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The Impact of Use Social Media in Communication Flow from State House to Traditional Media in Tanzania

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Abstract

The media has historically obtained and disseminated government information to the public through newspapers, radio, and television. Before the advent of social media, Journalists obtained information from the State House through telegraph, telephone, fax, and in-person encounters between the President's communication officers and journalists. Over twenty years, the State House Communications Department has enhanced its communication methods and effectively utilized social media platforms to engage with journalists and the public. However, little focus on scientific research has been done to assess the impact of social media on communication flow from Tanzania's state house to traditional media. Therefore, the study evaluated the application of new media in the Presidential Communication Directorate in disseminating news to the mainstream media. The study used a descriptive design and mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative delved into individual viewpoints on news collection using new media, while the quantitative evaluated respondents' perspectives. The State House Communication Unit has shifted its use of social media platforms enhancing networking among journalists, providing quick information access, and being cost-effective. However, the shift has led to decreased personal communication, a decline in exclusive news, an increase in false information propagation, and the emergence of citizen journalism. Journalists should improve their social media skills to maintain high-quality media reporting. The Statehouse should enhance its 24/7 media unit operations. The study highlighted the challenges and significance of using social media for news dissemination and gathering. The study involved media professional practitioner's and President's communication officers who identified significance and challenges and suggested how to improve media production and contents.

Keywords: News Flow, Presidential Directorate Communication, Social Media Platform, Traditional Media.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary presidential communication has evolved from broad, mass-focused appeals to include tailored, narrowly targeted messages in various media settings (Jacobs, 2005). The media has historically obtained and disseminated government information to the public through various mediums like newspapers, radio, and television. (Sturmer, 1998) before the advent of social media, reporters obtained information from the State House through telegraph, telephone, fax, and in-person encounters between the President and journalists. Over twenty years, the State House Communications Department has enhanced its communication methods and effectively utilized social media platforms to engage with

journalists (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2013; Alejandro, 2010). The landscape of political news dissemination has undergone significant changes in recent decades, largely due to the influence of technology. Various studies show that politicians in different parts of the world are using social media in elections (Abboud Ajwang, & Lugano, 2024; Gray & Carlos, 2021; Dez'elan, Vobic' & Maksuti, 2014; Fraia, & Missaglia, 2014; Pătrut's, 2014) and in various political communications (Fontaine & Gomez, 2020), thus bringing about a change in the flow of information in the mainstream media. Maweu (2017) observed that social media is progressively altering how Africans approach elections. Negrine and Lilleker (2002) argued that the media's coverage of politics has been dramatically influenced by the rising professionalism of journalists and political actors and by increasing commercial pressures and technical improvements. However, little focus on scientific research has been done to assess the uses of social media in Tanzania's state-house communication with traditional media. Therefore, the study evaluated the application of new media in the Presidential Communication Directorate at the State House in Tanzania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Evolution of the Use of Digital Communications in White House Departments

Technological advancements, namely the emergence of social media, have completely transformed how the White House and other worldwide organizations' communications departments distribute information (Yuan et al., 2022). As a communication medium, the Internet has been utilized in political campaigns to disseminate messages and facilitate information acquisition and active participation of voters. Nevertheless, legislators, public workers, and people often see using digital network technologies to influence public policy with scepticism (Alzubi, 2022; Chadwick, 2009, p. 12; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). This transition has increased the prominence of their social media profiles and changed the dynamics of conventional media platforms. The potential synergy between mass media and communication is immense. The creation and widespread use of emerging technologies significantly impact interpersonal communication and individuals' perceptions of society and self (Gruber, Hargittai & Nguyen, 2022). This shift has seen a move from the broad distribution of information to more personalized and social interactions facilitated by technology devices and their content (Newman et al., 2021).

Most research on the digital representation of political parties has traditionally focused on the national scale. The use of the World Wide Web (WWW) by political parties in the United States (Druckman et al., 2009), as well as in European countries like the United Kingdom (Gibson et al., 2009) and Italy (Vaccari, 2008), has been a primary scholarly focus. This study, however, delves into a different aspect—the digital interactive agencies. It specifically focuses on using Web 2.0 and social media (Komodromos, 2016) in the communication strategies of Public Relations managers in Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Malta. The presidential campaign of Barack Obama in the United States is a striking example of the influence of Web 2.0, showcasing a communication paradigm that promotes interactive information sharing and integrates social media platforms for political communication. In addition to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace, the campaign maintained a presence in 15 other online forums. During the campaign, citizens sent about one billion emails, public relations professionals authored 400,000 blog entries, and one million people signed up for Obama's text messaging program (Macnamara, 2010). There has been a significant increase in Africans' participation in Internet activities over the last ten years. What was once a small number has now grown to around 240 million, with social

media platforms accounting for the largest share of these online interactions (Oginni & Moitui, 2015), ITU, 2012).

Tanzania Presidential Directorate of Communication

In Tanzania, the Presidency holds significant authority, encompassing roles such as Head of State and Government, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, and the power to appoint officials and declare states of emergency or war. Managing the flow of information facilitated through the Presidential Directorate of Communication within the State House is critical to exercising this authority. In the past, government communications were overseen by the Tanzania Information Services (TIS) until President Benjamin Mkapa established the Presidential Directorate of Communication in 1995. Amid intensified media scrutiny, the approach to government information dissemination underwent a major transformation (Yujie, Alsagoff & Hoon, 2022). The Communication Office within the State House releases statements, media notes, and fact sheets, serving as sources of news and background materials for media outlets. However, the emergence of new media, notably social media platforms, has challenged the traditional communication paradigm. Social media's pervasive influence has revolutionized information dissemination, providing journalists and the public access to information beyond the institution's control (McGregor, 2019). Due to these changes, the Presidential Directorate of Communication has adopted new strategies to disseminate information and engage with the public. Social media sites provide direct channels for the Presidency to share real-time announcements, updates, and policy initiatives, fostering greater transparency and accessibility (Babeiya & Magoti, 2023; Lihiru, 2021).

Moreover, social media has empowered citizens to participate actively in governance by providing platforms for feedback, questions, and discussions. This symmetrical communication enables the government to gauge public sentiment, address concerns, and solicit input on critical issues, fostering a more inclusive and responsive governance framework. However, social media presents challenges for the Presidential Directorate of Communication alongside its benefits. These platforms' decentralized nature can make it difficult to control the narrative, with information spreading rapidly and sometimes uncontrollably. Furthermore, spreading false information and propaganda on social media threatens the credibility of the news and public faith (Cook, 2023; Adeeb & Mirhoseini, 2023).

In navigating these challenges, the Presidential Directorate of Communication must balance leveraging social media's opportunities for enhanced communication and engagement with implementing measures to mitigate the risks associated with misinformation and maintain the integrity of government messaging. The Presidential Directorate is essential for adapting to media evolution and effectively communicating the government's policies, initiatives, and achievements to the Tanzanian public. This research examined the transformation of Tanzanian presidential communication in light of new media developments during Mkapa's era to the current regime. By investigating the impact of social media on information dissemination and governance, the researchers contributed to a deeper understanding of modern communication practices and their implications for management and public discourse. Through empirical evidence and analysis, the researchers shed light on the dynamics of information flow, media influence, and governance in the digital age. This research fills existing knowledge gaps and provides insights into the interplay between new media, presidential communication, and management in Tanzania. The study's main objective was to assess the use of new media in news flow from the

Presidential Directorate of Communication in Tanzania to traditional media. The research was guided by the following questions.

- i. What social media platforms does the State House utilize to communicate with traditional media?
- ii. How do the State House and traditional media benefit from communicating through emerging new social media platforms?
- iii. What are the adverse effects of the State House and traditional media from communicating through emerging new social media platforms?

The researchers used Computer-Mediated Communication Theory (CMC) to study how digital platforms influence government officials' perceived presence and communication efforts. CMC offers insights into enhancing meaningful engagement and building stronger connections (Baym, 1998; Walther, 2011) between government officials and the public. The study also examined gatekeeping theories (Shoemaker, 1991) involving filtering and distributing information to the public. Gatekeeping decisions are made by reporters and editors, ensuring only relevant content passes through the gate. This theory influences societal cohesion and moral values, especially in the advancement of communication technology, where social media gatekeeping is deemed insufficient, allowing the spread of fake news and misinformation.

Methods

The study used descriptive research design and opts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative approach enables detailed exploration of individual perspectives regarding the application of new media as a tool for news gathering. In contrast, the quantitative approach facilitates the assessment of respondents' views through statistical analysis. This combination of methods enhances the robustness of the study findings and enables the researcher to know the research problem in depth. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study's population comprises 338 respondents who are media editors and senior reporters affiliated with various media outlets such as Mwananchi Communications Limited, Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN), IPP Media, Azam Media Group, and Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), as well as seven current and retired staff from the Presidential Directorate of Communication. The selection of these populations allows for direct access to decision-makers and individuals with specialized knowledge relevant to the research topic, enriching the study with valuable insights and perspectives.

Creswell & Creswell (2018) assert that the sample size is often established by including 20-30% of the population. The survey used a sample of 100 participants, including 30% of 338 media editors from notable print and electronic media organisations previously stated, together with seven current and former employees of the Presidential Directorate of Communication. The study used purposive sampling according to criteria that corresponded with the research aims (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The researchers used purposive sampling to choose experienced communication officials from the Presidential Directorate of Communication, ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the study findings. Furthermore, researchers used the cluster sampling approach to determine a sample size of 100 from a population of 338 journalists and editors. The cluster sampling methodology accounted for the category of journalism and media proprietorship, including private entities such as Mwananchi Communications Limited for print and digital media, IPP Media for broadcast media, and Azam Media Group for contemporary electronic media. The cluster identified government-owned media Tanzania

Standard Newspapers (TSN) for print outlets and Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) for electronic and internet media. The researchers then picked 20 journalists at random from each organisation within these clusters, ensuring an impartial and representative sample. This approach, which enabled researchers to collect data from a varied cohort of journalists, significantly enhances the study's scope and profundity. Wimmer & Dominick (2003) assert that cluster probability sampling enables researchers to get a sample that accurately represents the numerical distribution of various subgroups within the population.

The Study Used Three Data Collection Techniques:

As emphasized by Kruike-meier, Lecheler, & Boyer (2017), Latini et al. (2020), and Schiessl et al. (2003), the use of eye tracking has become a significant and intriguing tool for studying new media in the digital communication era. The researchers used internet-based eye-tracking to view the Statehouse's social media platforms, which provide news to traditional media. They then analyzed the news content posted by communication officers on these platforms. This method allowed them to determine the number of users, including journalists and editors from traditional media, who read and watch news from these platforms and then use it as a source of information for mainstream media. The findings of this study underscore the profound impact of social media on traditional media and the user engagement with news content.

A questionnaire is a document with a well-organized sequence of enquiries to gain insight into the issue. This study used google survey to distribute the questionnaires via the email of each respondent identified to participated in the study. The researcher closed ended questions to obtained information from 100 respondents, including editors and senior journalists from Mwananchi Communications Limited, Azam Media, Tanzania Standard Newspaper, Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation and IPP Media. According to (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014) the structured questionnaire format reduced disparity in the questioning processes promoted candid answers, and facilitated precise gathering and examination of numerical data.

The study used in-depth interviews to obtain information from current staff at the Presidential Directorate of Communication and journalists who have previously worked with it. This method effectively assessed the new media's impact on presidential communication in Tanzania. Regarding the data analysis, the researchers organized field data and edited and summarised it before entering it into a computer for quantitative analysis using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, such as percentage values, were computed, analyzed, and presented in graphs, tables, and paragraphs. A thematic analysis and a qualitative method were employed to identify recurring themes within the dataset. Thematic analysis is widely used for interpreting qualitative data and will be used to organize the findings of this study.

The researcher used multiple data sources to corroborate the findings regarding data reliability and validity. The researcher cross-checked data from different sources, such as interviews, surveys, and eye-tracking, to ensure reliability. In this study, ethical considerations were paramount, beginning with ensuring participants' voluntary involvement and obtaining informed consent before their participation. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained to safeguard participants' privacy and protect their identities. The researcher also obtained secondary data from reputable media institutions and

interviewed staff, ensuring ethical analysis and interpretation to avoid bias, obtaining consent from all parties involved, and maintaining personal confidentiality.

FINDINGS

What social media platforms does the State House utilize to communicate with traditional media?

The researcher employed eye-tracking technology, a reliable method, to identify the specific social media platforms used by the State House to provide information to traditional media and public in general. The investigation was undertaken with painstaking attention to ascertain the primary social media platform used by the State House to deliver public information. The findings suggest a significant shift in the State House Communication Unit's use of social media, which is of utmost importance in understanding the evolving landscape of news gathering. The State House Communication Unit started using other platforms, including Instagram, X, formerly Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Website.

Instagram Page URL: https://www.instagram.com/ikulu_mawasiliano

The findings revealed that the State House Instagram account is active. As of August 12, 2024, there were 9,691 postings and 1.2 million followers. The page contained numerous photographs with captions, video clips, and press releases. For example, multiple photographs capture the President engaging with foreign ambassadors who have arrived in the country. The page displayed photographs of the President participating in many official ceremonies and other public engagements. Furthermore, compared to the Instagram pages of other heads of state, which allow viewers to comment on each event posted, the President's Instagram page, operated by the Directorate, restricts viewers' comments. As supported by Plazas-Olmedo, and López-Rabadán, (2023), the study's appropriate position in visual social networks such as Instagram and dynamic forms such as video.

X Pages - <https://x.com/ikulumawasiliano?lang=en>

The analysis has brought to light the existence of two distinct X accounts linked to the Presidential office. These accounts, namely the official Ikulu Mawasiliano account, the account of the Director for the Presidential Communication Unit, and the President's personal Twitter account are crucial sources of information about the State House's social media activity. The State House Directorate in Tanzania, represented by Ikulu_Tanzania@Ikulu Mawasiliano, established an account on X (previously known as Twitter) in May 2018. Currently, it boasts a total of 475,000 followers. The Directorate effectively uses this account to disseminate all events, including videos, images, and press releases. Most press releases primarily focus on announcements of appointments, State visits overseas, and other events involving the President within the country. Additionally, before using social media, the State House used press releases to disclose forthcoming domestic and international activities, ensuring the inclusivity of the President's engagements. The personal X account of SamiaSuluhu@SuluhuSamia was created in June 2014 and has 1.6 million followers. Among the followers are President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President William Ruto of Kenya, U.S. President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and various other celebrities. The President primarily uses it to convey expressions of sympathy and address both domestic and global affairs. The President has 1348 posts with videos and remarks intended for the public. Comments from viewers are permitted on all X accounts, fostering a sense of engagement and involvement among the audience. These findings, in line with Haeder and Chattopadhyay (2022) and Anspach (2017), demonstrate that Tweets significantly affect presidential politics.

Facebook Account - <https://www.facebook.com/ikulu.mawasiliano/>

Investigations revealed that the State House Directorate of Communication created a Facebook account to disseminate and share information from the State House. The account started on April 16, 2021, and has 129,000 followers. It normally has live broadcasting, video clips, and photographs with captions. It differs from Instagram in that it allows viewers to make comments. The findings align with studies about state-house digital communication, such as those of Haeder and Chattopadhyay (2022).

YouTube

account <https://www.youtube.com/live/GcuVgumjXDQ?si=xt22AiodAZC1SUgw>

The State House Directorate of Communication in Tanzania launched its official YouTube Channel on December 22, 2012. As of August 13, 2024, when the researchers was collecting data, it had 31,746,530 viewers and 282,000 subscribers, with 240,000 videos, the majority showing events involving the President's official activities. It always uploads live events from the state house, which the media can download or link directly with traditional media or online television. The Directorate uses this account to broadcast live events. The State House also has a website that posts all the President's official events. It contains the President's Speeches, press releases, videos and still photographs with captions. Emruli, Zejneli, and Agai (2011) prove that YouTube is the most prominent social media platform that allows politicians to submit videos that influence voters.

Website - www.ikulu.go.tz

The State House website is a comprehensive platform that posts all the President's official events. It contains the President's speeches, press releases, videos, and still photographs with captions, providing a complete picture of her activities. The Website introduces top dignitaries, including the President herself and the President of Zanzibar, and their responsibilities. It is also linked with other state organs' websites, such as those of parliament and judiciary, ensuring reliable access to all relevant information. The media centre is a hub for all news regarding the President and her office, speeches, press releases, and a library of videos and photographs. The Website provides the contact address, which includes the physical address, telephone number, and email address. This finding is incorporated into the study by Vaccari (2008), highlighting the Website's role as a crucial collaborative social media platform for disseminating statehouse information.

Uses WhatsApp in Tanzanian Politics

Public Channel: <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Va9LFnU5q08Y7X7f9e2I>

On October 21, 2023, Samia Suluhu Hassan established a public WhatsApp channel. This channel, with 714,725 Followers, as it is readily available to more accessible to access its material. The collection comprised photographs and videos recording all activities undertaken by the President, providing a first-hand account of her daily activities. However, unlike a Twitter account allowing such exchanges, this account does not permit any form of engagement or comments from viewers or the general public.

WhatsApp Group

The State House has two groups of WhatsApp users. The groups used to communicate with editors and senior reporters. The researchers observed that one of the groups had 70 members, the majority of whom were editors, and the other group had 42 members who were State House reporters who specialized in reporting State House affairs. In this group, the State House uses it to circulate press releases, recorded

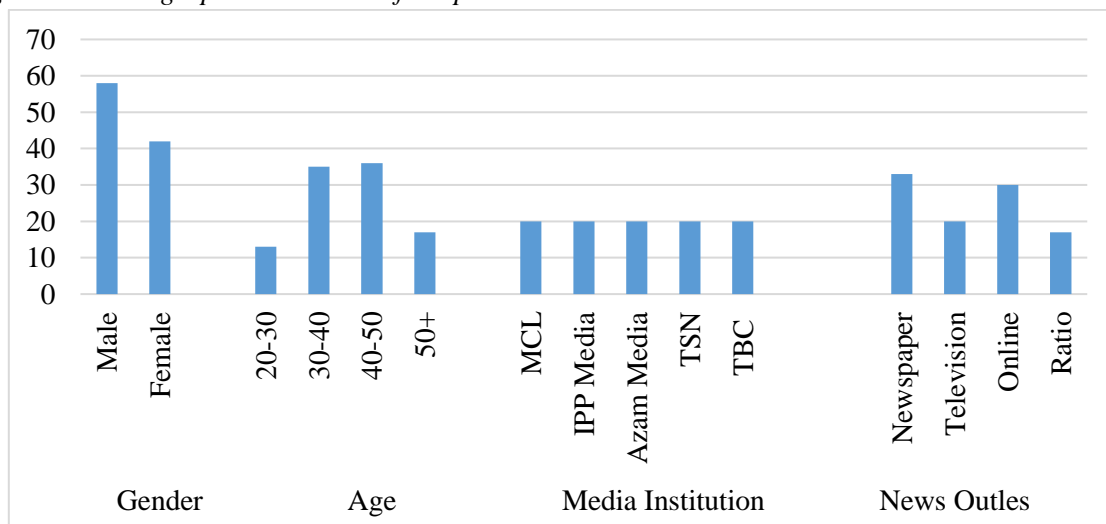
videos and schedules of events in and outside the State House. In these two groups, the editors and reporters get clarifications from the State House on any matter that requires either a press release, video or any issue, all swiftly and effectively. The study finds that Tanzania State House is adapting to integrate social media, a change set to enhance its communication with journalists. These findings echo the studies conducted by Haeder and Chattopadhyay (2022). Anspach (2017) further emphasizes the transformative shaping of presidential communication and fostering effective leadership. Additionally, the study used questionnaires, a trusted tool, to gain data from traditional media personnel regarding their utilization of social media for news gathering from the State House.

Demographic Attributes of Respondents

The data presented in Figure 1 showcases the diversity of our 100 respondents. Among them, 58 (58%) were male, and 42 (42%) were female. These participants were selected based on age, which fell within the following ranges: 13% were between 20 and 30, 36% were between 30 and 40, 35% were between 40 and 50, and 17% were 50 and beyond (as shown in Figure 1).

The Researchers employed a sample size of 100 participants, with 20 individuals selected from each of the following media organizations: Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), Mwananchi Communications Ltd (MCL), IPP Media, Azam Media, and Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN). Respondents from various media organizations have identified their areas of specialization. Specifically, 33% come from print media, 20% are from online media, 30% are from TV, and 17% are from radio, as shown in Figure 1. The respondents possess a wide range of specializations, with 80% having experience in traditional media, which are currently undergoing integration with new media.

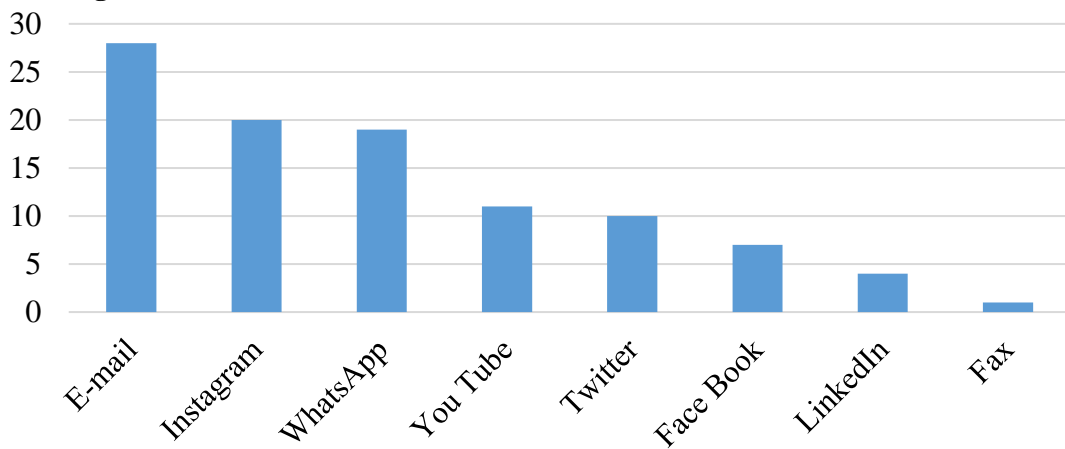
Figure 1: Demographic Attributes of Respondents



Source: Research Findings, 2024

The researchers aimed to determine the social media platforms used to obtain news from the State House. The findings indicated that of 100 respondents, 28% of individual's employ email, while 20% use Instagram. WhatsApp accounts for 19% of the total, followed by YouTube at 11%, Twitter at 10%, Facebook at 7%, LinkedIn at 4%, and Fax at 1%, as indicated in figure 2.

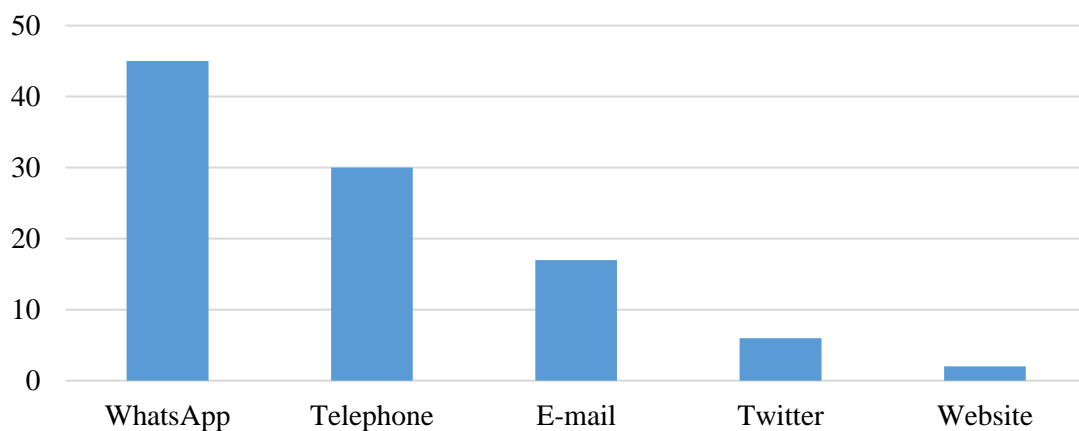
Figure 2: Which Means Does the State House Send News to Media Houses?



Source: Research Findings, 2024

The findings revealed that of 100 respondents, 45% used WhatsApp to seek clarification from the State House about the news, followed by Telephone 30%, email 17%, Twitter 8% and Website 2%, as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Digital Platform Journalists Use to Get Clarifications from the State House



Source: Research Findings, 2024

Figure 3 demonstrates that WhatsApp, particularly for clarification from the State House, is the most interactive digital platform news people use. Telephone is another platform used by news people, but WhatsApp is the preferred platform for cross-checking facts. Reporters can now monitor live broadcasts and engage in question sessions via WhatsApp and telephone. The findings obtained from the interview showed that the technological shift in social media has not only kept reporters informed but also engaged the audience through social media features, which allow the audience to share and comment. In response, mainstream media outlets have shown adaptability by introducing their social media platforms, reassuring the audience of their commitment to staying current with the latest communication changes. This study aligns with the research conducted by Ortega (2021) and Vaccari (2008) on Presidential Communication in the Internet Era. Their findings revealed that Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush established an online media section for the White House via the website

www.whitehouse.gov. Importantly, this demonstrates that the State House of Tanzania's decision is justified and intimately related to the evolution of communication technology.

How do the State House and traditional media benefit from communicating through emerging new social media platforms?

Editors and writers who have worked in the Tanzania Presidential Communication Unit categorize the benefits of combining traditional media with digital media in gathering information from the State House. The results implied that adding new media to gather news from traditional media has six main advantages. These include improved networking among journalists, easy and quick information access, decreased expenses of news dissemination, and breaking down communication barriers. Another significant is the availability of diverse alternative media for the statehouse, offering a wider range of news availability, and the establishment of social media unity in the mainstream media

Media Practitioner Network

The findings demonstrated that all respondents unanimously agreed on the positive communication among journalists' networks for information search, including platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Several studies have reached similar studies by Haeder and Chattopadhyay (2022), Meiserli (2021), McGregor, (2019) and Emruli et al. (2011), which have investigated presidential communication and highlighted its significant and powerful influence compared to traditional media.

Timely and Simplicity of News Gathering Processes

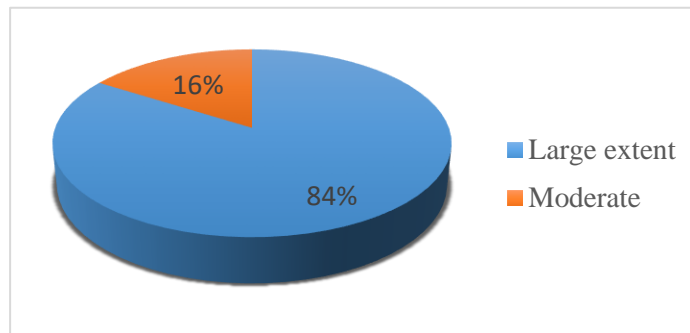
The study investigated whether social media significantly saves time and gathers news among journalists. According to the results, every respondent said social media saves time; instead of spending time in traffic jams following press releases from the Statehouse or waiting for clarification from the Statehouse information office telephone, with social media now everyone gets information instantly.

One participant said,

When we used typewriters and sent information to the media by graph or fax, the writers spent significant time preparing the news to reach the public after twenty-four hours or more. However, now that people are using social media, they can obtain information instantly, even without going through traditional media. The availability of the Statehouse news is all made possible by technological development in the news industry, which has significantly simplified news dissemination.

Another participant pointed out that before the advent of social media, it was far more challenging to communicate with all editors working in the newsroom simultaneously. They were used to working under strain because when one editor needed an explanation from the President's office, another was on the other end of the queue. They were working under tremendous pressure since we were all attempting to achieve the deadline. However, at this time, the Information Officer has taken on a pivotal role in transmitting messages to the WhatsApp group. Then, the State House Directorate of Communication used conference calls to ensure everyone received these messages concurrently. At the same time, each individual picked up the phone and received the message immediately. Regarding time savings, social media platforms offer a huge advantage. According to the study's findings, the availability of numerous social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Whatsapp, for Statehouse news has made news gathering among journalists more straightforward as indicated in figure 4.

Figure 4: *How New Media Has Simplified the State House Communication Flow*



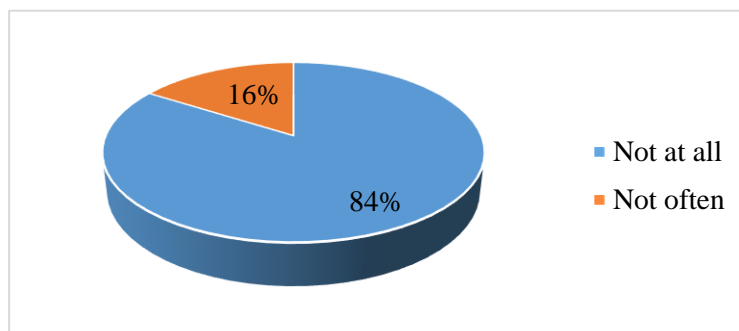
Source: Research Findings, 2024

The findings are similar to those of the study done by Gruber, Hargittai and Nguyen (2022). The study found that the evolution of networking changed the way people access daily news updates and helped journalists create connections with sources and audiences. The study's results are supported by Zhang and Li (2020) findings that journalists use social media as a tool for sourcing and verification.

Decrease of Expenses of News Dissemination and Gathering

The results showed that 84% of 100 respondents said the availability of network sites that provide news for journalists decreased expenses associated with information retrieval. They state they do not go to the State House to pick up press releases, and 16% said going there is not often, as indicated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: *Frequency Journalists go to the State House to Pick Press Releases*



Source: Research Findings, 2024

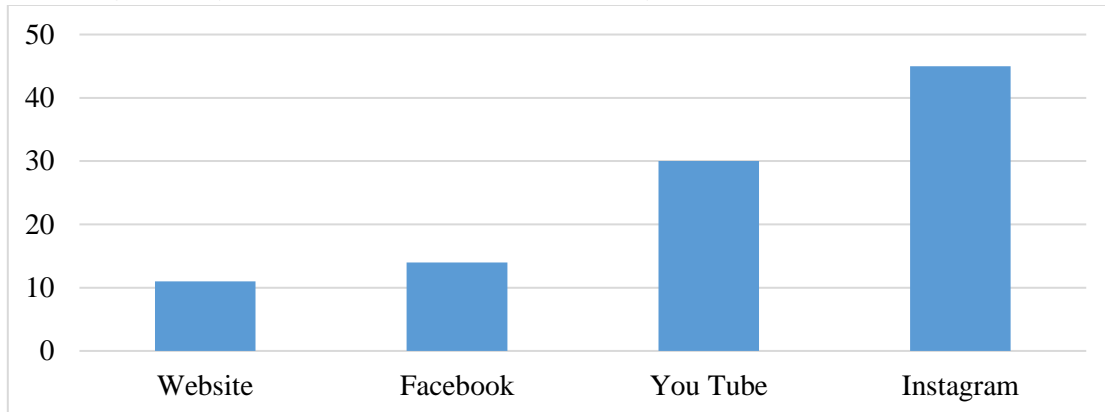
The findings from statehouse staff highlight the crucial role of journalists. In the past, all journalists diligently visited the Statehouse for news. However, this practice has significantly changed. Now, they only visit when invited by the President for a special occasion. This shift, as Meiserli's Study (2021) confirms, is a direct result of the influence of mass media and social media, leading to a decline in face-to-face communication between media personnel and politicians.

Breaking Down Communication Barriers

Before the digital era, news production was plagued by inefficiencies due to poor communication between the editor and the White House communications officer. However, the advent of social media

has revolutionized the efficiency of the White House and Newsroom. It has played a pivotal role in breaking down communication barriers and bureaucratic obstacles, empowering a more efficient dissemination of news. The figure illustrates the platforms with the highest usage for non-face-to-face communication: Website 11%, Facebook 14%, YouTube 30%, and Instagram 45%, as indicated in figure as indicated in figure 6.

Figure 6: *Digital Platform Used Journalists Obtain News from State House*



Source: Research Findings, 2024

Also, all respondents said it is significant in serving time as journalists can obtain news about the State House without communicating with State House staff. The findings incorporate the Study of Cherubini (2011), which provides evidence that social media platforms are widely used to access public information. Social media has gained widespread recognition among individuals of all ages and from many locations (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010).

Availability of Alternative Media for Statehouse

Another benefit is the State House's ability to communicate information directly to citizens, bypassing the need for media intermediaries. This has facilitated the access of unfiltered information to more individuals, bypassing the mediation of journalists. Moreover, it facilitates citizens' comprehension of their government's operations and promotes accountability. These results align with a study conducted by Meiserli (2021), which determined that social media is important for politicians since it allows citizens to get timely information. This allows individuals to evaluate the government's performance and make informed voting decisions.

Establishment of Social Media Unity in the Mainstream Media

According to the results, all traditional media had established their platforms. However, as much as traditional media relays information from social media, they rarely cross-check the veracity of the material obtained and solicit feedback conversely, as professional ethics requires. The finding reveals that media houses launched internet platforms. Social media users perform a crucial role in news distribution by sharing, ranking, tagging, and reposting collaboratively made content. They also compare and analyze content from personal blogs, open video-sharing websites, social media profile pages, and other sources. This finding is consistent with Cohen's 2009 study, which stated that for traditional media to survive and be seen and heard, news operations and journalists must be online and connected to social media. Overall, social media has completely changed the culture of gathering,

processing and dissemination of news and information from the State House without having to wait for press releases, faxes or telephone calls for both print and electronic media; the findings are consistent with the Study of Cherubini (2011), which suggest that individuals of all ages and geographical locations widely recognize the network sites. People rely on the Internet to obtain information quickly.

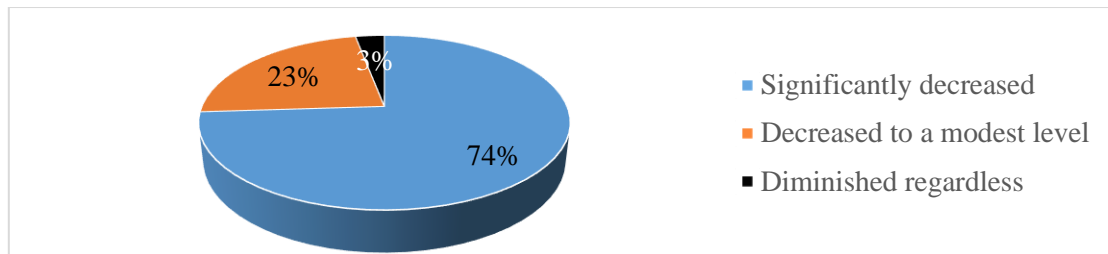
What are the adverse effects of the State House and traditional media from communicating through emerging new social media platforms?

The study uses a combination of journalists and Tanzania Presidential Communication officials to collect data on the effects and challenges of integrating new media with traditional media for news gathering. The findings, which are of significant importance, indicate that new media has had four significant effects: a decrease in personal communication, the decline of exclusive and breaking news, an increase in the propagation of false information, and the emergence of citizen journalism, all of which have impacted traditional media.

Lack of Interpersonal Communication

When surveyed about the study of the effect of media on interpersonal communication between the President, State House officials, journalists, and Presidential Communication staff, 84% of respondents reported a considerable drop, 23% reported a slight decline, and 3% reported a mitigated decrease as indicated in figure 7.

Figure 7: *New media has reduced the face-to-face interaction Between the President and Journalists.*



Source: Research Findings, 2024

The participants asserted that social networks limit the opportunities for questioning, as most information dissemination occurs online. They stress that this Emerging pattern has adversely affected the quality of news, particularly when the State House releases a press statement, and the mainstream media obtains information via social media. The Consistency in the information's substance conveyed is partially attributed to the need for more opportunities for immediate enquiries regarding the topic. This finding is consistent with multiple studies, such as the research conducted by McChesney and Nichols (2010), which illustrates a decrease in the calibre of news. The results correspond with the research conducted by Wilding, Fray, Molitorisz, and McKewon (2018), which emphasized that the lack of direct communication impedes journalists' ability to obtain vital first-hand information. The study also indicates that social media for news gathering reduces originality and the depth of information obtained through direct observation. The findings are corroborated by the research conducted by McChesney and Nichols (2010), who argue that there is a need for reform in professional media to uphold journalistic standards and foster the advancement of democracy. However, a representative from the President's Office argues that modern journalists are becoming lazy, avoiding

asking questions for fear of missing deadlines. They can still make inquiries via phone or WhatsApp despite the lack of face-to-face communication. The outcomes are consistent with the research of Gruber, Hargittai and Nguyen (2022), Wilding, Fray, Molitorisz, and McKewon (2018), highlighting the changing media landscape and the dilution of media content due to social media and politics. The outcome of this investigation is in line with Tambini's (2017) research, which suggests that journalists often work quickly to meet deadlines, producing shallow news. The findings align with van Dijck and Poell's (2013) study, which argues that social media has fundamentally changed journalism, making it more superficial. These results underscore the urgent need for professional journalists to adapt to the evolving media environment.

Declined Exclusive and Breaking News

These data indicate that incorporating new media with traditional media for news collection has reduced the creation of unique and immediate news stories. The findings indicated that social media has contributed to advancing technology, which enables the general people to access real-time broadcasts of presidential events. All 100 journalists have said that new technology has changed how they write stories because presidential events are no longer the most important news item. The findings are especially factual for printed newspapers released the day after the events happened. Most presidential news is delivered to media sources simultaneously. Respondents provided examples of State House press officers distributing news late at night about cabinet changes or appointments of other leaders by the President. This information quickly disseminates on social media, profoundly revolutionizing the area of news reporting and leaving reporters with limited new fodder to write about in the morning. According to his contention, this is crucial for upholding records. Journalists no longer regard news from the Presidential office as a fresh event. In addition, traditional media outlets no longer engage readers with headlines from the State House since social media platforms directly connected to the Statehouse can reach larger audiences. This highlights the necessity for journalism to adopt new strategies to adjust to the evolving methods of news distribution. The findings align with research done by van Dijck and Poell, 2013, who demonstrated that Politicians can now leverage social media to promote their goals without any disruption from journalists. They upload video recordings, integrate sound, and send them to the public. They still carry out their goals, even if they hire journalists. Smith and Marx (1994), van Dijck and Poell (2013), and McChesney and Nichols (2010) collectively agree that prominent politicians exert a dominant influence over the media, resulting in a pervasive atmosphere of fear and instability inside professional media organizations. The 'constant news cycle' refers to the rapid and continuous news flow facilitated by social media and digital platforms. This has significantly altered the pace and nature of news reporting, necessitating a shift in journalistic practices and strategies.

Another challenge that journalists face in the digital era is the standardization of headlines throughout all channels. This starkly contrasts previous years when journalists employed diverse perspectives and posed questions to communicate their message effectively. The writing scene has undergone a significant change, with journalism no longer presenting unique perspectives but instead offering the same content from several sources. The need for innovation in journalism becomes even more urgent. Editors, especially in the newspaper sector, are now motivated to demonstrate increased ingenuity in choosing different viewpoints for their stories to attract readers and conform to their diverse agenda-setting editorial policies. This imperative for innovation is crucial in upholding reader involvement and significance in netizen society. The results align with the studies conducted by McChesney and Nichols (2010), emphasizing the importance of adapting to the changing news landscape.

Fake News

The research findings underscore the need for increased consciousness of the challenges posed by misinformation. Every participant agreed that the widespread dissemination of false information presents a substantial obstacle for conventional media when using social media to gather news. The development of new forms of media has led to the temporary removal of specific journalists and the incarceration of others due to their spread of inaccurate information. In 2017, the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation took disciplinary action against nine employees for disseminating a fabricated news piece. The article falsely claimed that US President Donald Trump had commended President John Magufuli as an exemplary African leader. The Executive Director of TBC stressed that if the broadcasters had followed professional processes to verify the news source, such discrepancies would not have occurred. The analysis aligns with the conclusions of Nkanatha (2022), who proposes that the abundance of false information on social media may overshadow authentic news content. The 2016 US presidential election, where Facebook users showed more interest in fake news articles than credible news, further underscores the need for increased consciousness of the challenges posed by misinformation in traditional media and the influence of social media on news dissemination.

Another respondent highlighted that TBC One staff using fake news presented substantial challenges for all journalists, primarily because of the vast number of media platforms spreading the President's news. The significance of online networks in this matter cannot be exaggerated, as it significantly complicates distinguishing fake news. Journalists continue to face the challenging chore of sifting through multiple social media sites, which must guarantee the veracity and trustworthiness of the content. The results align with the studies conducted by Farkas (2023), both of whom support the need to reform and transform the media to combat the dissemination of false information. State House participants recognize that the presence of fake news presents a challenge for them as it increases terror. As a result, they thoroughly searched many online social networking sites and carefully constructed a well-considered response to refute it. The results coincide with the Study of Cook (2023), Jenkins and Gomez (2022), which indicates that the increase in misinformation is attributed to a decrease in the standard of journalism.

The Emergence of Citizen Journalism

The advent of networking sites as a platform for sharing information from the Statehouse has opened doors for non-journalists and intensified the competition in the media landscape. These non-journalists have established media outlets, now competing with professional media. This has resulted in a noticeable decline in newspaper readership and traditional media listeners, especially among youths. This tendency, as found in the studies by Gruber, Hargittai and Nguyen (2022), Zhang and Li (2020), highlights the expanding importance of social media among youth.

Conclusion

The research, using eye tracking, investigates the impact of new media on the dissemination of news from the Presidential Directorate of Communication in Tanzania to conventional media. The findings, revealed through eye tracking, highlight the Tanzanian Statehouse's use of at least six social media sites to transmit information, a discovery that significantly impacts the field of media studies and the way journalists use social media as news sources. The study, which involved a sample size of 100 participants from prominent print and electronic media organizations and seven employees from Tanzania's Presidential Directorate of Communication, aimed to evaluate the use of new media in transmitting news from Tanzania's Presidential Directorate of Communication to traditional media

outlets. The research concluded that the incorporation of new media in collecting news stories for traditional media outlets had a significant impact. Notably, the Tanzania State House played a pivotal role in this transformation, leveraging ICT and creating social media accounts to disseminate news to media professionals and citizens. This institutional initiative has revolutionized how journalists gather news, making it more efficient and cost-effective. While social media has provided flexibility in accessing news, it has also led to a decline in the quality of news. This is attributed to the homogenization of news across all media platforms, which hampers the diversity and development of unique news ideas that were previously obtained through personal contact and observation. The study concluded that the use of new media for news gathering and dissemination has both positive and negative consequences. These consequences, if managed effectively, can be transformed into positive outcomes if media personnel diligently work and uphold journalistic standards.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Numerous theoretical and practical implications arise from these findings. First, the findings indicated that Computer-Mediated Communication Theory could help elucidate how the use of digital platforms influences the perceived presence of government officials to enhance communication efforts. By examining the degree of social interaction, the study can assess the quality of interactions and relationships formed within digital communities by assessing the social presence experienced by users interacting with government Representatives online. The findings demonstrated that Computer-Mediated Communication Theory offers insights into enhancing meaningful engagement and informing communication strategies to build stronger connections between government officials and the public through digital channels. The Computer-Mediated Communication Theory is the foundation for citizen journalism and netizen society, as it emphasises the significant role of the internet and social media in both concepts.

These findings are consistent with earlier research evidence, which suggests that (Baym, 1998; Walther, 2011) Computer-Mediated Communication Theory offers insights into strategies for enhancing meaningful engagement, informing communication strategies to build stronger connections between government officials and the public through digital channels.

With reference to the media's role in gatekeeping, the study found journalists in traditional media are no longer able to act as gatekeepers since they lose control of over news flow as State house communication unity use media platform to disseminate news. As a result, citizen journalists disseminate false information and fake news, diminishing the credibility of news values. The study underscores the urgent need for media practitioners to adapt to the digital age, acquire the skills to use social media efficiently and enhance their reporting, enabling individuals to maintain their dependence on mainstream media. The findings challenged Shoemaker's study (1991), which stated that communication requires a gatekeeper to filter out irrelevant content, ensuring that only information serving the purpose of communication is passed through.

Recommendations

The study suggested that media specialists must regularly organize training sessions focusing on social media usage and identifying fake news to ensure the highest standard of media reporting. Moreover, while there is no explicit ban on personal communication at the State House, journalists are encouraged to use phone conversations and WhatsApp to submit enquiries and improve the overall standard of their news reporting. To facilitate the attainment of accurate information and prevent the dissemination of inadequate and superficial stories through social media, the Statehouse must bolster the operations of

the new media unit, ensuring its availability 24/7. This would enable professional journalists to access genuine information and thereby elevate the integrity of their reporting.

In addition, journalists need to conduct comprehensive investigations and maintain an extensive database of leaders' information. This approach will equip them with a broad spectrum of facts, particularly during leadership transitions, and will contribute to establishing a distinct journalistic identity. Journalists must also consistently adhere to professional, ethical standards. This unwavering commitment to ethical and quality reporting is indispensable for advancing the news industry and harnessing the potential of new social media platforms for meaningful public discourse.

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