
Overcoming Convergence in East Africa's Media Houses: The Case of the Standard Media Group

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7.1 Introduction and Background History

This chapter gives the research background to overcoming convergence challenges in East Africa's media houses: Standard Media Group, Kenya. Although the newsrooms in East Africa are evolving to multimedia, the multi-media journalist is slow in coming. This paper explores the extent to which media houses are driving the process of media convergence and if they are mobilizing multiple media platforms to the point where they become one medium (Chakaveh & Bogen, 2007). Convergence is an ambiguous term used by various disciplines to describe and analyse processes of change towards uniformity or union. When applied to the communication sector, it is often referred to as media convergence. A common feature of media convergence is its inter-disciplinary and multi-purpose character (Schneider, 2012; Schuppert, 2006). An ideal media convergence situation uses the same reporters to produce stories for television, radio, telecommunication and internet mediums. These can be enhanced through advent of new communication technologies such as mobile terminals, digital television or internet. Though total convergence is not yet a reality, an effectively converged media house would synergies resources; human, technological and capital tools and assets to enable efficient flow of content across multiple media platforms (Greyzed theme, 2012). This paper explores the extent to which media houses in East Africa are converging: A case study of Standard Media Group, Nairobi, Kenya. It will also identify positive and negative consequences of convergence of media houses in East Africa and find out how journalists are responding to the challenges of convergence.

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7.2 Historical Background on Standard Media Group

Standard newspaper was started in 1902 by an Asian gentleman, A. M. Jeevanjee who had amassed wealth from the construction of the then 535 mile Mombasa-Kisumu railway after he was awarded the contract to supply some of the materials. So on November 15, 1902 the famous *African Standard* was born in Mombasa, run by Mr. W H Tiller from England who produced the paper singlehandedly from sourcing stories to proof reading, editing as well as advertising. From typewriter to the computer evolution and now to multimedia platforms, the newspaper changed ownership from circulation throughout British East Africa and penetrated into the remotest districts of Congo. In 1918, the East African was made into a public company and changed to *The Standard* and absorbed the rivalry newspaper at the time, *The Leader*. To date the Standard newspaper has grown into a multi-media platform with the acquiring of a television station; Kenya Television Network (KTN) in December 1997. The East African Standard's On-line Edition was introduced in September 1999 which was an electronic version of the newspaper accessible through the internet. The latest addition to the media products is *Radio Maisha* which was started in 2010 (Ngunjiri, 2002).

7.2.1 Standard Newspaper

This is the flagship brand for the Standard Media Group and the cash cow of the organization. As at 2015, newspaper circulations and advertisements were attracting the highest revenue portion for the Group with the latter rating higher than the circulation. However online media has taken over classified advertisements and is threatening to surpass the print revenues in the future. In the financial year 2014, the newspaper suffered a slow decline in readership as readers shifted to free internet journalistic content provided on the Standard digital platform via their mobile devices. An increase in cost of the cover page dented profits further but to counter this the Group introduced county news to strengthen its nationwide content which used the infrastructure of the recently devolved governance in Kenya. The Group has plans to overhaul the content presentation as part of the Group's turn-around strategy not only to drive sales but also to bring out a new look for the newspaper (Standard Group Annual Report, 2014).

7.2.2 Nairobiian

The paper was launched in 2013 and has grown to be one of the leading circulating papers in the Kenyan market today. The strategy represents human interest content and recruits non-traditional readers who are interested in contemporary lifestyle of residents in the capital city Nairobi and other main towns in the country (Standard Group Annual Report, 2014).

7.2.3 Television: KTN

The television station acquired in 1997 reclaimed its second position in share of viewing in Kenya as at 31 December 2014. Performance is driven by creative programming and an innovative news segment which attracts high ratings at prime time news. News time is a big deal in Kenya where households gravitate to the television to catch up with prime time news. The poorly planned switch off of analogue television in early 2015 had significant impact on viewership and revenues dipped by 65 % following the digital migration. The 2014 financial year was characterized by a litigation process that saw the three largest media houses in Kenya namely Standard Media Group, Nation Media Group and Royal Media move from High Court to the Supreme Court in an attempt to have the government extend the digital migration deadline. The media houses were denied request to continue broadcasting on the analogue platform as has happened in many countries around the world and were switched off for 19 days. The vast majority of TV viewers who were used to free to air television were unable to immediately purchase decoders for the digital signal hence a large group of viewers were denied the possibility of watching TV (Standard Group Annual Report, 2014).

7.2.4 Radio Maisha

In Kenya about 99 % of people use radio as a source of information. Market research evidenced that the top radio stations were all using the national language, Kiswahili. As a result, Standard Media Group launched Radio Maisha, a Kiswahili speaking radio station on 24th May, 2010 targeting the low mass income bracket. In 2010, the station was trending in the 26th position. To improve its market share position, *Radio Maisha* was relaunched in 2013 with quality re-programming and has risen to second position as per second quarter 2015 Geopoll ratings. Radio Maisha reaches over five million people in Kenya and is the fastest growing radio in the market reaching about 30 % of the market. The station has increased transmitters nationwide from six frequencies and will have 20 frequencies nationwide as at the end of June 2015. Frequencies are in various towns such as Malindi, Voi, Garissa, Mandela, Webuye, Kiss, Narok and Turkana. News is one of the biggest drivers bringing timely comprehensive news to readers and relevant, high quality programmes (Japanni, 2015).

7.2.5 Standard Digital

The Standard digital maintained its top position in the market as the most visited Kenyan website at 189,623,026 hits as at December of 2014 with 45,705,617 visitors. Each visitor clicks on an average of five pages and stays for 3 min when reading text messages and 7 min if watching a video clip. The website receives high traffic flow and continues to make increased contribution to revenues with clients

preferring above the fold adverts which have guaranteed visibility. According to Mr. Matthew Shahi, the Manager for Online Business, the digital department began in 2001 as an extension of print department, posting newspaper stories and putting them online from 6.00 pm to midnight. No updates would be done from midnight to 4.00 pm the next day. In 2012, the department was revamped as a converged centre to catch all matters digital. Stories began being posted on sms, mobile apps and email as a revenue source database used for marketing products and services. From a revenue base of less than Kshs.3 million in 2011, the revenue increased to 36 million in 2012, and picked to Kenya shillings 86 million in 2013, 140 million in 2014 and 180 million in 2015. By 2016, the department projects a 600 million revenue which would surpass the current Group profit of 350 million as at 2014 financial year. More than one third of the workforce in this department recruits young university graduate interns, with a strong passion for digital media. The department receives direct revenue when business executive sell space and indirectly through tools such as banners on the website and sms news alerts (Shahi, 2015).

7.2.6 Publishers Distribution Services

This product sells imported newspapers and magazine to Kenyans, however the increase in the product prices have put these products out of reach of many Kenyans. In addition audiences have shifted to search for magazine content easily and cheaply from the internet. Standard Group will be soon be re-evaluating and re-strategising this product to map the way forward (Standard Group Annual Report, 2014).

7.2.7 Human Resource

To expand the pool of talent and in recognition of the changing faces of skills requirements for journalist, Standard Media Group launched the *Scribes Inc. Programme* for a special pilot multi-media journalism training. Graduates from this program will be multi-skilled journalists who will be able to produce content on all media platforms (Standard Group Annual Report, 2014).

7.3 Literature Review

This section provides an in depth review of past studies on challenges of media convergence to media houses and journalists and will discuss the theoretical framework to be applied. The review will cover the three research objectives of the study which are; To explore the extent to which media houses are synergizing their activities to enable efficient flow of content across multiple media platforms. To identify positive and negative consequences of media convergence on media

houses. To establish how medium-specific journalists are responding to the challenges of convergence. This section will also discuss the theoretical framework relevant to be applied.

7.3.1 How Media Houses Synergise Activities to Facilitate Convergence

A research study conducted by Saltzis and Dickinson (2008) titled, *Inside the changing newsroom: Journalists responses to media convergence* investigated the impact of journalists working practices due to the new reporting trends from single to multiple platforms. The study was conducted inside British national media organisations to investigate and describe the changes on the working practices of journalists and how they reacted to the process of production convergence in news reporting in multiple media platforms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 newsroom reporters and editors from *BBC*, *The Sky* and *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times* during 2002 and 2003. The findings of the study showed that while multimedia news is becoming well established, the multimedia journalist has been slow to be actualized because of the pressures that multi-media work adds to the journalist's daily routine and a concern over the impact on the quality of output (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

As digitisation seems irreversible and the boundaries between traditional and new media become blurry, newsrooms and journalists are moving from single media to multi-media reporting. The relationship between different media are now characterised by increasing cooperation, compatibility and connectivity as questions are raised as to whether traditional media will adapt to the new digital environment or even whether they will survive at all (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). The four news organisations under study used four strategies in order to achieve economies of multiformity the organisational and technical integration of newsroom; the use of multi-skilled work force, the application of flexible and user friendly technology in all aspects of production and the expansion of the services into new media with output extending to mobile devices such as phones (Doyle, 2002; Albarran & Dimmick, 1996; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

Technological Perspective From a technological perspective network convergence operates at three levels namely network, production, and distribution (Flynn, 2001; Ostergaard, 1998; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). Also known as "write once, publish anywhere". Technology now allows media content to be authored once and then published and delivered through multiple digital delivery mechanisms without being re-authored (Flynn, 2001).

Convergence at the distribution level refers to the consumption and to the idea that ultimately there will only be one way to access different types of digital network through a single device that will combine the different characteristics of today's media (Flynn, 2001).

In production stage, convergence has been achieved through introduction of digitization equipment in the news production chain and the integration of online with offline newsrooms to encourage sharing of material and treating information as platform neutral. But the key change comes with the arrival of server based newsroom production systems. Both *BBC* and *Financial Times* have adopted this method around a central computer server which allows common access to all the gathered material by all news workers, connects various operations inside the newsroom and automates a number of processes. However, a single multimedia newsroom has not yet been achieved (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

7.4 Consequences of Media Convergence on Media Houses

There are positive and negative consequences of convergence on media houses. New communication technology has brought major benefits for journalistic organisations and unsettling changes in working practices and routines (McNair, 1998; Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

7.4.1 Convergence Benefits to Media Houses

With the development of technology the cost of products and software has lowered. Instead of having different news crews for every medium, one converged media operation can use the same reporters and staff to produce stories for television, telecommunication and internet mediums fulfilling the promise of a single-person newsgathering based on a multi-skilled crew (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). Multi-skilling in newsrooms is a management led economic decisions aimed at cost reduction efficiency improvements (Cottle, 1999; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

A similar study was done in Finland on *Media Convergence and Business Models:*

Responses of Finnish Daily Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted in seven daily newspapers between November 2011 and January 2012. Finland has nine national dailies published in the capital regions with *Helsingin Sanomat* being the largest. In a market with a strong reading tradition, publishers are financially solid and have been able to retain and improve good profits despite convergence trends. Though the large media companies in Finland actively developed new forms of web based publications during the second half of 1990s they lacked the revenue that would sustain the new ventures and forced them to cut down these activities. The second wave of innovation has developed new business models using multimedia technologies to increase audience reach in a decentralized form of broad based content creation (OECD, 2010).

Traffic Generator Though media executives admit that the two pillars of journalism business namely circulation and advertising are slowly but steadily declining, there is a general agreement that journalism is a traffic generator that can be used for income generation through advertising. The Finnish market is divided rather peacefully between media companies and their newspapers. Rather than competing with other newspapers, Finnish newspapers have to compete with other leisure activities. In advertising, for instance, national newspapers are facing a tightening competition from Google and Facebook, who can provide the advertiser with targeted marketing. In an internet driven era, the national dailies are competing with anyone who produces contents (Lehtisaari et al., 2012).

7.4.2 Disadvantages of Convergence on Media Houses

An audience used to traditional forms of media may resist change to embrace a new way of receiving information. As a result those with a lack of technological skill will be unable to take full advantage of new media especially old people who may lack the computer literacy and those with visual or physical disabilities.

Fragmented Audience With the development of digital era, media houses are now more in touch with their audiences leading to a greater audience engagement with increased customer satisfaction. Online journalism is being perceived as a better form of journalism as it re-engages an increasingly distrusting and alienated audience. It also provides a multi-media format, interactivity, personalisation, globalisation, hypertextuality, interconnectivity and instantaneous reporting. Gone are the days where an editor had to wait till the next day to publish their feedback or wait for an entire week to publish on a weekly paper. That notwithstanding audiences complain of being overwhelmed with information overload (Pavlik, 2001; Kawamoto, 2003; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

Convergence has also seen the rise of dominant values of journalism. Van Tuyl (2010) argues that the fragmentation of audiences and the post modernization of our lifestyles have brought an end to the one-size-fits-all journalism and disrupted business models. Van Tuyl argues that journalism should embrace the diversity of the current public sphere and make itself relevant to its audiences (Van Tuyl, 2010). This notion is interlocked with the discussion about journalism finding its place in local networks and participatory citizen journalism (Franklin, 2010). Even though the Finnish media companies have been able to retain high profitability they have resorted to cost cutting and redundancies and convergence is seen as a cost cutting strategy. As distribution and printing costs continue to rise, the internet and mobile media devices have to some extent affected people's willingness to pay for journalistic content (Grönlund & Björkroth, 2011).

7.5 Response of Medium-Specific Journalists to Convergence

While the job of a journalist is to get others to get heard, their own voice is rarely heard on how they are adapting to convergence. The new communication technology has brought major benefits but also brought unsettling changes in working practices and routines. Journalists are now multi-tasking and are required to be multiskilled. Just as introduction of computers into newspaper newsrooms in the 1980s created more jobs for editors and journalists they made some roles redundant (Stepp, 1989; Garrison, 1999; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). It is no wonder that media houses now prefer the multi-skilled journalist and some newsroom roles will have to adapt or become redundant.

7.5.1 Versatile Journalists

According to the study done by Saltzis and Dickinson (2008), the multi-skilled journalist is one with interchangeable skills and is more valuable than one without. However these multi-skilled journalists are a minority at the *BBC*, at the *Financial Times* and at *The Guardian* even though they are trained in both radio and television production. Not all journalists were able to report with equal ease on the various platforms of newspaper, internet, radio and television. Existing journalists are not as versatile for the following reasons;

- (a) *The cost of training*—it is more difficult to train new concepts to experienced workers than to train an apprentice.
- (b) *Resistance to change*—where established journalists are less willing to change what they have been doing over their career years.

Journalists will no longer be identified by a specific medium in the same way that the news companies are no longer identified by a single medium. *The Guardian* is both a newspaper and a web publisher just as *BBC* is a broadcaster and web publisher. Standard media group is a publisher, yet has a television station, radio station and a thriving online division.

The multi-skilled journalism is not the result of “simple technological determinism but is a management led economic cost reduction decision aimed at efficiency improvement (Cottle, 1999). Yet multi-skilling in newsrooms raises significant concerns about declining quality in news output because of increased work loads, increased pressure and the deskilling of journalists (Bromley, 1996; Cottle, 1999). Newly hired journalists are expected to work in more than one area.

7.5.2 Benefits of Convergence on Journalists

It is not all gloom and doom, multiskilling has benefits such as offering journalists location flexibility meaning that a journalist can now post their stories from other

locations other than the newsroom. Media convergence has also speeded up data searching making more information easily accessible to journalists seeking background research information and checking on modern trends (Koch, 1991; Leonard, 1992; Brooks, 1997; as cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

A journalist also has increased control over their own output as they choose to post their stories on alternative medium (Wintour, 1989). Online journalism as part of new media provides a multimedia platform, interactivity, personalisation accessibility, hypertextuality, interconnectivity and instantaneous reporting. With its many advantages, online journalism is said to have the ability to re-engage an increasingly distrusting and alienated audience.

In the study by Saltzis and Dickinson (2008), broadcast journalist who have practiced multiskilling expressed positive feelings about it and claimed that it enriched their overall knowledge of the news product making them better journalists.

Challenges of Convergence on Journalists While technology allows journalists to produce news more quickly, multiskilling and multitasking that it makes possible does not. The journalists interviewed said that multi skilling was slower than traditional journalism as the journalist spent more time on a story than if it was done by two highly specialised workers. However this delay due to multi-skilling does not offset the overall gains that result from digital technology.

Increased Workload A major concern expressed by scholars is that the multi skilling required for multi-media reporting has resulted in a journalist who has to cope with an increased workload to get their work done. Cottle (1999) claims that the increased demands create a more pressured working environment which has a negative impact on journalistic standards (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). The time pressure and increased workloads make news analysis and reflection more difficult as journalists become increasingly obsessed with speed (Cottle, 1999; Scott, 2005; cited by Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). New media platforms face less editorial control meaning that more mistakes are likely to be published and the obsession for speed could affect the overall quality of news output. Accuracy, impartiality and truth remain important criteria of journalistic success hence it is more important to get a story right and second than first and wrong. That notwithstanding journalists interviewed rarely complained about the pressure because it is considered an integral part of the job. They enjoy the adrenalish rush that it produces and are not satisfied with quiet newsdays.

Journalist's Safety There have been safety concerns that limit the deployment of sending one journalist to report on a dangerous situation such a war zone or a terrorist attack location. When one reporter is filming and the eye is on the camera, it is difficult to see what is going on around them hence thereby increasing the exposure to risks such as a follow up bomb blast. The other challenge of a single reporter sourcing a story is that a reporter who is fully concentrated on the technical side of the report during interviews may compromise his ability to respond during

the interview and the time that is left to reflect on what is being said (personal interview, 2003).

For some of the reasons stated above the BBC policy encouraged multiskilling but did not make it mandatory and aimed at creating a workforce comprising of two types of journalists:

- (a) The single skilled specialists, valued for their high specialised journalistic standards.
- (b) The multi-skilled valued for their versatility and adaptability.

This research study was based on a theoretical framework as stated below.

7.6 Theoretical Framework

The theory of convergence in the media industry does not seem to be settled. Griffiths & Light (2008) define media convergence as the combining of several different products into one. Others define it as the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries and migratory behavior of media audiences in search of information (Jenkins, 2006). It is also seen as a way to deliver news in a new and different way, to expand a franchise, to protect market positioning and as a means of survival in the media industry (Quinn, 2004).

7.6.1 Kolodzy's Model

The theory of media convergence is also theorized and practiced by Kolodzy who provides a model for describing media convergence and describes it as an ongoing process in which content, technology, audience and industries intersect like a vienn (Kolodzy, 2006, p. 5) Jenkins identified the circles to represent various fields such as audience, industry, content and technology and media convergence to be the point where they intersect (Jenkins, 2001) (Fig. 7.1).

Fig. 7.1 Media convergence as an ongoing process in which content, technology, audience, and industries intersect. Sources: Kolodzy (2006)



7.6.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

The second theory informing this study is the uses and gratification theory. Littlejohn and Foss, and also Severin and Tankard state that audience members seek out mass media to satisfy individual needs. The theorists explain why people choose certain media forms and that media have a limited position that is because their audiences are able to exercise control over their media. With the upsurge of new media, uses and gratification are met by interaction and networking. Further more social networking sites are virtual places that cater for specific audience in which people of similar interest gather to chat and communicate with others. These social media sites offer people an arena where they can practice their freedom of expression and association (Musa & Willis, 2014 citing Lando & Mwangi, 2014).

7.7 Research Approach

This was a quantitative and qualitative study that utilized questionnaires and in-depth interviews to collect data. The study was conducted in the month of May and June 2015. For questionnaire distribution to journalists we used non-probability sampling technique where respondents were selected because of their convenience, availability and willingness to participate in the study. The journalists selected were from the Nairobi office newsroom which has 76 editorial staff from various editorial departments namely television, radio, newspaper and online. With this approach 22 journalists responded to the questionnaires and we conducted two indepth interviews to heads of departments or their assistants.

7.8 Limitations

Due to the fast paced technological world the findings of this study may soon become obsolete as technology evolves. However the findings will offer valuable insight into the challenges that media houses and journalists are facing as they adapt to using a converged media operation. Given reporters, flexible working hours, it was a challenge to finding journalists in the newsroom for questionnaire distribution. Most reporters spend their days in the field and only come to the newsroom when it is crunch time with just enough time to post their stories. Emailing questionnaires to journalists was also a challenge as reporters are sometimes in remote areas where they neither have phone nor internet connectivity. Nailing appointments for department heads who also double up as editors was an even bigger challenge as they constantly try to beat the never ending deadlines. Administrative Editor, Mr. Andrew Kagwa was instrumental in connecting researcher to the Heads of department and we managed to interview two of them namely Mr. Thomas Japanni and Mr. Matthew Shahi who were available and willing to be interviewed. We increased the days for distribution of questionnaires to be able to get as many respondents as possible.

7.9 Findings from Indepth Interviews and Questionnaires

From the 30 questionnaires, 22 questionnaires were returned duly complete. Findings of the study show that 64 % of the respondents (journalists) who work in media houses are male while 36 % are female which explains the gender based challenges facing media houses. Kenya has a 60 % youthful population as per the Kenya Population Census Report, 2010 and most employees of Standard Media Group are in this category with 64 % aged between 21–40 years and only 5 % aged between 41 and 50 years. Findings show that 77 % employees journalists of Standard Media Group are undergraduates, 18 % are post-graduates and 5 % of the respondents have other professional qualifications especially in film and theatre production. Bulk of the staff in the newsroom consist of sub editors at 77.3 %, news anchors constitute, 4.5 % are in the online department and 4.5 % are correspondents. The explanation of why a high percentage of staff in the newsroom are sub editors is that most reporters are rarely in the newsroom unless when they are posting their stories.

7.10 Media Houses Activities That Facilitate Convergence

Standard Media Group has aligned their operations to world class practice and has over the last 2 years commenced a process of investing into the latest technology to automate its key processes and operations. In 2013, the company invested in advertising and editorial Electronic automation system—PPI—a German technology that completely integrates the flow and production of editorial content, advertising workflow and pre-press production processes. PPI provides a turnaround time for output management because it is easy to tell the progress of publications from any central place. From the questionnaires 27.3 % respondents, acknowledged that Standard media Group had developed mobile apps for television, radio, print and additional bandwidth and free wi-fi to accommodate multimedia platforms. This is closely followed by 22.7 % of respondents who said that the provision of mobile phones and laptops to senior reporters enabled reporters to post their stories from outside the office. When airing the radio programmes, presenters are concurrently on social media for instantaneous and participatory audience feedback. According to an interview with Head of Radio, Mr. Thomas Japanni, the industry has cut throat competition and in order for radio presenters to remain relevant, they are now required to be technologically savvy and to comfortably using online platforms (Japanni, 2015).

The online department, the Standard digital which began in 2001 as an extension of print department reported 189,623,026 hits as at December 2014 with 45,705,617 visitors. The website receives high traffic flow and continues to make increased contribution to revenues with clients preferring above the fold adverts as it has guaranteed visibility.

7.11 Consequences of Media Convergence on Media Houses

There are positive and negative consequences of convergence on media houses; With the upsurge of social media some of the strengths of traditional media may be lost as new media offers certain advantages that traditional media cannot fulfill.

7.11.1 Advantages of Convergence on Media Houses

Findings of the study show 68.2 % respondents said that increased news coverage and audience reach is the main advantage of using multiple platforms in media houses. This increases audience reach with good quality relevant stories. Other advantages include: increased audience flexibility in terms of giving them more platforms to access information. The Media house is able to receive instant feedback on stories covered. Media house enjoys an audience perception of credibility and reliability and use of multimedia platforms is regarded as cost effective.

7.11.2 Disadvantages of Convergence on Media Houses

From the study 18.2 % of the respondents established that use of multimedia platforms is slowly but steadily reducing the circulation of the printed newspaper. Another 18.2 % percent said convergence reduces productivity. Other stated disadvantages of convergence included; spread of hate speech, lack of equipment and knowledge, high costs of accessing multimedia platforms devices like mobile phones and laptops, too much workload and time consuming in posting media stories on many platforms as opposed to one.

7.12 Medium-Specific Journalists Response to Convergence

Journalists gave various responses to convergence. From the findings, 59 % of the respondents post their stories on other media platforms other than the editorial departments they work in. Out of those who use other platforms 46 % use online platform, 15 % use television and 4.5 % use print. The drop in television use can be attributed to the specialised skills required for television which specific medium reporters may not be able to use with ease. The rest 41 % are medium specific and do not post their stories on other platforms.

Most respondents appreciated the social interaction with the audience and 51 % liked the participatory audience involvement. Respondents acknowledged the use of internet search engines to facilitate background research to their stories and 18.2 % said that new media provided easy access to information but could spread lies quickly. From the respondents, 18 % said that the fear of hate speech from audiences has made journalists to be more cautious when telling stories. Other respondents constituting 13.6 % lamented that social media now steals the show due

to their immediacy effect. Bloggers and citizen journalists can break news online before traditional media catches up. Social media also helps journalists to source for stories and trends and 18.2% of respondents said that the comments given by interactive audiences help to improve their storytelling skills.

7.13 Ability to Post Stories on Other Media Platforms

From the research findings it was established that journalists are to some extent allowed to post stories on other media platforms apart from their editorial departments with 64% of them acknowledging that they indeed post stories on other media platforms. However, some post on other platform without their supervisor's knowledge. Research findings indicate that (18.2%) editors/journalists from the editorial department post their stories on print, followed by online (13.6%), then on radio (4.5%) and the rest combine the four media platforms when posting on multiple media platforms.

7.13.1 Journalists Challenges with Multimedia Skills

Respondents had several challenges with media convergence such as a lack of access of equipment which rated at 18% when they want to report on other media platforms other their own such as a print reporter wanting to air on television or radio. This can be explained because priority is given to the respective department staff. Respondents also said they had an inadequate knowledge on how to use different medium, distortion of information also ranked at 18.2%, unhealthy competition among various media platforms as well as among media houses, increased workload due to multi-media at 9.1% and a lack of full embracement and exploitation of the web and mobile based tools.

7.13.2 Other Facts and Opinions Established by the Study on Media Convergence

The study asked respondents to give their opinions on various statements in relation to media convergence. The statements were put on a likerd scale of five (5) to enable respondents rate the statements according to their understanding. The respondents were required to either: Strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree or strongly agree with the statements. From the findings the 36.6% said that they obtained latent training and skills to use different media platforms. However though journalists like doing stories on different media platforms, they were rarely asked to do stories on different media platforms even though their editorial departments posted stories on different platforms. Respondents strongly agreed that the multi-skilling and multi-tasking required in convergence has increased work load and

slowed down their work speed. Despite this, they do not get additional pay for posting stories on multiple platforms.

7.13.3 Recommendations to Facilitate Convergence

The most repeated recommendation by respondents which was at 22.7% was that departments should stop working as silos and centralise news collection and production. If news breaks at the television desk then information should be passed on to other departments so that the different media departments can tailor the story to their medium. Training for journalists should be ongoing to develop multi-media skills.

7.14 Conclusion

The finding of this study has revealed that Standard Media Group has indeed made efforts towards media convergence. They have a converged editorial newsroom with editorial staff of television, radio, online and print sitting in one section. In 2013, the company invested in advertising and editorial electronic automation system—PPI—a German technology that completely integrates the flow and production of editorial content, advertising workflow and pre-press production processes. Journalist's training has also been adjusted from medium specific to multi-media skilling so that new reporters have proficient skills to operate on a converged platform. Media convergence has caused a slow but steady decline in print circulation as audiences prefer reading news on free online platforms. Though multi-media equipment and software for mobile apps has an initial high cost, a converged media is cost effective as a media house can reach a larger audience at a lower cost. Fragmented audiences are affecting how business is done as revenue sources shift to new media platforms. Hate speech poses a problem as audiences become more participatory and empowered through social media. New media provides journalists with easy access to research information, post stories and get instant feedback. However there is an increase in workload as posting stories on multi-media is time consuming and there is no extra pay for using other platforms. The editorial departments appear to be working independently when sourcing for news but converging at the point of distribution. Online platform is the shared platform of TV, Print and Radio but more interaction between the departments is needed if total convergence is to become a reality.

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