' only, but will also be able to write their own stories" (Editor B).

"Citizen journalism will help to enhance freedom of expression because citizens have more liberty and opportunity to voice out their concerns not only through article writing, but also through social media platforms. However, it is also important to note that freedom of expression can lead to misuse of speech particularly, in social media. For instance, people can use the opportunity to insult each other or communicate their personal agendas" (Editor W).

"Giving a person a voice is already part of that expression of freedom. I believe before the emergence of citizen journalism we gave citizens the chance to only comment in our newspapers. However, citizen journalism gives a better way of participation which is through social media, where current news is frequently updated. Making them relevant" (Editor P).

"By allowing citizens to write their stories, citizen journalism helps a lot in promoting freedom of expression. It will create a platform for the community to tell their own stories and be more involved in their media" (Editor DP).

"If our organization offers multiple platforms for citizens to express themselves it empowers the public, particularly, politicians on how the newspapers work" (Editor D).

It is evident that participants in this study acknowledge that citizen journalism will help newspaper organizations to enhance existing freedom of expression platforms, such as letters to the editor. Additionally, it enables for regular update of news stories which enhances the relevance of such stories to their readers. This is contrary to what happens in traditional or hard editions of newspaper. Citizen journalism provides the platform where citizens can comment on breaking news and influence the concept of news by writing their own stories and spread them. In addition, Riaz, (2011), state that:

> "Citizen journalism is almost free of charge journalism because non-journalists express their views and share their knowledge online without any financial reward. With the advent of this phenomenon, new communities have found their place in modern societies. It is an expression of the fundamental democratic principle of freedom of speech. More voices in the public arena can add to a more vibrant democracy. The contribution of citizens who comment on issues of public concern is appreciated all over the world. Especially in countries without freedom of expression, the world wide web plays a crucial role in informing the people. The most important thing is that the digital media are opening up the sphere to those who previously had no means to make themselves heard" (Riaz, 2011).

Even though there is an acknowledgement of advancement of freedom of expression, there is also an acknowledgement of misuse of the platform for freedom of expression where citizen journalists can express offensive opinions either directed to each other, individuals in the society, or to the newspaper organisation. This indicates that editors of Limpopo community newspapers endorse and promote freedom of expression, and are favourably disposed towards incorporating citizen journalism in their editorial practices based on technological innovations within their reach. However, as they acknowledge the innovation citizen journalism is contributing to freedom of expression, they see it as their

responsibility not to allow citizen journalists to misuse their freedom of expression to abuse one another or promote anti-social ideas and discourses.

As noted by editors in this study. the advanced privilege of freedom of expression that comes with citizen journalism also results into misuse of freedom of speech. The misuse of freedom of expression is evident through cyberbullying. Johannes (2018), defines cyberbullying as "when a child or group of children (under the age of 18) intentionally intimidate, offend, threaten, or embarrass another child or group of children, specifically through the use of information technology, such as a website or chat room on the Internet, a cellular telephone, or another mobile device." Moreover, South Africa has a high percentage of cyberbullying (ibid). According to O'keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011), cyberbullying exists because of lack of social media regulating policies, teenagers sharing too much information, teenagers posting false information about themselves and others. Furthermore, the implications of cyberbullying can include severe depression among teenagers. Therefore, the role of citizen journalism in enhancing freedom of expression comes with challenges of misuse of freedom expression particularly through social media platforms.

4.4.2 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Motivating and Raising Awareness about Issues that Affect the Minority Groups

Editors were asked what role citizen journalism can play in creating awareness about issues affecting minority groups. They expressed the following opinions:

"It plays a positive role, since it allows everyone to write their story, which will motivate even the minority group to do so" (Editor B).

"It will play an important role, because it will make gays and lesbians feel like part of the community because sometimes they receive criticism from members of the community" (Editor W).

"Yes for sure, they will be able to communicate their views and challenges that result in them being excluded from the general community" (Editor Y).

"A huge role. It will help them to express their grievances as a minority group because they face numerous challenges" (Editor E).

Majority of community members usually share common values or agree on certain principles. However, if few community members don't share those values or principles with the majority of the members of the community, they are considered as minority group and experience social exclusion. Therefore, according to editors in this study, through citizen journalism, members of the minority group will be able to bridge the gap between them and the majority group within the community. This is because citizen journalism can enable the minority group to raise awareness about their plights in the community, advocate for support from within and outside the community, and remedy the alienation they are experiencing. In agreement, Oyango (2013) states that marginalized voices use citizen journalism platforms to voice out their challenges and to express their grievances. In South Africa, a citizen journalism initiative supported by the European Developing Countries aims at advocating for the marginalised minorities by requesting them to write articles on particular topics (Banda, 2010). When ordinary citizens form part of news production process they feel a sense of representation and pride, they share sometime valuable and distinct contents (Riaz, 2011).

4.4.3 Citizen Journalism to Enhance the News Quality of Community Newspapers in Limpopo Province

Editors were asked whether they think citizen journalism will enhance professional journalism for better or worse. They expressed these views:
"Citizen journalism will enhance professional journalism for the better because community members are the eyes and ears of their own community. They have a closer relationship with prominent community members and with one another compared to professional journalists" (Editor Y).

"Citizen journalists are exposed to their everyday environment. Hence, they have the potential to produce high volume of stories. As a result, professional journalism can be strengthened because of high volume of news produced by citizen journalists especially in community media, because they address community based issues" (Editor DP).

"To a certain extent yes, because citizen journalists can bring in lots of stories and the more stories we receive, the higher the chance of drawing newsworthy stories from them" (Editor Y).

Therefore, the responses from the editors indicate that editors of Limpopo community newspapers are acknowledging that citizen journalism is a resourceful tool for enhancing the operations, and to some extent, the sustainability of community newspapers. In the same note, Ali and Fahmy (2013), state that "citizen journalismZAAWSssxsz provides powerful source of news for the rest of the world. However, it also provided a valuable resource for traditional media that had the ability to pick and choose stories that fitted their organizations' routines".

Most of the editors agree that the contribution of stories from citizens will help community newspapers to enhance their news quality because it0020will challenge professional journalists to apply journalistic principles intensely towards citizen journalism content to ensure they produce only quality news. As Editor DP explains, that citizen journalists will be bringing in more news stories and photos, which will make it easier to draw out quality news from the news stories by applying news selection guidelines.

However, few editors believe that citizen journalism will not contribute in any way towards enhancing the quality of community newspaper content. They express the following views:

> "I don't think citizen journalism can enhance the quality of news because it is up to the editor to do so. Even, if there could be high volume of stories that we receive,

if the content does not meet the newsworthy standard then it is not news. Through gatekeeping the editor ensures that there is quality news." (Editor, E).

"No, because as an editor, I must ensure quality of our publications by applying gatekeeping and other journalistic guidelines that ensure the quality of news story" (Editor W).

According to Gade (2008), editors are the chief foundation of journalism in a media organisation because they are directors of the newsroom and they ensure that quality professional journalism practice is maintained in a media organisation. Moreover, Griffitiths (2010), state that editors have the power to shape the idea and quality of news. "Therefore, any debate about the role of the media needs to consider the role that editors play in defining the role of the media" (Ibid).

Thus, it is evident that editors share the same sentiments by Gade and Griffitihs that editors are individuals who ensure that quality and harmless stories reach the public. This indicates that citizens might be in positions to access a high volume of news. However, editors determine what quality news is.

4.4.4 Citizen Journalism's Role Towards the Fulfilment of Informational Needs of the Community

The participants were asked what role citizen journalism can play in fulfilling the informational needs of the community. Most of the editors are of the view that citizen journalism will provide stories which are relevant, current and important to their newspapers. They express the following views:

"Yes it will, particularly regarding entertainment news. Most community members like entertainment stories, and it also forms part of the culture of the community. If someone is wedding or a sporting event is published in our newspapers that will be good for the community and it is what they want to see" (Editor B).

"If community members write news stories they think it is of importance to them, therefore, community members will be able to provide news according to their informational needs" (Editor DP).

"Well, in the case of informational needs, it will play a positive role. Community members know their needs very well, hence they will be able to provide news that is suitable for them" (Editor W).

Therefore, editors view citizen journalism as a tool that will help in meeting informational needs of the society. This is because they understand that one of their mandate as community media is to ensure that they tell stories of the society and since citizen journalism allows the society to tell their own stories, that serves as an advantage.

One editor has a different view, she expressed the following opinion:

"No, I don't think so because citizen journalists may identify their informational needs differently compared to professional journalists. There might be a strong misunderstanding between the two groups. Citizen journalists might strongly feel that their story deserves to be published but an editor might not publish it because they might feel it lacks relevance and prominence" (Editor Y).

Therefore, from the view of Editor Y, community members know what they want to read. However, editors determine what is news according to their news values and guidelines. In a way, this creates two different definitions of the community members' informational needs. Most community members value gossip over factual news. Hence, they will define their news informational needs along those types of stories. Due to their experience and consistent practice of journalistic values, professional journalists know better what newsworthy story looks like (Seth, 2010).

4.4.5 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Contributing to the Profitability of Limpopo Province Community Newspapers

All the editors state that citizen journalism will not play any role in increasing the profit of their community newspapers. They express the following opinions:

"It will not have any impact on our profit margin because community newspapers depend on advertising to get profit" (Editor B).

"Absolutely not, citizen journalism does not have any impact on our organization's profit because advertising team is responsible to generate revenue" (Editor W).

"I strongly believe it is the duty of the advertising department to contribute to the financial wellness of our business by ensuring that members of the community advertise their services in our organisation" (Editor Y).

From the views of the editors in this study, citizen journalism is not helping community newspapers financially. Profit making in community newspapers is a major challenge because it can only be generated through advertising. This requires members of the community to actively participate in advertising in order for their community newspapers to strive. This therefore, calls for the need for editors to encourage community members not only to contribute their stories but also advertise their products through their organisation. Furthermore, this means that community members need to play an active role in sustaining their community newspapers.

The views of the editors that citizen journalism will not contribute to the profitability of community newspapers may not be true when this is considered in terms of its overall contributions to community newspaper organisations. Advertisers are attracted to a newspaper organisation due to its high level of readership and circulation figures, which are the products of the quality of their news content and acceptance by their audiences. By helping to increase the volume of news stories, providing wider coverage of the community, and making the community members active participants in their community

newspapers, citizen journalism greatly contributes to increase in readership of the community newspapers, attract advertisers, and invariably, contribute to the profitability of community newspapers.

4.4.6 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Enhancing Community Newspaper Readership

Most editors state that citizen journalism will help community newspapers to increase their readership. They express the following views:

"It will have a positive impact because if we include stories written by citizen journalists there will be an attraction of other citizens' attention, because they like to read stories about or written by people whom they can relate to" (Editor B).

"Yes, community members love to read things that are affecting them" (Editor W).

"Yes it will, because some of stories will be written by citizens within the community and that will invite more readers either to complement or critic the writers or the news stories they have written" (Editor Y).

"Yes it will, when someone has written a story he or she will invite and encourage other community members to read his or her story" (Editor D).

Therefore, the dominating reason for editors to agree that citizen journalism will play an enhancement role towards readership is because they believe it enables community members to reflect on their societal identity and fully engage in their own media content. In agreement, Noor (2017), citizen journalism draws more readers and news through their contributions.

4.4.7 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Enhancing Journalistic Ethics in Community Newspapers

All the editors are of the opinion that citizen journalism does not play a positive role in terms of enhancing journalistic ethics (such as (truthfulness, partiality confidentiality, fairness credibility) in the community newspaper operations. They expressed the following views:

> "I think there's a reason why people study for 3-4 years to become professional journalists, and when they arrive here we offer them a platform for them to practice the journalistic ethics they have acquired. We are avoiding unethical journalistic operations, but citizen journalism seems to be promoting unethical journalistic operations" (Editor W).

"No, citizen journalists lack ethics in their practice, hence, I don't see how they will help in strengthening the ethics of journalism" (Editor B).

"No, it will not help to enhance it, instead, it destroys ethics. Journalistic ethics are what separate good journalist from the rest. If one lacks ethics, then they pose a threat to quality journalism" (Editor Y).

In agreement, Moyo (2009), state that when citizen journalists write stories they don't conduct a thorough investigation, they expect readers to verify the stories themselves. Moyo also cautions that since citizen journalists lack ethical practice and they are capable of spreading incorrect information that will lead to chaos. Seth et al (2010), state that citizen journalists lack balance and fairness and this puts them at the disadvantage position because they don't have to account to anyone. Moreover, they believe that citizen journalists are not aware of ethics because they do not even know they exist. Citizen journalism was described as a concept that has no confidentiality (Oyango, 2013). Therefore, the lack of confidentiality in journalism leads to deformation of character and gossip, and the major concern about user generated content is its legal implications such

as being sued for libel among others (Seth et al, 2010). This will affect their organisation in a negative way.

Overall, the objective of this section was to find out the possible roles citizen journalism can play in enhancing the state of community newspapers in Limpopo province of South Africa. Editors are of the view that citizen journalism does not play any role towards enhancing the profitability of community newspapers. However, a closer look at the role of citizen journalism in the community newspaper setup indicates that citizen journalism can improve the profit margins of community newspapers by enhancing news coverage of the community, increasing readership and circulation figures, and ultimately attracting advertisers to the newspapers.

However, the editors believe that citizen journalism is playing a positive role towards strengthening democratic values such as freedom of expression, representation of minority group and fulfilment of informational needs of the community members. Moreover, they believe that citizen journalism will enhance their news quality and readership.

4.5 SECTION D: THE APPLICATION OF GATEKEEPING TO CITIZEN JOURNALISM CONTENT

4.5.1 Incorporation of Citizen Journalism in Limpopo Community Newspapers

Editors were asked whether they incorporate citizen journalism content in their newspapers. Some editors stated that they don't incorporate citizen journalism content and they express the following reasons:

"Writing stories should be left to the professionals. Citizen journalists have no knowledge about article writing styles and other requirements that contributes to a good article." (Editor D).

"We don't incorporate citizen content because it will require a lot of attention and couching. Professional journalists know how to write an article according to journalistic standards. Citizen journalists write without any guidelines." (Editor B).

"We have done it in the past and it died down, because we were receiving fake news. Instead we ensure that we establish more sources or people who can lead us to the occurrence of incidents or help us to make follow ups and to give us information, or just to set the record straight and to give the actual reflection of what happened" (Editor Y).

"No we don't, the challenge will be the work burden that will come with it. The content will come with lots of mistakes which will be burdensome" (Editor W).

Because of the work overload that comes with citizen journalism content, some editors of Limpopo community newspapers decide to refrain from incorporating citizen journalism. As indicted by editor D that article writing should solemnly be a duty of professional journalists. His view indicates the importance of quality writing which is guided by journalistic principles such objectivity truthfulness among others. In agreement, White (2018), state that:

> "Journalistic writing is objective, meaning that it relies on facts and evidence, rather than opinions or emotional appeals. Many journalists view their work as a public service, and journalistic ethics set a very high standard for objectivity and fact-checking".

However, citizen journalists do not know the importance of objectivity and truthfulness, hence it will not reflect in their writing. This will create challenges for editors who incorporate citizen journalism content. Overall, this indicates that the editors prefer to deal

with news items that are compiled by professional journalists which come with minor challenges compared to content written by citizen journalists.

Chiefly, citizen journalists can contribute stories to news organisations not only by writing but through videos. According to Dreier (2012), Al-Jazeera and Cable News Network have adopted the citizen journalism video submission.

> Letting people upload their own news videos is nothing new: CNN, for example, has offered its iReport feature since 2006. Al-Jazeera began experimenting with its Sharek portal (which means "share") in late 2007, so it was well-positioned to capture striking first-person views during the Arab Spring uprisings of 2010 and 2011 (ibid).

Therefore, it is important for editors of Limpopo community newspapers who believe that the incorporation and contribution of citizen journalist will result into tiresome editing, to consider other convenient ways such as video and picture submission which will make citizen contribution effective.

 Editors who are incorporating citizen content stated the following reasons:
"We do incorporate citizen journalism content, because citizen journalists have the ability to provide information that we might not be able to get hold of. They live in different locations within a community. Hence, they can report different incidents which reflect diversity of the community" (Editor L).

"It is difficult to be everywhere always but through citizen journalism we can get news almost through every part of the community. However, the writing of citizen journalism will require intense regulations" (Editor E).

"We incorporate citizen journalism content because we want to encourage community members to form part of their own newspaper. As encouraged by the community media

principles, community members should be active in the operations of the community media and citizen journalism through article writing strengthens that principle" (Editor J).

Therefore, it is evident that some editors who incorporate citizen journalism content do so because they believe they will be able to reflect the diversity of the community. On the other hand, they incorporate citizen journalism content because they want to strengthen media literacy. Livingstone (2004) defines media literacy as: "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts". This means the capability to reflect the awareness to receive, interpret and respond to messages. If citizens are able to write their stories without limitations that reinforces the liberty of communication. On the contrary, Moeller (2009), suggests that both citizen journalists and professional journalists in the current technological advanced state need media literacy. Media literacy training is necessary to assist professional journalists to create awareness to citizen journalists on how to submit and collect newsworthy stories. Furthermore, citizen journalists also need to take the initiative to learn on how to write and report quality news (ibid).

Most of the editors who said they are not incorporating citizen journalist's content are willing to incorporate it, they express the following views:
"Yes we are willing to incorporate it. However, we are aware that this means we have to be ready and plan how to get through the work over load, but since it will help community to contribute towards their newspaper then we might take up the challenge" (Editor B).

"Yes I believe since we once did it, we are now aware of the things we should take note of. Basically, we will have a better change to come up with strategies that will help us to incorporate citizen journalism content" (Editor Y).

"We can, as long as we will be able to draw the line between citizen journalists and professional journalists. Because I believe that citizen journalists are currently having undeserving journalistic roles" (Editor D).

The willingness of the majority editors to incorporate citizen journalism in the news productions positively indicates that they understand the need for embracing new operations that strengthens the diversity and media literacy. Importantly, these editors acknowledge that the incorporation needs to be thoroughly incorporated in order preserve the quality of professional journalism at the same embracing innovative operations. As a matter of fact, Pavlik (2013, 181) state that:

"To insure long-term success, innovation in news media should be guided by four principles: intelligence or research, a commitment to freedom of speech, a dedication to the pursuit of truth and accuracy in reporting, and ethics. Evidence is presented that early innovation by news media leaders that adhere to the principles outlined here are finding success in both building audience and generating digital revenue".

One editor is not willing to incorporate citizen journalism:

"No, like I said it will demand a lot of attention, hence it will increase the work overload" (Editor W). In conjunction with this sentiment Oyango (2013), state the following:

"Majority of the respondents (93%) felt that it was necessary to have guidelines in handling challenges while a few felt otherwise. Majority of them were of the opinion that the guidelines should be in line with the editorial policy while others felt that there should be a consensus between editors to disregard images and messages that are not clear".

Clearly, editors in this study hold strong views that emphasises that the incorporation of citizen journalism will come with challenges such as high work overload among others. Even so, these challenges should be perceived as opportunities that will refine journalism and its operations into a relevant effective state.

4.5.2 Challenges Experienced by Editors of Limpopo Community Newspapers when Incorporating Citizen Journalism.

Editors who incorporate citizen journalism content express the following challenges:

"Yes we do encounter challenges, most of the content from citizen reporters lacks facts. As a result, we have to do extensive verifications. However, it gets better when we receive videos rather than written stories". (Editor E).

"Citizen journalism comes with high volume of content that needs to be verified" (Editor DP).

"Yes, we do. The biggest challenge and concern is lack of journalistic guidelines in their witting. Hence, this puts a lot of work for me as an editor because I have to align the content according to the expected journalistic standard. The writing style first and foremost it is not according to journalistic standard" (Editor J).

The views above indicate that lack of facts and journalistic guided writing are the major challenges that editors are facing when dealing with citizen journalism content or stories. According to Corder (2017), "Journalists even have their own writing style that citizen journalists should adapt in order to maintain consistency and professionalism". Moreover, citizen journalists should practice to verify information such as names of people, places, and organizations to avoid conflict (ibid).

4.5.3 Types of Citizen Journalism Stories that gets Published

Editors were asked which citizen journalism stories gets published. They gave the following responses:

"Stories about health and social awareness are mostly accepted by us for publishing. These types of stories help community members to be relevant" (Editor DP).

"Our slogan is "SHOCK AND AWE", this means whatever news content that is hard or shocking, we put it on the front page whether it is citizen journalism content or from a professional journalist" (Editor J).

"Information that is of importance to the community, important issues vary in seasons. For example, there is a season of initiation schools. If citizens submit stories about that in that season it will be considered a good story because it is timely" (Editor E).

Therefore, this means citizen journalism content in Limpopo community newspapers is selected according to its relevance and the organisation's guidelines. This is not a different procedure when selecting stories written by professional journalists. Moreover, it can be concluded that Limpopo community newspapers which incorporate citizen journalism content apply the process of gatekeeping or the selection of citizen journalism content similar to the content written journalism. The ability of not compromising gatekeeping standards indicates they don't easily conform to new operations despite their appealing benefits.

4.5.4 Editors' Gatekeeping Practice Towards Citizen Journalism Content

Editors were asked whether it is easy to apply gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content, they provided the following responses:

"No, because citizen journalists are individuals who don't have any journalistic knowledge. Hence, this requires us to standardise their content to professional journalism style." (Editor J).

"it is no easy at all to apply gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content because there are too many mistakes and there is no adherence to basic journalistic principles" (Editor L).

"The internet allows a high volume of information that makes it difficult to control what enters the gate" (Editor MG).

According to Oyango, (2013), because of their lack of journalistic principles such as truthfulness, editors are of the view that it is not easy for them to apply gatekeeping on citizen journalism content. Moreover, majority of the respondents reported that citizen's reports were inaccurate in their writing and in most cases their stories are difficult to verify. In agreement, Seth, Lewis Dominic (2010) states the following:

> Some editors, for instance, said they would feel the need to corroborate any article produced by a citizen. These editors maintained that citizen journalism would overwhelm their already overworked staff, detracting from their reporters' primary jobs.

This section investigated whether editors of Limpopo community newspapers incorporate citizen journalism. If they do, how do they apply gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content. Few editors incorporate citizen journalism in their organisations and they sate that gatekeeping citizen journalist content is challenging, because of lack journalistic guidelines such as truthfulness among others. Moreover, they allocate and publish citizen journalism content according to its newsworthy value. The main reason other editors don't incorporate citizen journalism in their news items is because of exhausting gatekeeping and editing. However, all of them are willing to incorporate citizen journalism content only if they can be able to come up with strategies that will enable them to effectively and effortlessly incorporate it.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails findings extracted from the previous chapter (data presentation and analysis). Data was collected from editors from Limpopo community newspapers in four districts (Capricorn, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe districts). Moreover, the chapter provides a conclusion which entails emerging issues from the findings. Also, the conclusion provides an overall and concise reflection of the study that was drawn from the findings. Furthermore, the study provides recommendations derived from the findings of the study.

5.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.2.1 Editor's Perception Towards Citizen Journalism

Editors in this study are of the opinion that citizen journalism comes with disadvantages. Their main concern is that citizen journalists are clueless about journalism ethics such as: confidentiality, human dignity and journalism writing skills. Scholars such as Yang and Arant (2014), Mutsavari (2014), Seth, Lewis and Dominic (2010), outline that the lack of ethical practice in citizen journalism, results in lack of trust between news organisations and the public and an increase in fake news. Therefore, the opinions from the Limpopo community newspapers indicate that they value journalism ethics and they are not willing to compromise them. However, their opinions should not cloud them from the benefits of journalism such as the ability of accessing news quickly and promote democratic participation within a community. Another concern raised by the editors is that citizen journalism depreciates the value of professional journalism because it elevates ordinary citizens to practice journalism similar to professional journalists. The ability for citizen journalists to operate better than professional journalists because of advanced

technological devices such as smart phones and the lack of regulations tends to overshadow professional journalism.

On a different note, editors in this study express that citizen journalism has the potential to enhance the identity of professional journalism, because they think citizen journalism helps to strengthens democratic participation, captures the current state of the community and promotes heterogeneity of the community. Before the emergence of citizen journalism, professional journalism used to be a top bottom practice where journalists would have control on which news to disseminate and pass them to passive audiences. Therefore, citizen journalism on both mainstream and community newspapers plays a significant role in providing interactive journalism. This is evident through online newspapers where journalists not only post stories in order to inform the public but to stimulate interaction and opinions from the public. Moreover, the concept of citizen journalism at a community level enhances professional journalism to a technological oriented practice because citizen journalism requires frequent use of smart phones and online publishing.

Editors in this study state that they would recommend the incorporation of citizen journalism to other editors, because they believe citizens have the best knowledge concerning their surroundings. Moreover, when editors of community newspapers incorporate citizen journalism content, there will be accessibility of high volume of stories instantly because citizen journalism practice has the potential to access stories within a short space of time. However, the editors' advice cautions the incorporation of citizen journalism operations, by establishing clear guidelines that will distinguish the role of citizens and professional journalism. Furthermore, there will be a need to orientate citizen journalists with journalistic ethics. Therefore, it is clear that to understand that citizen journalism has the potential to help community newspapers organisations to gather news fast. Hence, it could be recommended. However, its incorporation should be highly strategic, because citizen journalism has a detrimental effect towards journalism ethics.

The editors do not believe that citizen journalism will replace professional journalism because citizen journalism is founded by principles such as ethics. On the other hand, citizen journalism is not guided by any principles. As much as it has technological advantage this serves as a stepping stone for professional journalism, because it will adapt to these technological practices. Also, the editors outline that the concept citizen journalism and professional journalism can complement each other. Professional journalism has high credibility compared to citizen journalism and citizen journalism has the potential to gather news without the limitation of time and location. Both these characters from citizen and professional journalism can be combined to achieve a credible and technologically relevant journalism.

5.2.2 The Role of Citizen Journalism in Meeting the Needs of Limpopo Community Newspapers, and those of the Community

According to editors in this study citizen journalism has the potential to play a significant role in enhancing freedom of speech in their organisation. They account for this opinion by stating that by allowing citizens to write their own stories, that alone advocates for freedom of expression. Initially citizens were only given the privilege to express their opinions through the letter to the editor. However, with the help of technology and citizen journalism, members of the society can capture and narrate their own stories through social media platforms or even write articles and submit to newspaper houses. As much as editors acknowledge that citizen journalism is a good tool that enhances freedom of expression, they also outline that the level of freedom of expression given to citizens through citizen journalism in some cases leads to misuse of freedom of expression, where citizens may insult each other or verbally attack newspaper houses. Furthermore, the liberty of freedom of expression in citizen journalism can also be a breeding ground for cyberbullying, which is a major concern in South Africa as outlined by Johannes (2012).

Participants in this study believe that citizen journalism plays a significant role in creating awareness about minority group within a community. They are of the opinion that through social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Blogging sites citizens can express

themselves despite their social affiliations, race and social class. Therefore, with such open platform, social alienated community members can express challenges about their well-being. Furthermore, editors in this study state that citizen journalism goes beyond creating awareness but it also helps in demystifying myths and stereotypes concerning the minority groups. In South Africa, there is a project that encourages citizens who are marginalised to voice out their concerns through article writing. According to Banda (2011), this project is funded by the European Developing Countries.

Moreover, the editors are of the view that citizen journalism will enhance the quality of professional journalism, because citizen journalists are closer to events. Hence, they have the potential to produce high volume of stories. Despite the possibilities of citizen journalists submitting stories that are not in line with professional journalism writing style, they still agree that the stories will add value to the quality of professional journalism, through aligning the stories to the required professional journalism standard. Also, according to the editors in this study, through capturing quality videos and photos of events as they unfold proves that citizen journalism plays a significant enhancing role. Furthermore, editors believe that citizen journalism can enhance readership within community newspapers, because stories written by citizens will be a motivation to other citizens to read, participate in writing their articles and critic stories published by their fellow citizens.

The editors agree that citizen journalism helps in meeting the informational needs of the society; because citizens have the power to publish what they view is newsworthy through social media platforms and even to an extent of writing articles and submit them to newspaper organisations with the hope of being published. On the other hand, the editors believe that citizen journalism will not play any significant role in increasing profit in community newspapers because they are of the view that members of the society can only generate profit through them advertising their products and services to the newspaper organisations. Therefore, citizen article writing has no relation with advertising in community newspapers.

All the participants in this study believe that professionals do not play a significant role in enhancing professional journalism ethics. They substantiate this by stating that, for a professional journalist to effectively practice journalism ethics they need proper knowledge and practice through tertiary training. On the other hand, citizen journalists don't have any training and ethical guidelines. This is evident through gruesome pictures of accidents, child phonography and fake news they post through social media platforms and blogs. Therefore, editors in this study outline that citizen journalism threatens professional journalism ethics. This results in professional journalism being overshadowed by citizen journalism, because it appears more appealing and sensational.

5.2.3 The Application of Gatekeeping to Citizen Journalism Content

Majority of the editors stated that they do not incorporate citizen journalism, because they believe that journalism should be left to the professionals. Moreover, since citizen journalism has no knowledge about professional journalistic writing style, this is evident enough that they cannot be associated with journalism writing. One of the editors states that instead of incorporating citizen journalism in their organisation, they prefer to widen their networks of sources because they once attempted to incorporate citizen journalism and it did not yield fruitful results. On the other reason for editors not to incorporate citizen journalism content is because they think it will increase work overload, since the stories will not be aligned to journalistic guidelines.

For the few editors who incorporate citizen journalism content express that they experience challenges such as content that lacks facts and needs to verified. Therefore, if the content lacks such professional journalistic standards, this requires the editors to align the stories to professional journalistic guidelines. The editors state that citizen journalist stories which get selected for publication are stories that have the element of social awareness, controversy and impact. Also, the editors state that it is exhausting to apply gatekeeping towards citizen journalism content.

5.3 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Disruptive innovative theory has the following assumptions:

- Traditional businesses innovate and develop their products or services in order to appeal to their most demanding and/or profitable customers, ignoring the needs of those downmarket.
- New businesses target this ignored market segment and gain traction by meeting their needs at a reduced cost compared to what is offered by the incumbent.
- Incumbents don't respond to the new entrant, continuing to focus on their more profitable segments.
- Entrants eventually move upmarket by offering solutions that appeal to the incumbent's "mainstream" customers.
- Once the new entrant has begun to attract the incumbent business's mainstream customers and, disruption has occurred.

5.3.1 Disruptive Innovative Theory and Citizen Journalism Perceptions of Limpopo Community Newspaper Editors

Participants in this study (editors), acknowledge that citizen journalism is threatening professional journalism ethics and truthfulness, objectivity amongst others. They further state that lack of journalistic writing skills by citizen journalists makes the concept of citizen journalism not to be good journalism. This supports the premise of the disruptive innovation theory, which state that entrants (new businesses) can penetrate the up market because of their more appealing operations. In the context of this study, citizen journalism as entrants offers ordinary citizen to write and publish photos and videos without any ethical considerations. This makes the practice of citizen journalism more appealing compared to professional journalism, which requires intense ethical considerations in their operations. Moreover, citizen journalism tools and location enable them to be appealing journalism compared to professional journalism. Smartphone, which offers citizens with advanced photo and video technology, allows them to capture and write about events anywhere anytime. Meanwhile, professional journalists depend on

heavy cameras and they depend on tip off from sources in order to capture a story. At times they have to travel a long distant in order to report a story.

Their views (editors in this study) about citizen journalism are not entirely negative. They acknowledge that citizen journalisms has a positive impact in journalism because it strengthens democratic participation putting citizens at the forefront in the collections, dissemination and voicing out their opinions. Moreover, editors highly recommend that citizen journalism be incorporated in traditional journalism operation because of its potential to access news quickly without and barrier of location, which is the most important aspect in journalism. Editors recommending citizen journalism to be recognised and incorporated challenges contends against Christensen's theory premises that states that: Incumbents don't respond to the new entrant, continuing to focus on their more profitable segments. However, editors of this study (incumbents) are responding positively to citizen journalism by expressing positive views about citizen journalism and its benefit. This indicates that they may incorporate it in their organisations.

Furthermore, editors are against the notion that citizen journalism has the potential to replace citizen journalism because they believe professional journalism is founded and sustained by ethics and skilful individuals compared to citizen journalism. Also, they only see citizen journalism as a concept that will complement and enhance citizen journalism and not as a replacement. In conjunction with disruptive innovation theory premise which state that new entrant dominates the main market. However, the premise does not indicate whether traditional business ends up at the bottom of the market or remains competing with in the up market. Moreover, in the context of this study the editors do not see citizen journalism competing with traditional media or dragging professional journalism to down market. However, they state that there should be no competing for the up market, but there should be an integration of the two concepts (entrants and incumbents).

5.3.2 The Disruptive Innovation Theory and Role of Citizen Journalism in Meeting the Needs of Limpopo Community Newspapers, and those of the Community.

Citizen journalism according to the editors in this study will play an effective role in enhancing freedom of speech amongst citizen journalism because citizens will choose, gather and disseminate what they consider newsworthy. They see interesting events, capture it through their cellphones, post it through their social media, and write a brief report of what happened. Alternatively, take photos and videos of events and submit them to media houses. This is an appealing opportunity for citizens because before this, they use to exercise their freedom of speech only through the letter to editor (print media) and studio phone in and SMS (broadcasting). Likewise, the disruptive innovative theory supports this finding by stating that traditional businesses innovate and develop their products or services in order to appeal to their most demanding and/or profitable customers, ignoring the needs of those downmarket. In conjunction with this study, traditional journalism has enhanced itself by establishing more sources and contacts in order to get more news to provide to the audiences. However, their provision of news is only to those who can afford to buy newspapers, own a television and radio set.

Apart from this, some audiences afford to access media, the platform for them to exercise freedom of speech is limited. Also, those who cannot afford to access media are deprived informational needs and freedom of expression. Therefore, traditional journalism has neglected informational needs of those who cannot access media, particularly those in the remote areas with no technological and financial means. However, financial and technological deprived audiences are not the only audiences that are neglected. Those who can afford and being catered for by traditional journalism are still being deprived platforms to express their opinions. Overall, traditional journalism in its operations focused on improving ways to gather and disseminate news to technologically and financially privileged, neglecting those who are financially and technologically deprived. Even so, traditional journalism also neglected platform of freedom of expression by restricting it into SMS, studio phone ins and letter to the editor.

5.3.3 The Disruptive Innovation Theory and the Application of Gatekeeping to Citizen Journalism Content

In Limpopo community newspapers only few newspaper organisations incorporate citizen journalism. Editors account for this by stating that citizen journalism content lacks journalistic foundation. They prefer to widen their network of contacts or sources. Moreover, they are of the view that citizen journalism will increase their workload, because it comes raw without any journalistic writing style. Similarly, the editors who incorporate citizen journalism content in their organisation, also express that citizen journalism content comes with lots of challenges such as the need to apply more effort to align it with professional journalism writing standard.

Therefore, the lack of enthusiasm from editors in this study to incorporate citizen journalism in their organisation, does not support any of the disruptive innovation premises. On the other hand, their reluctance in incorporating citizen journalism and addressing the challenges that comes with, may lead them being overrun by citizen journalism and being at the bottom of the market.

McQuail (1987:121-123) provides the following basic assumptions of the democratic participation theory:

Individuals and minory groups should be able to enforce their claim to:

- The right of access to the media
- The right to have their needs served by the media

- The organisations of the media and the content of the messages should not be influenced by political or bureaucratic control.
- The existence of media must be justified in terms of the needs and interests of recipients, and not exclusively in terms of those of the media organisation, professional media workers or advertisers.
- Small-scale, interactive and participatory forms of media are regarded as more beneficial than large – scale, unidirectional media that are used only by professional media workers.
- In general, social needs are neglected by established media,
- This theory regards communication as too important to be left to the professionals.

5.3.4 The Democratic Participation Theory and Citizen Journalism Perceptions of Limpopo Community Newspaper Editors

According to the editors in this study, citizen journalism cannot be deemed as good journalism because of its lack of ethics, truthfulness and objectivity amongst other important journalistic values. In relation to the democratic participation theory, there is no link between the theory and the perceptions of editors of community newspaper editors. Democratic participation theory advocates for audiences to have access and participation to media without any limitation. However, their access and participation should not promote unethical practice. This is the main concern for professional journalists, particularly in this study.

On the other hand, editors in this study view citizen journalism effective in promoting democratic participation, by allowing them to write stories and capture videos and photos and disseminate them in their social media platforms or blog sides. This view from the editors supports the democratic participation assumption which state that media should be interactive and small media should facilitate interaction. Social media and blogs are

types of media that are currently enhancing participatory media through citizen journalism.

5.3.5 Democratic Participation and the Role of Citizen Journalism in Meeting the Needs of Limpopo Community Newspapers, and those of the Community.

One of the premises of the democratic participation theory is that the existence of the media should be encouraged by the mandate to serve informational needs of the audiences. Since citizen journal is effectively practiced through social media, it can be argued that social media is fulfilling the democratic participation value. Citizens are determining what is newsworthy for them, because they have the power to report incidents and have significant platforms to share those opinions, either through a social media page which belongs to a newspaper organisation. Therefore, social media compared to other types of media, is in the fore front in allowing audiences to fulfil their informational needs through the practice of citizen journalism. Moreover, citizen journalism has challenged this premise by switching the role of the media and audiences. It made it possible for audiences to move from a state where they passively wait for their informational needs to meet by professional journalists, to a state where they actively play a role of meeting their informational needs.

5.3.6 The Democratic Participation Theory and the Application of Gatekeeping to Citizen Journalism Content

Majority of editors in Limpopo community newspapers have not taken initiative to incorporate citizen journalism content, particularly written articles this is because they are of the view that citizen journalism cannot be recognised as legit journalism, because of its lack of ethical practice. Also, they state that, incorporating citizen journalism will require them to overwork, because citizen journalism content will come with no journalism standards. Therefore, these views contend against the principle of democratic which state that the media should exist to advocate for informational needs of the community. Incorporating citizen journalism in their organisation they will be able to meet the informational needs of the community. Failure to do so means they are neglecting this

responsibility. Furthermore, the views from the editors do not support the premise of the democratic participation which state that there should be interaction from the community to their media. The resistance from the editors to incorporate citizen journalism content does not promote and enhance democratic participation, which is an important value in media in general. What is more is that, the democratic participation theory state that communication is important to be left to the professionals only. Since editor's views indicate hesitancy in corporation of citizen journalism content, this means they against the notion that communication should be about audiences not entirely about communication specialist (journalists). This also, means they want to remain active producers and disseminators of information to a passive audience.

For the editors who incorporate citizen journalism despite expressing difficulties, indicates that they support the premise of the democratic participation theory that sate that the media should exist to serve informational needs of the community not only of the media organisation. Also, they support the notion of the theory which states that there should be an interaction from the audiences and media organisations. If there are tools which allow participations, therefore participation from audiences should be encouraged, facilitated and prioritised by media organisations. Moreover, these editors support the notion from the theory which state that it should not be the responsibility of journalists and media organisations to communicate to audiences, but also audiences should communicate information even to news organisations.

Overall, the findings of the study fairly support the theories of the study. The reality is that, editors admit that citizen journalism offers and advance journalism operation, despite its lack of ethics. Similarly, disruptive theory premise state that new business or operations offer better services in order to appeal to audiences. Editors who incorporate citizen journalism content strongly support the democratic participation theory premise which stipulates that there should be participatory media, where audience will be able to fully participate in their media. Obviously, those who do not incorporate citizen journalism content reject the notion of participatory media which comes through citizen journalism concept.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The concept of citizen journalism is one of the results of digital development. Its influence has affected both mainstream and community newspapers. Some community newspapers in South Africa such as Grocotts's *Mail* in Cape Town among others came up with "*Iindaba Ziyafika*" project where youth citizen journalists collaborate with professional journalists to report stories. This project reflects that citizen journalism at community level is possible despite its challenges.

In Limpopo community newspapers Editors of Limpopo acknowledge both the disadvantages and advantages of citizen journalism. However, they also outline that citizen journalism has the potential to lead community newspapers to advance technological operations. This means with proper planning citizen journalism projects in collaboration with Limpopo community newspapers is possible.

There are few editors who incorporate citizen journalist. However, their incorporation is not thoroughly founded by proper strategies. This is evident through concerns they raised such as lack of ethical practice and the absence of journalistic writing style from citizen journalists content which affects their gatekeeping process to citizen journalism content. If the incorporation will be carefully formulated, these issues will be addressed through workshops or training, where a new set of ethics that will accommodate citizen journalists will be framed. Through these strategies editors will also be able to draw the line between the role of citizen journalism and professional journalism. This will also help demystify the confusion on to what extent should citizen journalism gather report stories and which journalism ethics apply to citizen journalism. Moreover, how the process of gatekeeping should be applied to citizen journalism content. Therefore, citizen journalism poses challenges towards the gatekeeping process in community newspapers. Citizen journalism should be taken as an opportunity to advance professional journalism and community newspapers, despite its challenges citizen journalism poses towards fundamental practice of professional journalism. Furthermore, challenges that come with

citizen journalism should be viewed as an opportunity to enhance their operations and keeping themselves abreast with the digital revolution.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- Citizen journalism comes as a result of digital revolution. Therefore, it is important that community newspapers in Limpopo adapt to other digital practices that will facilitate the practice such as online operation. This will enable them to post articles and open news pages which allows citizens to post and share their stories.

- For citizen journalism to be the effectively incorporated into community newspaper in Limpopo, there is need for proper strategies to be formulated by newspaper organisations in Limpopo. These strategies will help to overcome the challenges that come with citizen journalism practices.

- Young people should be encouraged to be actively involved in incorporating citizen journalism in the community newspapers within the province. This is because they are well acquainted with the operation of current and necessary digital platforms.

- Government should endeavour to assist community newspapers through ICASA and other government departments in relevant areas such as training of their staff in the needed technologies and grants for purchasing of the equipment for this practice.

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Date: **16 April, 2018**

From: **Dr. Mbajiorgu, Miss Mahlangu**

Subject: **REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A MASTERS STUDY**

Please receive an invitation to participate in a Masters research study conducted by my student MS **CHARLOTTE MAHLANGU: 201218571**, in the Department of Media, Communication and Information Studies, University of Limpopo, South Africa. The title of her research is: **NEWSROOM GATEKEEPING AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM: A STUDY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER EDITORS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM.** This letter asks for your permission to be interviewed by the researcher on the above stipulated topic subject. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour to complete.

The aim of this study is to determine the views and opinions of editors of Limpopo community newspapers towards newsroom gatekeeping against citizen journalism, how they incorporate it in their newspaper publishing and what role citizen journalism play in community newspapers in Limpopo province. You have been specifically selected to participate in this research based on your experience as an editor of a community newspaper. Your vital input will contribute towards obtaining the necessary information required for this study. The results of the study will among others, help community newspaper editors attain a deeper understanding of the concept of citizen journalism and develop strategies to effectively incorporate citizen journalism in their everyday editorial activities in the newsroom.

You will be asked to sign a separate consent/confidentiality form that specifically addresses the use of the information you provide for the purpose of this research. The study adheres to the guidelines of the ethical committee of the University of Limpopo.

Kind regards

…………………………………..

Dr C. M. Mbajiorgu

Lecturer at the Department of Media, Communication and Information Studies

Charlotte Mahlangu (Ms)

…………………………………..

Student at the Department of Media, Communication and Information Studies
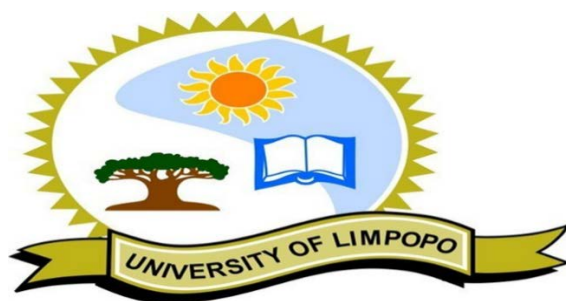
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INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Before participating in this research, the researcher will talk to you, and will give you this consent form to read. You will be asked to sign this form after you have decided to participate,

I, Mr/Ms/Mrs -- volunteer to participate in this research project from the University of Limpopo. I understand that this research is designed to gather information about the extent citizen journalism is employed in the editorial activities of community newspapers within Limpopo province, and to identify ways it can be effectively utilized in community newspaper industry in the province.

Moreover, I understand that:

1. My participation in this research is voluntary, and that I will not receive financial compensation for my participation. I may withdraw my participation in a case of discomfort, and my withdrawal will not affect my relationship with the researcher.
2. I have the right to decline to answer certain questions if I am uncomfortable.
3. My response to the questions will be recorded at my permission. However, where I am not comfortable about recording my response, the researcher will have to write down my responses by herself.
4. Information that will be obtained from me in the form of views will be strictly used for research purposes and I have a right to receive a copy of the final research once it is completed.
5. I have a right to be anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

_____   _____   _____

Participant   Signature   Date
(Full name)

I, Charlotte Mahlangu, have elucidated the scope of the research to the participant and explained his/ her rights concerning his/ her participation in the research project. She/ He freely agrees to participate in this study.

Kind regards,

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Signature   Date

APPENDIX 3

SECTION A: PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

AGE									
ETHNIC GROUP									
YEARS SERVING AS AN EDITOR									
NUMBER OF PUBLICATION EDITING FOR									

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW (OPEN ENDED-QUESTIONS)

SECTION B: EDITOR'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

1. Do you think citizen journalism is good journalism?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

Please elaborate on your answer.

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2. Has citizen journalism changed the concept of journalism for the better?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

Please elaborate on your answer.

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3. Has citizen journalism changed the concept of journalism for the worse?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Please elaborate your answer

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4. Can you advice other community newspapers to incorporate citizen journalism in their organisation's news production   Yes ☐ No ☐

Please elaborate your answer

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5. Do you think citizen journalism will replace professional journalism in the future?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Please elaborate on your answer.

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6. Do you think citizen journalism content is gaining more popularity among community newspaper audiences than those of community journalism?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Please elaborate your answer

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………….....

7. Do you think citizen journalism can produce good journalists?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Please elaborate on your answer.

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

8. In your opinion, can citizen journalists and professional journalists work together cohesively?   Yes ☐   No ☐

Please elaborate your answer.

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SECTION B: THE ROLE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN LIMPOPO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

9. What role does citizen journalism play in:

9.1 Helping community newspapers to promote freedom of expression at the community level?

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9.2 Helping community newspapers to represent minority group at the community level?

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9. 3 Helping community newspapers to promote democratic participation at the community level?

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9.4 Enhancing the news quality of the content of your newspaper?

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9.5 Meeting the news information needs of your community members?

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9.6 Giving a voice to your community members or making their voices to be heard by others through your newspaper?

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10. In community newspapers, what role will citizen journalism play in?

10.1 Circulation?

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10. 2 Increasing readership?

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10.3 Increasing profit?

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11. In your opinion, what role does citizen journalism play/can play within the community newspapers in ensuring:

11.1 Ethics in news reporting?

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11.2 Impartiality in news reporting?

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11.3 Fairness in news reporting?

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11.4 Truthfulness in news reporting?

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11.5 Confidentiality in news reporting?

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11.6 Credibility in news reporting?

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11.7 Professionalism in news reporting?

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SECTION C: THE APPLICATION OF GATEKEEPING TO CITIZEN JOURNALISM CONTENT

12. Do you incorporate citizen journalism contents in your news reporting?

Yes ☐   No ☐

13. If Yes, why do you incorporate it?

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..

14. If No, are you willing to incorporate them?   Yes ☐   No ☐

15.Please explain your answer

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16. Are you encountering any challenges in incorporating citizen journalism contents in your news production?   Yes ☐ No ☐

17. If Yes, please mention such challenges to me.

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18. What journalistic aspects do you consider when applying gatekeeping to citizen journalism news content?

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19. Do you practice gatekeeping against user-generated news content the same way you do against professional journalism news content?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

Please elaborate on your response.

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20. How do you apply gatekeeping to citizen journalism?

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21. What kind of user-generated content gets selected for publication in your newspaper?

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22. What kind of user-generated content gets rejected in your newspaper?

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23. Where do you locate user-generated stories in your newspaper (newspaper page/s)?

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24. In general, is it easy to apply gatekeeping to citizen journalism news content?

Yes ☐   No ☐

25. If YES, please explain.

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………………………………………………………………………………………….

26. If NO, please explain.

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--------------THE END OF INTERVIEW--------------------------
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. -----------