



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FACULTY OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATICS
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA TECHNOLOGY**

**ASSESSING THE ADAPTIVE CAPACITY OF SELECTED NAMIBIAN PRINT AND BROADCAST
MEDIA IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN PRACTICE IMPOSED BY COVID-19**

**BY
LAMYAA LINUS**

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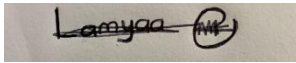
**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AT THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**SUPERVISOR: DR NKOSINOTHANDO MPOFU
JANUARY 2025**

DECLARATION

I Lamyaa Linus, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis entitled: '*Assessing the adaptive capacity of selected Namibian print and broadcast media in response to changes in practice imposed by covid-19*', is my own original work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at any university or higher education institution for the award of an academic qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the global media landscape, posing unprecedented challenges for journalists and media organisations. This study examines how media and journalists in Namibia responded to changes in journalism practices imposed by COVID-19. Using an exploratory research design and adopting a qualitative research approach, this study assessed changes to journalism practice as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and how journalists and media organisations responded to the changes. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with journalists and media practitioners, from selected print and broadcast media, to understand their experiences and adaptations during the pandemic. Findings reveal that the Namibian media industry underwent substantial transformations, including a shift from traditional newsroom operations to remote and digital reporting. The study also found that misinformation was a major challenge, necessitating rigorous fact-checking and verification processes to maintain credibility and public trust. Financial constraints further exacerbated the difficulties, with many media organisations experiencing significant revenue losses, leading to salary cuts, job redundancies, and shifts in business models. Additionally, the pandemic took a toll on journalists' mental health, with many reporting stress and burnout due to increased workloads, job insecurity, and exposure to distressing news. Despite these challenges, journalists demonstrated resilience by embracing digital transformation, collaborative reporting, and innovative storytelling techniques. Alternative revenue streams, including digital subscriptions and external funding sustained media operations. The study concludes that while COVID-19 accelerated digital transformation and innovation in journalism, it also exposed vulnerabilities in financial sustainability and journalists' well-being. Strengthening institutional support, investing in digital infrastructure, and implementing mental health initiatives are recommended to enhance media resilience in future crises. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on media adaptation in crisis situations.

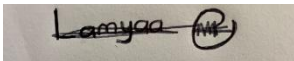
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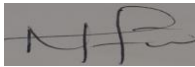
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AUTHENTICATION OF THE THESIS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved children, Aakifah and Zayn. My greatest hope is that one day; you will embark on your own academic journeys with determination, passion, and unwavering belief in your abilities. May this work serve as a testament that with dedication, perseverance, and faith, there are no limits to what you can achieve. May you always strive for excellence, break boundaries, and leave a lasting impact in whatever path you choose. This is for you, my greatest inspiration.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study's background and context. It provides the justification for conducting this study by outlining the problem statement. Additionally, the chapter articulates the research objectives, and research questions. It also explains the significance of the study, establishes the delimitations and gives the definitions of some important technical terms used in the context of this study. Lastly, an outline of the thesis is provided in the chapter's conclusion.

1.1 Background to the Study

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 triggered an unprecedented global catastrophe, posing challenges to numerous sectors throughout the world (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2023). This crisis has had far-reaching consequences not just worldwide, but also in Namibia. COVID-19's worldwide effect has been unparalleled, causing disruptions in a variety of industries, including tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, and retail ((UNWTO, 2020)). Global governments imposed tight lockdown measures, affecting economies, supply systems, and jobs (Onyeaka et al., 2021). The global economy contracted sharply, with an estimated shrinkage of 3.2% in 2020 (Namibia, 2021). This economic downturn was the most severe since the Great Depression, affecting global trade, investment, and consumption (Chan, 2020). The pandemic led to significant job losses and disruptions in supply chains, exacerbating economic inequalities and pushing millions into poverty (Namibia, 2021). The health sector faced unprecedented pressure, with hospitals overwhelmed and healthcare systems stretched to their limits.

In Namibia, the COVID-19 pandemic had profound socio-economic impacts (UNDP, 2021). The country experienced a significant decline in economic activity, particularly in key sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and trade (Ntounis, 2021). The tourism sector, a major contributor to Namibia's GDP, was severely affected due to travel restrictions and lockdown measures, leading to massive job losses and business closures (UNDP, 2021). The hospitality

industry also faced similar challenges, with many establishments shutting down or operating at reduced capacity (IPPR, 2022).

The Namibian government implemented various measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, including lockdowns, social distancing protocols, and economic stimulus packages (UN, 2021). Despite these efforts, the pandemic exacerbated existing socio-economic challenges, such as high unemployment rates and income inequalities (Maramura, 2024). According to World Health Organization (2023), the health sector in Namibia also faced significant strain, with limited resources and infrastructure to handle the surge in COVID-19 cases. The role of the media became crucial in disseminating accurate information, combating misinformation, and keeping the public informed about the evolving situation and government responses (UN, 2022). Amid these developments, journalists assumed a critical role in communicating the origins, repercussions, and remedies to the health crisis (World Health Organization, 2020).

Journalism plays a normative role of enabling those in the media discipline to share information that is of use to the public (Özkent, 2022); this is a practice that is specifically important, especially during a public health crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The public relied heavily on the media and the news they provided for them to understand what Covid-19 entails (Hapal, 2021). Through the media, the public was aware of the latest findings and reports on the virus, as well as the extent to which the virus was likely to spread based on research and experiments (WHO, 2021). This was necessary so as to allow people to take precautionary measures to protect themselves as well as their loved ones.

While journalism assumed this important role during the health crisis, the media industry itself was not exempt from the effects of the pandemic. According to Perreault (2021, 5), “despite being an important tool to the public with regards to effectively disseminating important and crucial information, journalists were mostly caught up with trying to balance their personal challenges, with that of fulfilling their duty of informing the public”. Moges (2022) further states that the media was affected by the changes brought by Covid-19 as many publishers experienced serious financial problems because their advertising revenues collapsed as a result of the crisis. An article written by Mare (2020, 7) highlights how “print media was heavily affected at personal, professional, and organizational levels by COVID-19

prompted economic slowdown”. To address the challenges affecting the media during the pandemic, Mare (2020, 7) explains how “companies were forced to decide on how best to keep the lights on”. Some organisations chose the route of cutting salaries across the board, while others lay off staff. These were all drastic measures necessitated by an unforeseen global pandemic (Mare, 2020)

Evidently, the operations of media organisations and even journalism practices were substantially altered during the pandemic. Journalists encountered extraordinary challenges in obtaining credible sources, validating information, adjusting to new technology, securing their safety and dealing with stress and trauma (Theodora, 2021). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic hastened the technological evolution of the media environment and audience behaviour, posing both possibilities and risks to journalism in terms of creativity, cooperation, diversity and sustainability (Simon & Purpose, 2022).

The Namibian media industry also experienced some of the above mentioned challenges. While there is research on how Covid-19 has changed the global media environment, there is a paucity of research, particularly in the Namibian context, that has examined how media responded to the changes in journalism practices imposed by Covid-19. The study uses the concept of ‘resilience’ and field theory to understand how, at both individual and organisational level, journalists and media organisations responded to changes imposed by the pandemic. To do this, the study focused on selected print and broadcast media which include: The Namibian, 99FM, Radio Wave, and Fresh FM

Contextual Background of the Namibian Media Scene

Namibia has a diverse and evolving media landscape that has undergone significant transformations since its independence in 1990. Historically, the country’s media was heavily influenced by colonial rule and later by the South African administration, which controlled much of the press and broadcasting systems (Hutchinson, 2021). The first newspaper in Namibia, the *Windhuker Anzeiger*, was established by George Wasserfall in 1898 and later adopted by the German colonial administration as an official gazette, primarily serving colonial interests (Akpabio, 2023). During South African rule, media institutions were largely state-controlled, with independent journalism facing significant restrictions. However, with Namibia’s independence, the media sector expanded, allowing

for greater press freedom and the emergence of independent media outlets (Action Namibia, 2024).

Namibia's media industry consists of print, broadcast, and digital platforms, catering to a multilingual and diverse audience and enjoying strong constitutional protections for press freedom (Remmert, 2023). As of 2023, the country had three television stations, 13 newspapers, and 25 radio stations, with a mix of state-owned and privately owned media houses (Stroebel, 2023). The print media sector includes major publications such as *The Namibian*, *Die Republikein*, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Namibian Sun*, and the state-owned *New Era*; there are also other media outlets although they are not major ones (Shihepo, 2021). While *The Namibian* is owned by a trust, other private newspapers operate under Democratic Media Holdings. Weekly publications such as *Informanté*, *Windhoek Observer*, and *Namibia Economist* also contribute to the country's print media landscape ((Matthys, 2024)).

Broadcast media in Namibia is dominated by radio and television, with the state-owned *Namibian Broadcasting Corporation* (NBC) playing a central role in disseminating news and entertainment (CRAN, 2024). NBC operates multiple radio stations and television channels, providing content in various local languages. In addition to *NBC*, private radio stations such as *99FM*, *Radio Wave*, and *Fresh FM* offer alternative perspectives and entertainment programming (State Media Monitor, 2025).

The political economy of the Namibian media is shaped by both government influence and private sector dynamics. While Namibia enjoys a relatively high degree of press freedom compared to other African nations, media institutions still face challenges such as financial sustainability, advertising dependency, and political pressures (Matthys, 2024)). The government maintains control over state-owned media, which can sometimes lead to biased reporting in favour of official narratives. However, independent media outlets have played a crucial role in holding power to account and providing diverse viewpoints ((Keulder & Nakuta, 2025)).

Despite these advancements, the Namibian media industry continues to grapple with issues such as economic viability, digital transformation, and regulatory constraints (Remmert, 2023). The rise of online media has introduced new opportunities for journalism, but it has

also posed challenges related to misinformation, declining print circulation, and shifts in audience consumption patterns (de Vega, 2025). Understanding this media landscape is essential for contextualising how journalists and media organisations adapted to the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

1.1.1 Description of the selected print and broadcast media in Namibia

1. *The Namibian* Newspaper (Namibian, 2024)

- **Overview:** *The Namibian* newspaper was established in 1985 by a journalist, Gwen Lister. *The Namibian* is the largest daily newspaper in Namibia. Initially a weekly publication, it became a daily newspaper in 1989. It is published in English and includes a section in Oshiwambo on Fridays.
- **Focus:** The newspaper covers a wide range of topics including politics, business, sports, and lifestyle. It is strongly oriented toward promoting Namibian independence and providing a platform for diverse voices.
- **Target readership:** It caters to a broad audience, including professionals, policymakers, and the general public interested in current affairs, politics, business, and social issues. The newspaper is thus, accessible to a wide readership across the country (Heuva, 2022).

2. *Fresh FM* (FM, 2024)

- **Overview:** Fresh FM is a popular radio station in Namibia, known for its vibrant and youthful programming. It targets a young, urban audience with a mix of music, culture, and lifestyle content.
- **Focus:** The station focuses on contemporary music, entertainment, and cultural programming. It aims to engage and inspire young Namibians.
- **Target audience:** It targets and attracts the urban youth aged 18-29, broadcasting in Windhoek, Rehoboth, Okahandja, Oshakati, Ongwediva, Swakopmund, Grootfontein, and Rundu. Fresh FM provides listeners with a daily look at the intersection of culture, commerce, and artistry in Namibian cities, aiming to inspire and represent the lives of young, influential individuals (Heuva, 2022).

3. 99FM (99FM, 2024)

- **Overview:** Launched in 1998, 99FM is a prominent radio station in Namibia, known for its dynamic and personality-driven programming. It brands itself as "Your Inspiration Station," aiming to inspire and entertain its audience.
- **Focus:** 99FM offers a diverse range of content, including music, talk shows, and cultural programs. It emphasises storytelling and features segments like "Royal Hustlers," which highlight Namibian industry leaders and entrepreneurs, aiming to inspire listeners through success stories.

Target audience: It targets a young, urban audience. The station is known for its inspirational programming, aimed at uplifting and engaging listeners through a variety of shows that highlight change-makers and community initiatives (Heuva, 2022).

4. Radiowave (Radiowave, 2024)

- **Overview:** Established in 1997, Radiowave 96.7 FM is recognised as Namibia's number one hit music station. It offers personality-driven radio with entertaining, dynamic, and up-to-date programming.
- **Focus:** Radiowave focuses on delivering contemporary hit music alongside engaging talk segments. The station aims to provide a blend of entertainment and information, keeping its audience informed about local and international events.
- **Target audience:** Radiowave is a prominent commercial radio station in Namibia, recognised as "The home of personality-driven radio." Its programming is entertaining, dynamic, and compelling, featuring a mix of contemporary music, engaging talk shows, and up-to-date news segments. Radiowave primarily broadcasts in English and aims to connect with a diverse audience, offering content that appeals to both young and mature listeners across urban areas (Heuva, 2022).

The organisations above were all actively involved in the coverage of Covid-19 and were also affected in one way or the other by the pandemic, hence the need to establish what changes they observed, if any, and how they responded to the changes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the practice of journalism globally. Media and journalists experienced difficulties in acquiring and verifying critical information (Kostarella & Kotsakis, 2022). In Namibia, Covid-19 impacted on journalism in various ways necessitating an examination of the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in responding to these changes. The pandemic exacerbated financial difficulties for media houses. Advertising revenue, a primary income source, plummeted as businesses cut costs (Heuva, 2022). This financial strain led to budget cuts, layoffs, and reduced operational capacities (Daniels, 2020). While the pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital platforms, many media houses were unprepared for this rapid transition (Heuva, 2022). The lack of digital infrastructure and skills among journalists hindered effective digital content production and dissemination (Heuva, 2022).

Journalists faced significant hurdles in accessing reliable information. Lockdowns and movement restrictions limited on-the-ground reporting, making it difficult to verify facts and gather first-hand information (Granville, 2021). The pandemic saw a surge in misinformation and disinformation, particularly on social media (Granville, 2021). Journalists had to navigate this “infodemic” while ensuring accurate reporting, which was a considerable challenge given the limited resources (WHO, 2020). Journalists were at the frontline, covering the pandemic despite the health risks involved. Many lacked adequate protective equipment and faced the constant threat of contracting the virus (WHO, 2020). Media operations were disrupted due to the need for remote work. This shift posed logistical challenges, including ensuring reliable internet connectivity and maintaining communication among staff (Heuva, 2022). The pandemic affected public trust in media. With the proliferation of fake news, audiences became skeptical of media reports, challenging journalists to maintain credibility and trust (Granville, 2021).

While existing research documents how, on a global scale, the media environment was affected by the pandemic, there is a limited knowledge, particularly in the Namibian context, on how journalists, at an individual level and media, at an organisational level, responded to the changes imposed by Covid-19 on journalistic practice. Against this backdrop, this study examined how media organisations and journalists in Namibia responded to changes in their practices imposed by Covid-19. Specifically, the study focused

on selected broadcast and print media outlets, which include *The Namibian Newspaper*, *Radio Wave*, *Fresh FM* and *99FM* to understand the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, “changes” refer to adjustments, shifts, or modifications seen in media industry practices, processes, and dynamics, as well as journalistic activities.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess the adaptive capacity of selected Namibian print and broadcast media in response to changes in practice imposed by Covid-19,

The study addressed the following sub-objectives:

- To assess changes observed in the media and journalism industry before and after Covid-19 by selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists
- To examine how selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19
- To establish how selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19

1.4 Research Questions

The main question this study sought to answer is; how did selected Namibian print and broadcast media adapt to changes in practice imposed by the COVID-19?

The study addressed the following questions:

- What changes were observed by selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists in the media and journalism industry in Namibia before and after COVID-19?
- How did selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia respond to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19?
- How did selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations respond to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it looks at how media and journalists in Namibia have adapted to changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding these

adaptations can help improve media practices and ensure better information dissemination in future crises. The study provides insights into effective strategies that media outlets and journalists have used to adapt to the pandemic. These strategies can be adopted by other media organisations to strengthen their resilience and responsiveness in times of crisis.

Additionally, findings from the study can provide insights for policymakers to support the media industry, ensuring it remains robust and capable of handling future challenges. The study also adds to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the specific context of Namibian media during the pandemic. It highlights unique challenges and solutions, contributing to a broader understanding of media adaptation in crisis situations.

1.6 Delimitation of the Research

The study focuses on the adaptive capacity of selected Namibian print and broadcast media in response to changes in practice during COVID-19. This research is limited to selected media organisations operating within Namibia. The study examines changes and adaptations that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both print and broadcast media are included in the analysis. Journalists and editors from selected Namibian media outlets are the primary subjects of the study. The study does not cover digital or online-only media platforms.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Media:** - “Media” refers to the many channels and platforms through which information is disseminated in the context of this study, including but not limited to newspapers, television, radio, and internet platforms. It includes the organisations and entities in charge of creating and transmitting news and information (Dictionary, 2024).
2. **Journalists:** - In this research, “journalists” are persons who collect, verify, and provide news and information to the public. They work in a variety of media types, assisting in the creation of material that informs, educates, and engages the audience (Sokanu, 2024).
3. **Adapting Capacity:** - “Adapting capacity” refers to media organisations' and journalists' ability to modify, evolve, and respond effectively to changes and difficulties, notably those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It necessitates adaptability, resilience, and the ability to innovate in the face of upheaval (Jonas Schulze, 2020).

4. **Changes:** - In the study, “changes” refer to adjustments, shifts, or modifications seen in media industry practices, processes, and dynamics, as well as journalistic activities. These developments are explicitly studied in the post-COVID-19 setting (Cathy Li, 2020).

1.8 Thesis Outline

The study consists of six chapters, which are summarised as follows:

CHAPTER ONE- In Chapter 1, the background and context of the study are presented. The chapter also includes the problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, and scope of the study. Additionally, the chapter provides concise definitions of key terms used in the thesis outline and the study.

CHAPTER TWO - This chapter reviews existing academic literature on journalism and media practices, particularly in the context of health crises. It explores the role of the media during pandemics, the state of journalism before COVID-19, and the impact of the pandemic on journalism practices. Additionally, it examines media and journalists’ responses to these changes, resilience in journalism, and the challenges faced by media professionals, drawing from international, regional, and Namibian perspectives.

CHAPTER THREE - The third chapter outlines the theoretical foundation guiding this study. It presents key theories relevant to journalism and media adaptation during crises, explaining how they provide a lens for analysing the research findings. This chapter serves to connect the study’s research questions with broader theoretical discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR - Chapter four describes the methodological approaches employed in the study. It outlines the research design, and methods, defines the research population, and sampling strategy, and data collection methods. The chapter concludes with a thorough discussion of the ethical considerations taken into account during data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE - This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the findings of the study based on the data collected from Namibian print and broadcast journalists. It examines the impact of COVID-19 on journalism practices, focusing on how journalists adapted to new challenges and how media organisations responded to these changes. Key themes explored

in this chapter include the shift to online journalism, access to sources and information, the pace of news dissemination, challenges encountered, changes in reporting methods, embracing technology, collaboration and network building, and, financial support and external assistance. The chapter provides insights into the evolving nature of journalism in Namibia and highlights the resilience of media professionals in navigating the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

CHAPTER SIX - Chapter six presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings. The discussions align with the study's objectives and provide suggestions from journalists regarding their working conditions, aiming to create a suitable and beneficial environment. The chapter concludes by suggesting recommendations for improving journalistic practices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of existing research and scholarly discourse related to the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in the face of crises, with a specific focus on the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Through a systematic review of relevant literature, this chapter explores key themes to understand the dynamic and multifaceted nature of journalism practice during times of significant change. While extensive research has been conducted on media resilience and digital transformation, a clear gap exists in contextualising these discussions within the Namibian journalism landscape. By evaluating existing studies, this chapter establishes how this research contributes to filling that gap, offering a localized perspective on media adaptation and resilience in Namibia.

2.1 The Role of Media during a Health Crisis

Media plays a crucial role in disseminating information, shaping public perception, and ensuring accountability during health crises (McQuail, 2010). According to Reynolds and Seeger (2005), as well as Southwell, Thorson, and Sheble (2018), media coverage during pandemics plays a crucial role in educating the public, countering misinformation, and influencing policy decisions. Similarly, Vasterman and Ruigrok (2013) argue that the media's role in crisis communication extends to shaping public discourse and guiding governmental responses. However, research by Posetti and Bell (2020) and Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018) underscore the challenges posed by sensationalism, misinformation, and political interference, as these can undermine the credibility and effectiveness of health reporting. While this applies broadly, the current study explores how Namibian journalists navigated these challenges specifically, considering government restrictions, rural access limitations, and press freedom concerns. This builds on Wasserman (2019), who argues that African media often grapple with balancing informative reporting with crisis-induced constraints—a tension that this study further unpacks in Namibia's context.

During pandemics, the role of the media extends beyond simple information dissemination. It also serves as a bridge between the public and policymakers, ensuring that critical health messages reach diverse audiences (Gadzekpo, 2020). Posetti and Bell (2020) assert that media institutions function as watchdogs, holding governments accountable for their handling of public health crises. Wasserman (2019) further emphasises that media organisations ought to balance their role as informants with their duty to prevent public panic. However, Newman et al. (2021) shift the emphasis highlighting that some media organisations have struggled with ethical dilemmas while reporting on sensitive health data.

In Namibia local media played a vital role in relaying COVID-19 information to the public; especially in rural areas where access to official information was limited (Heuva, 2022). However, challenges such as government restrictions on information flow and lack of resources impacted media effectiveness. Comparatively, studies from other African nations (Mare, 2020) reveal similar trends, where journalists had to navigate restrictive reporting environments while maintaining professional integrity. This suggests that while media is instrumental in crisis communication, structural and political limitations often hinder its efficiency (Peters, 2021).

Scholarship has consistently highlighted the critical function of the media in shaping public discourse, ensuring accountability, and disseminating reliable information during health crises (McQuail, 2010; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). However, while global analyses discuss broad media responses to pandemics, studies focusing on how Namibian journalists adapted remain limited (Heuva, 2022).

Thus, this study advances the discourse by examining whether Namibian journalists could uphold ethical reporting standards while confronting political limitations and financial instability during COVID-19. The findings provide localised insights into the African journalism landscape that have not been extensively explored in existing literature.

2.2 The State of Media and Journalism before COVID-19

Before the pandemic, journalism was already undergoing significant transformations due to digital disruption, economic challenges, and shifts in audience behaviour (Pew Research Center, 2020). Scholars such as Pavlik (2019) and Newman et al. (2020) discuss how

declining newspaper circulation, the rise of digital platforms, and misinformation trends shaped the media landscape globally. Within Namibia, research by Namibian Media Trust (2018) highlights similar trends, particularly the struggle of print media to remain financially sustainable and the increasing role of digital news consumption.

Journalistic practices were largely dependent on traditional models of information gathering, where face-to-face interviews, field reporting, and press conferences were the norm (Wasserman, 2019). Reese (2018) points out that while there was a gradual shift towards digital journalism, driven by technological advancements and changing audience preferences, traditional practices for information gathering, sorting and reporting were still being used. Similarly, Hanitzsch and Vos (2017) affirm that traditional reporting methods remained central to journalism, as direct engagement with sources ensured credibility, depth, and contextual accuracy in news production. Likewise, Nyamnjoh (2015) posits that face-to-face interviews and on-the-ground reporting provided journalists with the ability to verify information firsthand, making it a preferred method over digital sourcing, which often posed risks of misinformation and misinterpretation. Despite technological advancements, these conventional practices continued to dominate, especially in regions where digital infrastructure was less developed or where audience trust in online news remained low (Franklin, 2019).

The financial sustainability of journalism before the pandemic was a growing concern. McChesney (2017) and Mare (2020) identify declining advertising revenues and political pressures as key threats to journalism's sustainability. The significant shift from traditional to digital media disrupted revenue streams, as audiences increasingly consumed free online content, reducing the profitability of print newspapers (McChesney, 2017). This transition was further exacerbated by the dominance of tech giants like Google and Facebook, which absorbed a significant portion of digital advertising revenue, leaving media houses struggling to sustain operations (Mare, 2020).

The role of political pressure in shaping journalism practices before the pandemic cannot be overlooked. In many parts of the world, governments and political elites exerted influence over media houses through restrictive laws, ownership structures, and economic

dependencies (Nyamnjoh, 2017). According to Wasserman (2019), press freedom in several African countries was constrained by government regulations, which often limited critical reporting and investigative journalism. Concurring, McCurdy (2013) notes that political interference in media operations ranged from subtle pressures, such as restricting access to information, to more overt tactics, such as censorship and intimidation of journalists.

In Namibia, while the country has consistently ranked high on press freedom indexes, challenges remained. Media houses faced pressure from political actors, particularly state-owned enterprises and government institutions that controlled substantial advertising revenue. Mare (2020) argues that this financial dependence limited editorial independence, as some outlets avoided publishing critical reports that could jeopardize government advertising contracts. Furthermore, Heuva (2018) asserts that self-censorship was an issue among journalists who feared retaliation or loss of access to key sources if they reported unfavourably on those in power. These political and financial constraints, coupled with declining revenues, created an environment where independent journalism was already struggling before the onset of COVID-19.

This shift was further accelerated by financial constraints, which forced many news organisations to explore alternative revenue models such as digital subscriptions and sponsored content (Nielsen, 2019). However, these measures were not always sufficient, as audience reluctance to pay for online news and competition from free digital content continued to pose challenges to financial sustainability (Newman et al., 2021).

2.3 The Impact of COVID-19 on Journalism Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic forced newsrooms worldwide to rapidly reconfigure their operations, shifting from traditional reporting methods to remote work, digital content production, and enhanced information verification mechanisms (Posetti & Bell, 2020). The shift was largely driven by movement restrictions, social distancing measures, and the overwhelming demand for accurate and timely news. Research by Kyriakidou and Garcia-Blanco (2021) indicates that the pandemic accelerated the digitization of journalism, compelling media organisations to embrace online sources, virtual reporting tools, and alternative storytelling formats to ensure the continuity of news production.

One of the most significant changes observed was the widespread adoption of remote journalism. Reporters, editors, and news producers had to transition from newsroom-centric operations to decentralized, digital-first reporting (Karanja, 2021). This shift not only changed workflow processes but also introduced new challenges related to verifying information obtained online (Newman et al., 2021). According to Tandoc et al. (2021), journalists increasingly relied on social media platforms, official government briefings, and virtual press conferences to gather information. While this allowed for broader access to sources, it also exposed newsrooms to the risks of misinformation and digital manipulation.

The pandemic also transformed news consumption patterns. Studies by Casero-Ripollés (2020) and Nielsen (2022) indicate that audience engagement with digital news platforms surged during COVID-19, as people turned to online sources for real-time updates. This trend placed significant pressure on journalists to produce content at an accelerated pace while ensuring accuracy (Savoir, 2024). However, the rapid news cycle also contributed to increased stress levels among journalists, many of whom struggled with burnout and mental exhaustion (Feinstein & Osmann, 2021). The heightened demand for instant reporting created an environment where journalists had to balance speed with the ethical obligation to verify facts before publication.

Furthermore, the pandemic disrupted traditional journalistic routines by limiting access to on-the-ground reporting. As noted by Sreedharan et al. (2020), travel restrictions and safety concerns prevented many journalists from conducting in-person interviews or visiting affected areas. In Namibia, Heuva (2022) remarks that many reporters had to rely on phone interviews, video calls, and user-generated content to supplement their coverage. While these methods ensured the continuity of reporting, they also raised concerns about source credibility and the ability to capture the full context of unfolding events.

Another critical impact of COVID-19 on journalism practice was the economic strain placed on media organisations. Numerous news outlets faced significant financial losses due to declining advertising revenue, leading to budget cuts, layoffs, and salary reductions (Nielsen, 2022). In response, some media organisations sought alternative revenue streams, including digital subscriptions, sponsored content, and crowdfunding (Mare, 2020). However, these

solutions were not universally effective, as many audiences remained reluctant to pay for online news, further complicating the financial sustainability of journalism.

The financial strain not only threatened the survival of media organisations but also had profound implications for the quality of journalism. Reduced budgets meant that many newsrooms had to operate with fewer journalists, resulting in heavier workloads for the remaining staff and a decline in investigative reporting (Newman et al., 2021). According to Tandoc and Lee (2022), understaffed newsrooms struggled to maintain rigorous fact-checking processes, increasing the risk of inaccuracies and misinformation. Similarly, Posetti and Bell (2020) argue that the economic downturn forced media houses to prioritise cost-effective content production, often favouring sensationalised stories and clickbait over in-depth, analytical journalism.

Furthermore, the reliance on alternative revenue models introduced ethical concerns regarding journalistic independence. García-Avilés (2021) posits that the shift toward sponsored content and corporate-funded journalism blurred the line between editorial integrity and commercial interests, potentially undermining the credibility of news reporting. In some cases, media organisations faced pressure to align their narratives with the interests of sponsors, limiting critical coverage of key societal issues (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2022). This is supported by Nielsen (2022) who observed that the precarious financial state of media organisations raised concerns about journalistic independence, as some outlets became more reliant on government subsidies or corporate sponsorships, potentially influencing editorial decisions. This argument is reiterated by Mare (2020) who affirms that financial instability in Namibian media organisations led to increased dependence on government advertising, raising concerns about editorial autonomy and press freedom.

Additionally, the shift to digital subscription models created accessibility barriers for certain audience groups. While wealthier consumers could afford paywalled content, lower-income populations, particularly in developing countries, were often excluded from accessing credible news sources (Nielsen, 2022). This digital divide contributed to the proliferation of misinformation, as individuals without access to verified journalism turned to social media and unregulated online platforms for information (Patwa et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Journalism Practice during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally reshaped journalistic practices worldwide, compelling reporters and media organisations to rapidly adapt to new modes of news gathering and dissemination. Casero-Ripollés (2020) contends that journalists had to quickly transition to remote interviewing, digital press conferences, and multimedia reporting to ensure the continuous flow of information amid widespread lockdowns and movement restrictions.

There was an increase in the adoption of virtual reporting tools. As in-person interactions became increasingly limited, journalists relied on video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp to conduct interviews and attend press briefings (Newman et al., 2021). This shift was necessary to comply with social distancing protocols while maintaining access to credible sources. However, Tandoc et al. (2021) argue that while these digital tools facilitated information flow, they also introduced challenges related to source verification, as journalists could not always assess body language or gauge authenticity in the same way they would during face-to-face interactions.

In addition to virtual interviews, multimedia storytelling gained prominence during the pandemic. Digital platforms became central to news consumption, with media houses investing more in video content, infographics, and live streaming to engage audiences (Nielsen, 2022). Supporting this idea, Posetti and Bell (2020) assert that the pandemic underscored the need for journalists to be proficient in various digital tools, including data visualisation software and real-time audience engagement strategies. Similarly, Matsilele (2022) points out that the increased reliance on social media for news distribution compelled journalists to adapt their reporting styles, often condensing complex information into bite-sized, shareable content tailored for online platforms.

Moreover, Mare (2020) affirms that media organisations adopted hybrid journalism models, blending traditional reporting with digital innovations to sustain audience engagement. Print and broadcast media outlets integrated more online content, live streaming, and interactive storytelling to cater to audiences who turned to digital platforms for real-time updates. This resonates with global trends, as noted by García-Avilés (2021), who states that

the pandemic acted as a catalyst for digital transformation in journalism, compelling even the most traditional news organisations to expand their online presence.

Furthermore, the urgency of pandemic-related reporting heightened the need for collaboration between journalists and public health experts. Hanitzsch and Vos (2022) further observe that the complexity of COVID-19 necessitated greater interdisciplinary cooperation, with newsrooms frequently consulting medical professionals, epidemiologists, and government officials to ensure the accuracy of health-related information. This shift not only improved the credibility of news reports but also highlighted the evolving role of journalists as mediators between scientific expertise and public understanding.

In essence, COVID-19 compelled newsrooms worldwide to rapidly digitize, with journalists transitioning to remote work, virtual reporting, and heightened fact-checking procedures (Posetti & Bell, 2020; Kyriakidou & Garcia-Blanco, 2021). While global analyses capture broad trends, few studies examine the specific newsroom adaptations in Namibia during the pandemic. In the same way, Nielsen (2022) argues that digital platforms reshaped audience engagement, but little research investigates whether Namibian journalists successfully leveraged digital storytelling and interactive reporting to maintain audience trust. This study fills that gap by assessing digital innovations in Namibian journalism, determining whether the shift to virtual press briefings and social media reporting sustained media credibility.

Furthermore, Feinstein and Osmann (2021) highlight journalists' psychological strain due to fast-paced pandemic coverage. However, Namibia-specific research on journalist burnout, safety concerns, and mental health resources remains minimal. By incorporating first-hand accounts from Namibian journalists, this study provides a deeper understanding of how media professionals coped with stress, workload intensification, and misinformation risks.

2.3.2 Experiences of Journalists Covering COVID-19

The experiences of journalists covering COVID-19 varied significantly across different contexts. Global studies (Brown, 2020; Lee, 2021) reveal that journalists faced immense pressure due to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, requiring rapid adaptation to new reporting methods. The pandemic changed the way newsrooms functioned, shifting traditional journalistic practices towards digital formats and remote work (Mugambi, 2022).

While this shift ensured continuity, it also presented new challenges, including reduced access to reliable sources and increased risks of misinformation (Mugambi, 2022).

In Namibia, Heuva (2022) notes that journalists experienced difficulties accessing reliable sources and verifying information, while also dealing with heightened emotional and psychological stress. Similar challenges were observed in other regions, as reported by Perreault and Ferrucci (2021), who documented the toll that pandemic-related reporting had on journalists' mental health. Furthermore, journalists had to navigate an information landscape riddled with fake news and conspiracy theories, which required increased fact-checking efforts (Kyriakidou & Garcia-Blanco, 2021).

A significant aspect of journalists' experiences during COVID-19 was the psychological burden they faced. According to Feinstein and Osmani (2021), journalists covering distressing pandemic stories, such as rising death tolls and overwhelmed healthcare systems, suffered from anxiety, depression, and burnout. This was particularly evident in developing nations where media professionals had limited access to psychological support. In Namibia, media practitioners reported similar emotional distress due to extended working hours and exposure to traumatic stories (Heuva, 2022). The emotional burden of the job was compounded by job insecurity, as many media houses faced financial strain and implemented layoffs or salary reductions (Nielsen, 2022). Heuva (2022) further notes that journalists struggled with feelings of helplessness and exhaustion, exacerbated by a lack of psychological support structures within news organisations.

In addition, the economic downturn resulting from COVID-19 further intensified challenges for journalists. A great number of media houses suffered financial losses due to declining advertising revenue, forcing them to cut costs by downsizing their workforce or reducing salaries (Mare, 2020). This financial strain meant that remaining journalists had to take on heavier workloads, often covering multiple beats with limited resources (Mare, 2020). This, as already indicated above, caused a lot of distress on journalists.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced numerous challenges for journalists significantly altering their working conditions and exposing them to heightened risks. Another pressing concern was the safety of journalists. Covering pandemic-related news meant that reporters

had to navigate high-risk environments, including overcrowded hospitals, quarantine zones, and public protests against COVID-19 restrictions (Avilés, 2021). The contention is that, journalists were required to work under strenuous conditions, often without adequate protective equipment, while simultaneously managing the responsibility of delivering accurate and timely information to the public (Tandoc et al., 2021). According to Hanitzsch and Vos (2022), a considerable number of journalists reported inadequate access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and poor institutional support, placing them at risk of infection. In Namibia, Heuva (2022) observes that journalists were often forced to work with minimal resources, heightening their exposure to the virus while fulfilling their professional duties. This reality underscored the need for better occupational health policies within media organisations.

Censorship and government control over information flow were additional challenges that impeded journalistic work. Many governments introduced emergency laws that restricted media coverage of COVID-19, often justifying these measures as necessary to prevent misinformation (Posetti & Bell, 2020). However, these restrictions sometimes served as a means to suppress critical reporting. Reports by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ, 2021) indicate that journalists in various regions, including Namibia, faced intimidation, legal threats, and in some cases, arrests for reporting on government failures in pandemic management. Such limitations constrained media freedom and hindered the ability of journalists to provide independent, fact-based reporting.

Access to credible sources also became a significant challenge during the pandemic. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures meant that journalists could no longer conduct face-to-face interviews or attend press conferences. Studies by Sreedharan et al. (2020) show how journalists across Africa faced difficulties accessing reliable sources due to movement restrictions and government-imposed media controls, which limited their ability to conduct in-depth investigative reporting. As a result, they had to rely more heavily on digital communication tools such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and email (Newman et al., 2021). However, while digital adaptation allowed journalists to continue their work despite movement restrictions, it also introduced new ethical and professional challenges. Studies by Tandoc et al. (2021) indicate that misinformation spread at an alarming rate during the

pandemic, making it difficult for journalists to verify sources while maintaining the speed of reporting. This placed significant pressure on reporters to balance urgency with accuracy, particularly as governments and social media platforms struggled to contain the spread of false information. Vasterman and Ruigrok (2013) contend that crisis reporting requires heightened vigilance, as the rapid dissemination of unverified claims can contribute to public panic and undermine trust in journalism.

Journalists also experienced significant obstacles in maintaining ethical reporting standards while coping with the pressures of the pandemic. Sreedharan et al. (2020) substantiate this view by asserting that the need to produce timely news often clashed with the imperative to verify information thoroughly, leading to increased instances of misinformation and public distrust. This tension further underscores the importance of developing robust fact-checking mechanisms within newsrooms, as suggested by Tandoc et al. (2021), to balance speed with accuracy in crisis reporting.

2.4 Media and Journalists' Response to Changes in Journalism Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic forced both media organisations and individual journalists to reassess and modify their approaches to news production and dissemination. The crisis accelerated the shift toward digital journalism, with media houses adopting digital subscription models, live-streaming, and social media-driven engagement to maintain audience reach while offsetting declining advertising revenue (Matsilele, 2022). Similarly, Nielsen (2022) posits that the pandemic catalysed the transition from traditional print circulation to digital-first strategies, as lockdown measures disrupted newspaper distribution channels. This transformation was not merely an operational shift but a necessary adaptation to ensure survival in a rapidly evolving media landscape, hence the quest for resilience. Resilience in journalism refers to media professionals' ability to adapt, recover, and sustain ethical standards despite crises (Wasserman, 2020). While research recognises resilience in Western and global contexts, the current study brings this discourse into the Namibian media landscape, examining how local journalists sustained reporting amid constraints.

Šimunjak (2023) argues that emotional intelligence plays a central role in journalistic resilience, enabling professionals to navigate stressful reporting conditions effectively. This research critically examines whether Namibian journalists' coping mechanisms aligned with existing resilience frameworks or if unique factors, such as press freedom limitations and financial precarity, influenced their adaptability differently. Additionally, Duchek (2019) conceptualises organisational resilience as the institutions' ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises. This study applied Duchek's framework to assess whether Namibian media organisations implemented contingency strategies, secured financial sustainability, and trained journalists in adaptive digital techniques.

2.4.1 Media Perceptions on their Response to the Impact of COVID-19

To counteract financial losses, many media organisations sought alternative revenue streams. Mare (2020) observes that financial constraints led media outlets to downsize, reduce staff salaries, or seek external funding through donor agencies and media development partnerships. This viewpoint is consistent with Posetti and Bell's (2020) findings that the pandemic exposed the financial vulnerability of media organisations, particularly those heavily reliant on advertising revenue. As a result, some media houses diversified their business models by introducing paywalls, crowdfunding initiatives, and corporate-sponsored content to sustain operations (Newman et al., 2021).

Another significant shift in media response was the increased focus on audience engagement through social media platforms. According to García-Avilés (2021), media organisations leveraged Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to conduct live-streamed press briefings, host interactive discussions, and provide real-time updates. This digital transformation was not only a response to movement restrictions but also a strategic effort to retain audience engagement in an era of declining trust in traditional media. Likewise, Tandoc et al. (2021) assert that the pandemic reinforced the role of social media as a primary channel for news consumption, compelling media organisations to refine their online presence and tailor content for digital audiences.

Beyond financial and digital adaptations, media houses also had to reinforce their credibility by enhancing fact-checking mechanisms. As misinformation surged during the pandemic,

several news organisations partnered with independent fact-checking initiatives to verify COVID-19-related content before publication (Patwa et al., 2021). This was particularly crucial as governments, health agencies, and advocacy groups depended on the media to disseminate accurate public health information. Hanitzsch and Vos (2022) contend that these collaborations were instrumental in countering the spread of false information, thereby strengthening public trust in journalism at a time when misinformation was rampant.

Despite these adaptations, the transition to digital-focused media models was not without challenges. While some media houses successfully implemented subscription-based content, others struggled to convert audiences into paying subscribers, as consumers were accustomed to free online news (Nielsen, 2022). Additionally, reliance on social media platforms introduced concerns about content moderation, as algorithm-driven engagement models sometimes prioritised sensational content over in-depth investigative reporting (Casero-Ripollés, 2020). This created an ethical dilemma for journalists and editors, who had to balance audience reach with journalistic integrity (Casero-Ripollés, 2020).

2.4.2 Journalists' Perceptions on their Response to COVID-19

Scholarly research shows that individual journalists expressed both resilience and frustration as they navigated the unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Newman et al. (2021) found that journalists globally embraced digital storytelling and data journalism to enhance COVID-19 coverage, recognising the need to provide audiences with accurate and accessible information. Similarly, Posetti and Bell (2020) claim that the crisis pushed journalists to become more versatile, utilizing multimedia tools and audience engagement strategies to sustain public trust. This shift towards digital-driven journalism required reporters to adopt new skill sets, including real-time fact-checking, data visualisation, and virtual interviewing, in order to meet the increasing demand for timely and verified news (Reilley, 2023).

Journalists demonstrated resilience by finding innovative ways to navigate pandemic-era reporting challenges. Matsilele (2022) observes that journalists developed alternative information-gathering strategies, such as engaging citizen reporters, leveraging

crowdsourced data, and collaborating with fact-checking organisations to ensure the reliability of their stories. Studies by Hanitzsch and Vos (2022) and Matsilele (2022) indicate that newsrooms experimented with new storytelling formats, including data-driven journalism, live streaming, and interactive content. These adaptations not only enhanced audience engagement but also provided journalists with more tools to convey complex information in an accessible manner. Similarly, Tandoc et al. (2021) emphasise that journalists played a crucial role in public education by simplifying complex health information and debunking false claims through investigative reporting. The pandemic fostered innovation in journalism. The pandemic demonstrated the resilience of journalism, showcasing its ability to evolve in response to crisis conditions while maintaining its core function of informing the public.

2.5 Resilience in Journalism

Resilience in journalism refers to the ability of media professionals and organizations to adapt to crises while maintaining ethical standards and operational stability (Wasserman, 2020). This concept has gained increasing attention as journalists and news organizations navigate various disruptions, including political pressures, economic challenges, and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Duchek (2019) argues that organizational resilience in media is shaped by preparedness, adaptability, and the availability of resources, all of which determine the capacity of a newsroom to sustain operations under adverse conditions.

Resilience in journalism is often linked to crisis preparedness. Hanitzsch and Vos (2022) contend that news organisations that invest in contingency planning, digital infrastructure, and crisis training are better positioned to continue reporting during emergencies. This preparedness includes developing alternative revenue models, training journalists in multimedia skills, and fostering collaboration with external stakeholders to ensure journalistic continuity. Similarly, Southwell et al. (2018) emphasise that resilience is not only about survival but also about maintaining credibility and trust, which are crucial for sustaining public confidence in the media.

Adaptability is another fundamental component of journalistic resilience. According to Posetti and Bell (2020), the pandemic accelerated digital transformation in journalism. It

compelled reporters and media houses to quickly integrate remote working models, data-driven reporting techniques, and virtual newsgathering methods. This observation is supported by Matsilele (2022), who asserts that resilience in journalism requires openness to innovation, particularly in adopting new storytelling formats and audience engagement strategies. The ability to embrace technological advancements while ensuring ethical reporting standards is a key marker of resilient journalism.

However, resilience is not solely an organisational matter—it also pertains to individual journalists. Feinstein and Osmann (2021) confirm the point that journalists covering crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, often experience heightened stress, anxiety, and burnout. Building resilience at an individual level requires psychological support mechanisms, access to counselling services, and the implementation of newsroom policies that promote work-life balance. García-Avilés (2021) further suggests that peer networks and professional support groups can play a vital role in helping journalists cope with the emotional toll of crisis reporting.

Mare (2020) notes that resilience in journalism has been tested by financial constraints, job insecurity, and the rapid shift to digital platforms. While some media houses successfully transitioned to online news models, others struggled because of resource limitations and a lack of digital expertise. Ndjebela (2021) argues that for journalism to remain resilient, there must be greater investment in journalist training, sustainable funding models, and policies that protect press freedom.

2.5.1 Adaptive Capacity in Journalism

Existing research on journalism's adaptive capacity identify various strategies employed by journalists to navigate the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Javakhishvili (2018) observes that journalists exhibited resilience through multi-skilling, technological adaptation, and alternative storytelling methods. These approaches were vital in ensuring the continuation of quality journalism despite the constraints of the pandemic, such as social distancing and the rapid shift to digital platforms.

Supporting this view, Dube (2020) maintained that many journalists, particularly in Africa, were forced to rapidly develop digital skills to maintain coverage and communication with their audiences. Dube's study emphasises how journalists leveraged digital tools not only for news gathering but also for audience engagement, ensuring that information remained accessible despite logistical challenges. Similarly, Karanja (2021) opines that in Kenya, journalists adopted innovative techniques like live-streaming and using social media platforms to deliver real-time updates, demonstrating adaptability in an increasingly digital media landscape.

In line with the above observations, research by Mugambi (2022) underscores that the pandemic acted as a catalyst for the adoption of digital technologies within newsrooms. According to Mugambi, the rapid transition to remote work environments required journalists to adapt quickly to new technological tools, including virtual collaboration platforms and online video production tools. This adaptive behaviour reflected the broader trend of technology integration into traditional journalism practices, ensuring newsrooms could continue to operate efficiently during times of uncertainty.

However, it is important to note that while technological adaptation played a critical role, alternative storytelling methods also emerged as crucial strategies. As observed by Peters (2021), the pandemic forced journalists to reconsider traditional storytelling formats and embrace more creative, immersive approaches. Peters suggests that through interactive digital formats, such as podcasts and infographics, journalists were able to engage audiences in new ways, offering alternative forms of news delivery that were not only innovative but also more accessible to diverse audiences.

It is equally significant to note that, while existing literature provides insights into journalism's pandemic related challenges, this study addresses key gaps:

Limited research on journalism resilience in Namibia – most resilience studies focus on Western contexts; this study provides localised insights into Namibian journalism's structural and operational constraints.

Overlooked psychological impact of crisis reporting – while research discusses newsroom adaptations, journalists’ mental health struggles and coping mechanisms in resource-limited environments have received minimal scholarly attention.

Lack of sustainable revenue models for African media – current financial strategies remain short-term fixes; this study raises questions about how media organisations can create lasting financial resilience beyond emergency donor aid.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of existing literature on the role of media during health crises, the state of journalism before COVID-19, the impact of the pandemic on journalism practice, and the responses of media organisations and journalists to the unprecedented changes imposed by the crisis. The reviewed literature demonstrated that journalism plays a crucial role in disseminating timely and accurate information, countering misinformation, and influencing public perception and policy decisions. However, the pandemic significantly disrupted traditional journalism practices, accelerating the shift toward digital platforms, increasing financial strain on media houses, and imposing ethical dilemmas on journalists.

The literature also underscored the resilience and adaptability of the journalism industry. Media organisations embraced digital transformation, sought alternative revenue streams, and reinforced fact-checking mechanisms to maintain credibility. Meanwhile, journalists had to adopt new skill sets, navigate mental health challenges, and engage with audiences in innovative ways to sustain public trust. Despite these adaptations, challenges such as declining revenue, increased workloads, and the struggle to balance speed with accuracy remained persistent issues.

By drawing from both global and Namibian contexts, this chapter underscored the broader implications of the pandemic on journalism and the varying degrees of adaptation across different regions. The next chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study, and describes the qualitative approach used to explore the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in Namibia during COVID-19.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Introduction

This thesis examines the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in Namibia, focusing on how they responded to changes in journalism practice imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theory underpinning this study.

A theoretical framework is a basic analysis of the theories that act as a guide for any research (Vinz, 2022). Researchers use theories to explain phenomena, make connections, and predict the future. Thus, according to Vinz (2022), a theoretical framework allows for the discussion of theories that underpin a study (Vinz, 2022). This study is guided by two main theories: the concept of resilience and field theory as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1993). This chapter therefore discusses the assumptions of each theory and highlights the relevance of selected theories to the objectives of this study.

3.1 Theory of Resilience

3.1.1 Defining Resilience

Resilience theory has evolved over several decades, with contributions from various fields such as psychology, ecology, and organisational behaviour (Šimunjak, 2023). One of the early pioneers of resilience research was Norman Garmezy, a developmental psychologist, who began studying resilience in children facing adversity in the 1970s (Moore, 2019). His work laid the foundation for understanding how some individuals can thrive despite significant challenges.

Ann Masten, another key figure in resilience research, further developed the concept in the 1990s and 2000s. Masten defined resilience as "the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development" (Heshmat, 2020). Masten's concept of resilience hinges on various adaptive processes that are fundamental to how individuals thrive in the face of adversity. These processes are not extraordinary; rather, they are grounded in ordinary, everyday behaviours and interactions and they include:

1. **Positive Relationships** – Supportive relationships with family, friends, and mentors are crucial for resilience. These relationships provide emotional support, guidance, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for navigating through tough times (Masten, 2014).
2. **Problem-Solving Skills** – Effective problem-solving skills are crucial to resilience. The ability to analyse a situation, identify potential solutions, and implement strategies to address challenges is critical (Masten & Obradović, 2006).
3. **Self-Efficacy** – Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed, plays a significant role in resilience. Individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to face challenges head-on and persevere despite setbacks (Bandura, 1997).
4. **Emotional Regulation** – Emotional regulation involves managing one's emotions in a healthy way. Techniques such as mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, and stress management can help individuals respond to stress and adversity more effectively (Gross, 2002).
5. **Cognitive Flexibility** – Cognitive flexibility is the ability to adapt thinking and behaviour in response to changing circumstances. This adaptability is crucial for resilience, as it allows individuals to shift strategies and approaches when faced with new challenges (Bonanno, 2004).

Resilience is also defined from an organisational perspective. Duchek (2019) conceptualises organisational resilience as "the ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper" (Duchek, 2019). This concept is crucial in today's dynamic and unpredictable business environment, where organisations must navigate various challenges and crises to maintain their operations and achieve long-term success.

Alsaidi, Crowther, and Al Badri (2024) propose a comprehensive definition of organisational resilience, distinguishing between core and augmentative resilience capabilities. Core resilience capabilities include anticipating, learning, adapting, and recovering from disruptions (McManus, 2008). These fundamental capabilities enable organisations to effectively respond to and recover from adverse events. Augmentative resilience

capabilities, on the other hand, enhance an organisation's ability to manage and mitigate risks, ensuring continuous improvement and sustainable development.

3.1.2 Key Elements of organisational resilience:

1. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** A resilient organisation is flexible and can adjust its operations in response to changing circumstances, whether internal or external (Duchek, 2019).
2. **Risk Mitigation and Management:** Organisational resilience includes identifying, assessing, and managing risks to reduce their impact on the organisation's operations (Alsaïdi et al., 2024).
3. **Business Continuity:** At the heart of organisational resilience is business continuity, which aims to limit and control possible impacts on the organisation's priority activities during and after a disruption (Galaiti et al., 2023)
4. **Problem-Solving:** A resilient organisation embraces innovation and creative problem-solving to navigate through challenges and transform disruptions into opportunities for growth (Duchek, 2019).
5. **Organisational Culture:** Organisational resilience is deeply linked to organisational culture. It requires the cultivation of a proactive, resilient mindset among employees, leaders, and partners based on the principle of partnership (Alsaïdi et al., 2024).

3.1.3 Resilience in journalism

Resilience in journalism refers to the industry's ability to not only adapt but also respond and recover amid crises, emphasising its dynamic and flexible character (Hackett & Zhao, 1998).

According to Javakhishvili (2018), resilience in journalism is "the ability of journalists and news organisations to adapt to and recover from adversities, such as political pressure, economic challenges, and technological disruptions, while continuing to fulfil their role in society". Skinner (2012) defines resilience in media organisations as "the capacity of media institutions to sustain operations, maintain journalistic integrity, and adapt to changes in the media landscape, including shifts in technology, audience behaviour, and regulatory environments". Šimunjak (2023) on the other hand, discusses resilience in journalism as an

element of psychological capital, emphasising the importance of emotional intelligence in managing everyday work-related stressors and maintaining resilience. Emotional intelligence enables journalists to navigate the emotional challenges of their work, such as dealing with traumatic events, managing stress, and maintaining mental well-being (Šimunjak, 2023).

Key Factors contributing to resilience in journalism

1. **Emotional Intelligence and Resilience:** Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in building resilience among journalists. It involves recognising and managing one's own emotions and those of others, which is essential for coping with the emotional demands of journalism (Šimunjak, 2023).
2. **Training and Support:** Many journalism organisations are now incorporating resilience training into their programs to help journalists manage stress and build emotional resilience. This training includes strategies for self-care, stress management, and emotional regulation (Nieman Reports, 2020).
3. **Mental Health Awareness:** There is a growing recognition of the importance of mental health in journalism. Journalists are encouraged to seek support when needed and to practice self-care to maintain their resilience and well-being (Nieman Reports, 2020).

The study, which builds on the current paradigm, recognises that resilience entails more than merely adaptive capacity (Šimunjak, 2023). It broadens the investigation to include how journalism responds to changes in practice because of Covid-19 (Wasserman, 2019). This technique is consistent with the study's aims, which are to assess the adaptive ability of media and journalists in Namibia in response to changes in practice imposed by Covid-19, with a focus on selected broadcast and print media.

The inquiry is further guided by the sub-objectives, which analyse changes witnessed by journalists in the field, evaluate how journalists responded to these changes, and examine how media organisations adapted to the obstacles presented by Covid-19.

3.1.4 Key components of resilience theory

1. Adaptability

Adaptability refers to the ability to adjust to new conditions and environments (VandenBos, 2007). This component highlights the importance of flexibility and creativity in maintaining journalistic standards and operations under unprecedented circumstances (Mahon, 2021)

2. Recovery

Recovery involves bouncing back from setbacks and maintaining mental health and professional efficacy (Dror, 2020). This component underscores the need for mechanisms that support journalists' well-being, and enable them to continue their roles effectively (Osmann et al., 2021).

3. Sustainability

Sustainability ensures long-term viability despite ongoing challenges (Formisano et al., 2018). Sustainability in journalism means creating an environment where journalists can thrive even in the face of future disruptions (Mahon, 2021).

3.1.5 Use of Resilience Theory in Journalism Studies

The study by Šimunjak (2023) explores how emotional intelligence helps journalists manage stress and maintain performance. Emotional intelligence comprises self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills, all of which are vital in building resilience. These components of emotional intelligence collectively contribute to a journalist's ability to withstand and recover from the challenges posed by their demanding profession (Šimunjak, 2023).

Another critical aspect of resilience in journalism is the connection between professional identity and resilience. Andersson's (2021) research highlights how journalists adapt to challenges while maintaining their core values. The study emphasises the role of professional commitment and ethical standards in fostering resilience, suggesting that a well-defined professional identity provides journalists with the strength and clarity needed to persevere through crises (Andersson, 2021).

Wassermann's (2020) work on resilience in journalism provides further insight into how media professionals cope with adversity. Wassermann further examines the structural and cultural factors that influence resilience in news organisations. He argues that resilience is not solely an individual trait but is also embedded in the organisational culture and support systems. Effective leadership, collaborative work environments, and continuous

professional development are identified as key factors that enhance organisational resilience (Wasserman, 2020). Wassermann's research underscores the importance of creating resilient newsrooms where journalists are supported through training, peer networks, and mental health resources, fostering an environment where they can thrive despite external pressures.

Resilience theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how journalists and media organisations can adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. By examining the components of adaptability, recovery, and sustainability, this study sheds light on the strategies that enabled Namibian journalists and media organisations to navigate the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The insights gained from this research can inform future efforts to build resilient media systems capable of withstanding future crises.

This study assesses the strategies used by journalists and media organisations to cope with the stress and disruptions caused by the pandemic, and explores the role of organisational support, peer networks, and personal resilience in facilitating recovery. Furthermore, the study evaluates the long-term changes in journalism practices that emerged from the crisis and their implications for future resilience, considering how media organisations can build resilience to withstand future disruptions.

3.1.6 Limitations of Resilience Theory

While the resilience theory has provided valuable insights into how individuals and organisations cope with adversity, it is not without its limitations. Below are examples of key criticisms and challenges associated with the resilience theory:

The resilience theory often focuses on positive adaptation and outcomes, potentially overlooking its negative aspects which can lead to a narrow understanding that does not account for the complexities and potential downsides of being resilient (Ungar, 2020). Not all forms of resilience are adaptive; in some cases, resilience can lead to individuals persisting in untenable situations, tolerating unnecessary adversity, and setting unrealistic goals. This "maladaptive resilience" can mask underlying vulnerabilities and prevent effective action to address risks (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021). Additionally, resilience is highly context-dependent, which means, what works in one situation may not be effective in another. The theory may not fully capture the diverse and dynamic nature of resilience

across different cultural, social, and individual contexts (Southwick et al., 2014). Defining and measuring resilience can be challenging due to its multifaceted nature, with different models and definitions leading to inconsistencies in research and practice, making it difficult to compare findings across studies (van Breda, 2018). Furthermore, the resilience theory often focuses on individual and organisational factors, potentially neglecting the broader structural and systemic issues that contribute to adversity, which can limit the theory's ability to address root causes of challenges and promote systemic change (Wasserman, 2019). Despite the limitations of the theory, it still provided a basis upon which the researcher could understand how journalists and media organisations responded to changes in practice, imposed by Covid-19. The next section discusses the field theory.

3.2 Field Theory

Field theory is another theory used to guide this study. The theory was proposed by Pierre Bourdieu and it provides a framework for understanding the social dynamics within journalism (Reese, 2016). It posits that journalism operates within a “field” of power relations and social structures, where various actors (journalists, media organizations, audiences) interact and compete for influence and resources (Benson, 1999). This theory helps to analyse how external pressures, such as economic constraints and political influences, shape journalistic practices and the autonomy of the media field (Benson, 1999).

Pierre Bourdieu was a prominent French sociologist, in the late 20th century. Bourdieu's work aimed to understand the dynamics of power within social fields, which are structured spaces of social positions where individuals and institutions compete for resources and influence (Reese, 2016). Bourdieu's Field theory provides a framework for analysing the social structures and power relations that shape the practices and strategies of agents within a field.

3.2.1 Key Components of Field Theory in Journalism

Field theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu, provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics within social arenas, including journalism. This theory highlights several key components: fields, capital, habitus, and doxa. Each of these components offers insights into how journalists and media organizations navigate their professional environment, especially during unprecedented times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fields -are structured social spaces where agents and institutions struggle for the same stakes (Bourdieu, 1993). In the context of journalism, the field encompasses media organizations, journalists, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders (Hackett & Zhao, 1998). Each field operates according to its own set of rules and norms, which Bourdieu refers to as the “rules of the game.” For instance, within the journalistic field, these rules dictate what constitutes newsworthiness, the ethical standards to be upheld, and the professional practices to be followed. The field is dynamic, with power relations constantly shifting as agents compete to accumulate various forms of capital that provide leverage within the field (Bourdieu, 1993).

Capital: Bourdieu identified various forms of capital that agents use to gain advantage within a field.

- **Economic Capital:** Financial resources and assets.
- **Cultural Capital:** Education, skills, and cultural knowledge.
- **Social Capital:** Networks and relationships.
- **Symbolic Capital:** Prestige, recognition, and honor.

In journalism, cultural capital and social capital are particularly relevant. Journalists leverage their education, skills, and networks to navigate the field and achieve their professional goals. Cultural capital might include expertise in a particular subject area or journalistic skills, while social capital involves relationships with sources, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Symbolic capital, such as awards and public recognition, also plays a critical role in establishing a journalist's credibility and influence within the field (Benson & Neveu, 2005).

Habitus

Habitus refers to the dispositions ingrained in individuals through socialization, influencing how they perceive and react to the world. It encompasses the habits, skills, and styles that individuals acquire over time. Journalists’ habitus shapes their practices and responses to changes in the field, such as the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, a journalist's instinct to verify information thoroughly before publication is part of their

professional habitus. The pandemic has necessitated adaptations in habitus, as journalists have had to develop new skills and approaches to continue their work under constraints like remote interviewing and reporting (Posetti, 2020)

Doxa

Doxa represents the accepted norms and beliefs within a field. In journalism, doxa includes the principles of objectivity, ethics, and newsworthiness. These norms guide journalists' practices and decision-making processes. For instance, the commitment to objectivity requires journalists to present balanced and unbiased information, while ethical standards demand accuracy, fairness, and respect for privacy. During the pandemic, the doxa of journalism has faced new tests, as journalists have had to navigate a rapidly changing information landscape, misinformation, and heightened public scrutiny (Couldry, 2003).

3.2.2 Application to the Study

Fields: This study examines how Namibian print and broadcast media organizations navigated the competitive landscape during COVID-19, exploring the interactions between different stakeholders and the strategies employed to maintain operations. It delves into how these organizations adapted their practices to continue reporting during lockdowns and social distancing measures.

Capital: The analysis focuses on how journalists leveraged their skills (cultural capital) and networks (social capital) to adapt to new challenges. It also considers the role of economic capital in sustaining media operations during the pandemic.

Habitus: The study investigates how journalists' ingrained practices influenced their responses to the pandemic. It examines the extent to which their habitus enabled or constrained their ability to adapt.

Doxa: The research explores how the crisis challenged or reinforced journalistic norms and values. It considers whether the pandemic led to a re-evaluation of established practices and principles.

3.2.3 Navigating Constraints: Theoretical Integration and Adaptive Strategies in Media Resilience

The study examines how Namibian journalists and media organizations adapted to changes imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected theories—Resilience Theory and Bourdieu’s Field Theory offer distinct yet complementary perspectives in exploring this issue. Resilience Theory provides insight into how journalists and media organizations coped with disruptions and maintained journalistic integrity despite the challenges they faced. It allows for an in-depth analysis of the problem-solving strategies employed by journalists to overcome constraints (Masten & Obradović, 2016), the recovery mechanisms that enabled media organizations to sustain operations (Duchek, 2019), and the ways in which journalists navigated stress and uncertainty during the crisis (Šimunjak, 2023). Moreover, the theory emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence and support systems in fostering resilience, which is crucial in understanding how individuals and organizations persevered through adversity (Šimunjak, 2023).

Bourdieu’s Field Theory introduces a structural and sociological dimension to the research problem, offering a broader perspective on the external factors influencing journalism. This theory helps examine how power dynamics and institutional norms affected media responses to crisis situations (Wasserman, 2020), as well as how economic and political pressures shaped journalistic practices during and after the pandemic (Javakhishvili, 2018). Furthermore, Field Theory sheds light on the ways in which media organizations restructured their operations based on shifts in journalistic fields and audience expectations (Skinner, 2012). By integrating Resilience Theory with Field Theory, the study ensures a balanced examination of both individual resilience and the broader structural influences that affected journalism in Namibia.

While Resilience Theory is useful in analyzing adaptation and recovery, it has certain limitations that needed to be addressed in the study. One of its key limitations is the overemphasis on individual coping mechanisms, which can overlook the structural challenges faced by journalists and media organizations (Šimunjak, 2023). To overcome this, the study contextualizes resilience within broader systemic constraints by incorporating Bourdieu’s Field Theory, which highlights how external factors such as media ownership, financial constraints, and government regulations influenced adaptability (Wasserman,

2020). Additionally, Resilience Theory often lacks consideration of systemic barriers, focusing more on personal resilience rather than organizational strategies (Alsaïdi et al., 2024). The study addresses this by exploring how media institutions implemented policies and reforms to withstand disruptions, rather than solely relying on individual journalists' ability to cope (Duchek, 2019).

Another limitation of Resilience Theory is its assumption that resilience is always beneficial, without acknowledging potential negative consequences (Bonanno, 2004). The study counters this by critically evaluating both successful and unsuccessful adaptations, recognizing that some resilience strategies, such as compromising journalistic ethics for survival, may have had unintended consequences (Wasserman, 2019). By adopting this approach, the study overcomes the gaps in Resilience Theory and ensures a holistic understanding of how Namibian journalists and media organisations navigated the COVID media landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the adaptive capacity of selected Namibian print and broadcast media in response to changes in journalistic practice imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides a comprehensive account of the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and analytical techniques used to address the study's central question. By explaining the rationale behind each methodological choice, this chapter aims to demonstrate the study's validity, reliability, and relevance to the broader discourse on media resilience. The chapter also presents the ethical considerations and limitations encountered during the research process.

4.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a framework containing the commonly accepted views about a subject within a scientific community. It encompasses the philosophical assumptions and methodological choices that guide a researcher's approach to inquiry (Abbadia, 2022). The components of a research paradigm typically include ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and methodology (the process of research) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Components of a Research Paradigm

1. **Ontology:** This refers to the nature of reality and what can be known about it. It asks the fundamental question of whether reality is objective and external to the individual, or subjective and shaped by human experiences and social contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
2. **Epistemology:** This is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. It addresses questions about how knowledge is created, acquired, and communicated (Crotty, 1998).
3. **Methodology:** This involves the process and procedures of research. It includes the strategies and methods used to collect and analyse data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This study is located within the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivism is a research philosophy that focuses on understanding and interpreting the social and cultural phenomena in the world (Nasrin & Pervin, 2022). This choice allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of social phenomena, emphasising the subjective experiences, beliefs, and values of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interpretivism paradigm assumes that reality is constructed by social actors and is subjective in nature. Researchers interact with participants to understand their perspectives and experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm further asserts that knowledge is context-dependent; thus researchers seek to understand phenomena within their specific social and cultural contexts (Schwandt, 1994). Within the interpretivism paradigm, the goal is to understand the meaning that individuals or groups assign to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The interpretivism paradigm offers several advantages; including providing detailed insights into complex social phenomena by exploring the subjective experiences of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It emphasises the importance of context, leading to a deeper understanding of phenomena within specific social and cultural settings (Schwandt, 1994). Additionally, it allows for flexible and adaptive research designs that can evolve as the study progresses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). However, there are also disadvantages to this approach. The subjective nature of interpretivism can introduce biases and affect the reliability and generalizability of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, in-depth qualitative research can be time-consuming and resource-intensive (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Analyzing qualitative data can be complex and requires significant interpretive skills (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Relevance of the Interpretivism Paradigm to the Study

The interpretivism paradigm is highly relevant to this study as it focuses on understanding the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in Namibia during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paradigm allowed the researcher to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of journalists and media organisations, providing a comprehensive understanding of how they navigated changes in journalism practices. The paradigm allowed the researcher to listen to the narratives of participants in line with the issue under

investigation. By emphasising context and meaning, the interpretivist approach aligns with the study's goal of examining the nuanced and context-specific responses to the pandemic. Because the study seeks to explore the subjective experiences of the participants, it is appropriate to adopt the exploratory research design, which is discussed in the section below.

4.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the overall strategy and structure that a researcher uses to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical manner, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed (Creswell, 2018). It outlines the framework for collecting, measuring, and analysing data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Components of a research design typically include the purpose of the study, the research questions, the hypotheses, the variables, the methodology, and the data collection and analysis techniques (Yin, 2014).

This study employed an exploratory research design, which is a type of research methodology intended to provide in-depth explanations for the occurrences of problems observed in research (Swedberg, 2020). The exploratory research design is significant because it offers a wealth of information, allowing the researcher to acquire a broader view of the subject at hand (Swedberg, 2020).

Assumptions of the Exploratory Research Design

The exploratory research design is based on several key assumptions:

The study design is flexible and can be adjusted as new insights and information emerge (Stebbins, 2001). Unlike traditional approaches, the research does not start with a clear hypothesis but rather seeks to explore the phenomena to generate new ideas and understandings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The primary aim is to gain a deep understanding of the research problem through qualitative methods such as interviews and observations (Yin, 2014).

However, there are also some drawbacks. Findings from exploratory research may not be easily generalizable to other settings or populations (Yin, 2014). The open-ended nature of the research can introduce researcher bias, influencing the outcomes (Stebbins, 2001).

Additionally, gathering in-depth qualitative data can be time-consuming and resource-intensive (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Relevance of the Exploratory Research Design to the Study

The exploratory research design is particularly relevant to this study as it seeks to understand the adaptive capacity of media and journalists in Namibia in response to changes imposed by COVID-19. This design allows the researcher to delve into the complexities and nuances of how journalists and media organizations have navigated these changes, providing a comprehensive and detailed understanding that can inform future practices and policies. An exploratory research design supports the use of qualitative research approaches and this is discussed below.

4.3 Research Approach

A research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It encompasses the overall approach taken to conduct a study, including the strategy, data collection methods, analysis techniques, and interpretation processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Common research approaches include qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods strategies.

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore and interpret participants' experiences and perspectives. Creswell (2014) argues that qualitative research is well-suited for studies that seek to understand human experiences, behaviours, and meanings. This study relied on interviews with journalists and media professionals to examine how they navigated operational changes, technological transitions, and economic constraints during COVID-19.

Assumptions of the Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative research approach is based on several key assumptions. Firstly, the researcher assumes that reality is constructed by individuals interacting within their social contexts (Phillips, 2023). Secondly, it is assumed that understanding is deeply rooted in the context where the phenomena occurs. Thirdly, the research is driven by the data collected rather than starting with a hypothesis, emphasizing the generation of theory from data

(Creswell, 2014). Lastly, this approach considers the whole phenomenon, understanding the complexity and interconnections within the research context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The qualitative research approach has several notable advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, it provides rich, detailed insights into complex phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, there are some cons to consider. The interpretive nature of qualitative research can introduce researcher bias, potentially affecting the reliability of the results (Chetty, 2016). The data collection and analysis process can also be lengthy and resource-intensive, requiring significant time and resources to conduct thoroughly. Furthermore, findings from qualitative research are often specific to the context studied and may not be easily generalizable to other settings, limiting their broader applicability (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Relevance of the Qualitative Research Approach to the Study

The qualitative research approach is particularly relevant to this study as it allowed the researcher to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of journalists and media organisations, providing a comprehensive understanding of their responses to the pandemic. By emphasizing context and meaning, the qualitative approach aligns with the study's goal of examining the nuanced and context-specific adaptations in journalism practices.

4.4 Population and Sampling

In research, population refers to the entire set of individuals or objects that are the focus of a study. It includes all elements from which the researcher may collect data (Bhandari, 2022). Sampling, on the other hand, is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from the population to represent the entire group. This allows researchers to make inferences about the population without studying every member (McCombes, 2019).

Components of Population and Sampling

1. **Population:** The entire group of individuals or objects relevant to the research question.
2. **Sample:** A subset of the population selected for the study.
3. **Sampling Frame:** A list of elements from which the sample is drawn.

4. Sampling Technique: The method used to select the sample from the population (Bhandari, 2022).

Identifying the Population and Sampling of the Study

The population for this study consists of journalists and news editors from selected media organisations, including *The Namibian*, *99FM*, *Radio Wave*, and *Fresh FM*. This population was chosen because they are mainly private with no funding or assistance from the government, making them key informants for understanding the adaptive strategies employed by the media industry. In addition, they represent both print and broadcast media in Namibia.

Given the study's qualitative nature, the purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants who possess first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Boeije, 2010). Purposive sampling ensures that the selected participants have the necessary experience and expertise to provide in-depth insights into the strategic and operational changes in their organisations (Alchemer, 2021).

A total of 12 participants were selected from the identified print and broadcast media organisations. Three participants were selected from each of the four organisations. However, in the process of data collection, one participant withdrew and this meant that eleven (11) participants constituted the final sample size. These participants included journalists and editors, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The selection criteria included:

- Having at least two years of experience in journalism before and during COVID-19.
- Working in either print or broadcast media in Namibia.
- Direct involvement in reporting, news production, or media management during the pandemic.

Participants were contacted in person and via telephone, and their participation was voluntary. To ensure inclusivity, interviews were conducted at times convenient for each respondent. According to Bhandari (2022), identifying the right population ensures that the research addresses the appropriate group of individuals who have first-hand experience and

insights into the changes and challenges faced by the media industry during the pandemic. By focusing on media professionals, the study aimed to capture the experiences and adaptations made by those directly involved in journalistic practices.

4.5 Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Data collection refers to the systematic approach used to gather and measure information on variables of interest, enabling one to answer the research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (George, 2022). Components of data collection include the choice of method, tools for gathering data, and the procedures followed during collection.

Data Collection Method: Semi-structured interviews

The primary data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection method that combines predefined questions with open-ended discussions, allowing for flexibility in responses while ensuring key topics are covered (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). This approach enables researchers to gain deeper insights by allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences, perspectives, and opinions (Bryman, 2016). Unlike structured interviews, which follow a rigid set of questions, semi-structured interviews provide room for follow-up questions and probing, making them suitable for exploratory research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An interview guide was developed to facilitate the process.

Each interview was conducted either face-to-face or virtually via phone call, depending on the participant's availability and COVID-19 restrictions. Interview questions focused on:

- Changes observed in the media and journalism industry before and after Covid-19 by selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists
- How selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19
- How selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19

Interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent, and additional notes were taken to capture key observations.

Data collection Procedures

1. Preparation: The researcher developed a flexible interview guide with broad themes and topics to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the research questions while allowing participants the freedom to express their views.
2. Conducting Interviews: Interviews were conducted in a conversational style, allowing participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. The researcher also used follow-up questions to delve deeper into specific areas of interest.
3. Recording and Transcription: Interviews were recorded (with the participants' consent) and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate capture of the data for analysis.
4. Data Management: Transcripts were organised and stored securely, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Data analysis techniques and procedures refer to the systematic methods used to process, organise, and interpret data collected during research. These techniques allow researchers to uncover patterns, identify themes, and draw meaningful conclusions from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis identifies patterns and themes within qualitative data, making it an effective method for interpreting interview responses (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The assumptions of thematic analysis include several key factors: Firstly, it acknowledges that the analysis is influenced by the researcher's perspectives and interpretations, emphasizing subjectivity. Secondly, themes are understood within the context in which the data were collected, highlighting contextual interpretation. Thirdly, a data-driven approach is employed, where themes are derived directly from the data rather than being imposed by pre-existing theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Lastly, the method is flexible and can be adapted to different research questions and types of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

However, there are some drawbacks. The analysis can be influenced by the researcher's biases and perspectives, and the process of coding and identifying themes can be time-

consuming (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, there is no single way to conduct thematic analysis, which can lead to inconsistencies in application (Holloway & Todres, 2003).

The six-step thematic analysis process proposed by Clarke and Braun (2013) was followed:

1. Familiarisation with Data: Transcribing and reviewing interviews to gain a deep understanding of responses.
2. Initial Coding: Assigning labels to key statements relevant to the study's objectives.
3. Theme Identification: Grouping similar codes into overarching themes.
4. Reviewing Themes: Refining and validating themes against research objectives.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Ensuring themes accurately reflect the experiences of participants.
6. Report Writing: Integrating themes with literature and presenting findings in a structured format. This is presented in the next chapter

Data analysis procedures

First, data preparation involves organising and preparing the collected data for analysis, which included transcribing interviews, sorting materials and coding data. To prepare the data, I manually transcribed each interview recording, reviewed the transcripts for accuracy, and organised them according to participants. I then used open coding where labels or codes are assigned to segments of data that are relevant to the research questions (Saldaña, 2016). To carry out the coding, I read through each transcript line by line, identifying meaningful segments that reflected participants' experiences with media adaptation during COVID-19. I assigned descriptive codes to these segments, grouped them into broader categories, and refined them iteratively to align with the study's conceptual framework on media resilience. The next step involved theme identification where an analysis of coded data was done to identify recurring patterns or themes. To identify themes, I examined the coded data across all transcripts, looking for recurring ideas, phrases, and experiences that reflected how media practitioners adapted to the pandemic. I clustered similar codes together and reviewed them in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. Themes that emerged from the analysis included experiences of journalists

reporting during COVID-19, challenges encountered by journalists, changes in reporting methods, becoming multi-skilled, embracing technology, financial challenges and sustainability, advertising and business model adjustments, collaboration and network building, financial support and external assistance, verification and misinformation, self-censorship and press freedom concerns. After identifying themes, the process of data interpretation begun. This was done in order to make sense of the identified themes, to draw conclusions and answer the research questions. Finally, reporting presents the findings in a structured format, often accompanied by direct quotes from the data to illustrate the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and this has been done in the next chapter.

4.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality and rigour of the study. It is about establishing the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which help in legitimizing the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Four Elements of Trustworthiness

1. **Credibility:** This refers to confidence in the truth of the data and its interpretation. It involves ensuring that the findings are a true reflection of the participants' perspectives and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Methods to achieve credibility include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation of data sources and methods (Shenton, 2004). To ensure credibility, participants were selected based on their expertise, and interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy.
2. **Transferability:** This is the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other contexts or settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Providing thick descriptions of the study context and participants can enhance transferability by allowing readers to determine if the findings are applicable to their own settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Detailed descriptions of the research context and participant selection enhanced applicability to similar settings.
3. **Dependability:** This element involves ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It focuses on the stability of data over time and conditions. Techniques to achieve dependability include providing an audit trail

and conducting a dependability audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). The research process was meticulously documented, allowing for future replication.

4. Confirmability: This refers to the degree to which the findings are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivations, or interests (Shenton, 2004). It is achieved through practices like reflexivity, audit trails, and triangulation to minimise bias and ensure objectivity (Shenton, 2004). Objectivity, auditability and dependence on data were steps that were maintained to provide transparency.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are moral standards that are incorporated into a study to assist the researcher when conducting research. Ethical considerations ensure that the rights, dignity, and well-being of the participants are protected throughout the research process (Bhandari, 2021). Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Namibia University of Science and Technology's Ethical Committee. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and written informed consent was obtained. To ensure confidentiality, the participants' identities were anonymised using codes (J1-2025, J11-2025).

Key Ethical Issues and How They Were Adhered To

1. Autonomy

Autonomy emphasises an individual's free will to participate in a study. It ensures that participants have the right to make informed decisions about their involvement in the research (Beauchamp, 2019).

The participants were provided with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent forms were given to all participants, ensuring they understand their rights and that they voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

2. Nonmaleficence

Nonmaleficence discourages the researcher from causing harm to participants. It involves taking measures to protect participants from any physical, emotional, or psychological harm (Beauchamp, 2019).

The study was designed to minimise any potential harm to the participants. Sensitive topics were approached with care, and the participants were assured that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Data was collected and handled confidentially to protect the participants' privacy.

3. Justice

Justice encourages the researcher to treat participants with respect and ensure that they benefit from the research. It involves fairness in the selection of participants and the distribution of benefits and burdens (Beauchamp, 2019).

Participants were selected based on criteria relevant to the research question to ensure fairness. Efforts were made to ensure that the benefits of the research will be shared with the participants and the wider community. Such benefits include providing feedback on the research findings and explaining how they could be used to improve journalism practices during crises like COVID-19.

4.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, the methodology chapter of this study laid the foundation for a robust and thorough examination of how media and journalists responded to the adaptive capacities on the changes imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of Namibian print and broadcast media. This chapter presented a detailed account on the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and data analysis procedures employed in the study.

The use of an exploratory research design allowed for flexibility and adaptability, essential for understanding the complex and dynamic nature of journalism practices during a crisis. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the study captures a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings. The qualitative data collection methods, including semi structured interviews, provided deep insights into

the lived experiences of media professionals, while the rigorous data analysis techniques ensured that the findings were grounded in the data and were also contextually relevant.

Overall, the methodological choices made in this study are well-suited to achieving the research objectives and answering the research questions. The next chapter presents, analyses and discusses the findings of this study. It explores the experiences of journalists and media organisations in adapting to the changes imposed by COVID-19, supported by direct participant quotes and relevant scholarly discussions.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of this study. The focus of the study was to examine media and journalists' adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia, with a focus on selected broadcast and print media. As highlighted in chapter 4, inductive thematic analysis was employed to derive meaning from the findings. The findings are thus presented based on the themes that emerged and in line with the objectives of the study which are: to assess changes in the media and journalism industry before and after COVID-19, to examine how selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19, and to establish how selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19. Finally, to protect the identity of the participants, each one was assigned a code beginning from (J1 – J11 - 2025). This chapter therefore begins with brief discussions on the information of the participants.

5.1 Information of the Participants

Initially, 12 participants were sought for this study; however, only 11 were interviewed as one participant was unavailable. A total of eleven (11) participants from four selected media organisations were then interviewed for this study. The participants represented various roles within the media industry, including journalists, and editors. Their areas of specialisation varied and included covering politics, business, community reporting, entertainment, and investigative journalism. The participants had diverse experience levels, ranging from early-career journalists to senior reporters and media executives. The majority had direct experience reporting during the pandemic, which provided valuable insights into how journalism practices changed in response to COVID-19. 'Changes' in the context of the study refer to adjustments, shifts, or modifications seen in media industry practices, processes, and dynamics, as well as journalistic activities.

5.2 Changes in Journalism practice Imposed by COVID-19

In order to get an understanding of journalists' perceptions on changes in journalism as a result of Covid-19, the study first sought to assess their experiences of reporting during the pandemic. Thereafter, findings on changes in journalism practice are presented and the challenges encountered by journalists are explored.

5.2.1 Experiences of Journalists Reporting During COVID-19

The narratives below reflect on the journalists' and editors' experiences while reporting during the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants reflect on how reporting on Covid-19 had psychological effects on them. Some participants commented:

Every day, I had to write about people dying, families losing loved ones, and hospitals being overwhelmed. It was heart-breaking, and I think it left a permanent mark on me (*J3-2025*).

We covered tragic stories daily, and there was no psychological support from management. It was just 'keep going.' No therapy, no debriefing. We were left to deal with it on our own (*J4-2025*).

The burden of prolonged exposure to distressing news, particularly reporting on the rising death tolls and suffering had a psychological effect on journalists. The COVID-19 pandemic placed significant psychological strain on journalists, many of whom were frontline workers disseminating vital information while dealing with uncertainty, fear, and overwhelming workloads. Another dimension of psychological stress for journalists was the backlash they faced from the public, especially on digital platforms. The spread of misinformation led to increased hostility toward journalists, who were sometimes accused of bias or spreading fear:

People online would attack us, saying we were spreading lies about the virus. It became risky to even report certain facts because of the backlash (*J11-2025*).

I received direct threats after publishing a report on COVID-19 regulations. It felt like people were looking for someone to blame, and journalists became an easy target (*J8-2025*).

While some participants experienced psychological problems, others commented on how they were affected physically. The amount of work done was beyond the normal workload. Participants opine:

It was extremely difficult. The workload doubled, but the staff was reduced. I found myself covering multiple beats in a day while also trying to verify information. At some point, I felt completely burnt out (J7-2025).

We didn't have a choice but to keep reporting, no matter how exhausted we were. There were nights when I barely slept, constantly chasing stories and updates. It was mentally draining (J8-2025).

As journalists, we were overworked, doing more with fewer resources. There was always pressure to cover everything and ensure the public was well-informed, but that takes a toll (J9-2025).

There were times when I just wanted to step away, but in this industry, you can't. If you're not working, someone else will take *your place*. *There was no space to process trauma* (J6-2025).

For a number of participants, mistakes observed in journalists' reporting could be attributed to overworking and pressure. J8 commented:

We had several situations where we had broadcasters or publishers who got in hot water or were criticized even by those on the ground because they put out information that was not accurate or was questionable. For some, the consequences had lasting implications as a lot of people had consumed the information, making our organization lose its credibility. Although negligence cannot be justified, we should agree that some of these things happened solely because people were overworked and under a lot of pressure (J8-2025).

The psychological and physical toll of reporting on COVID-19 has been widely documented in journalism studies. Research suggests that journalists, as frontline workers in information dissemination, faced immense emotional and physical strain due to the nature of their work

during the pandemic (Posetti et al., 2020). Several scholars highlight the mental health challenges journalists encountered while covering the pandemic. Machmer et al. (2023) observed that journalists reporting on COVID-19 experienced significant psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Similarly, Kyriakidou and Garcia-Blanco (2021) argue that crisis reporting places journalists in an emotionally vulnerable position, particularly when they must continuously cover tragic events without time to process their own emotions. Another dimension of psychological stress for journalists was the backlash they faced from the public, particularly on digital platforms. Tandoc and Lee (2020) discuss how misinformation during the pandemic contributed to increased hostility towards journalists, with some being accused of bias or fearmongering.

In addition to the psychological distress, journalists also endured severe physical strain due to overwhelming workloads. Sibanda (2021) affirms that journalists working during the pandemic were often overworked, covering multiple beats with limited resources. This led to burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion, mirroring the experiences described by the participants in this study. Casero-Ripollés (2020) also argues that the crisis intensified job demands for journalists, with many working extended hours under extreme pressure to deliver timely and accurate news.

5.2.2 Changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19

The study also sought to understand, through the journalist's and editors' lens, changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19. Some of the changes include shifts to online reporting, the pace at which news was produced, rise of misinformation and access to sources. The pandemic forced a rapid transition to digital journalism, changing how reporters gathered, produced, and disseminated news. Research by Newman et al. (2021) reveals that the pandemic accelerated changes in newsroom operations, shifting from traditional in-office workflows to hybrid and remote models. The necessity for social distancing led media organisations to adopt digital tools and rethink content production strategies (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi, & Nielsen, 2021). The narratives in the below subsections highlight some of the changes.

5.2.2.1 Shift to online platforms

Before COVID-19, journalism was quite normal. We could attend events, interact with sources directly, and cover stories with ease. But when the pandemic hit, everything changed. Newsrooms went virtual, and we had to adapt overnight. (J1 2025)

The narrative above shows how Covid-19 drastically changed or altered journalism practice. This view is also shared by other participants. They commented:

We had to shift to telephonic interviews, Zoom calls, and pre-recorded news segments. It was a major adjustment, especially for those of us used to in-person reporting (J2-2025).

During Covid-19, I had to significantly alter my reporting methods, shifting from in-person interviews to virtual formats such as phone calls, Zoom meetings, and WhatsApp video calls. Newsrooms also adopted pre-recorded interviews to ensure continuity in broadcasting (J4-2024).

The experience during COVID-19 was quite difficult because it was something new; it was something that you are not used to. The newsroom went from being face-to-face to being online in terms of meetings and information sharing. When you want to book an interview, you would either call or send an email and then do it telephonically (J3-2025).

The abrupt shift to online platforms was a global phenomenon. Kyriakidou and García-Blanco (2021) assert that the pandemic accelerated the digitisation of journalism as restrictions on movement and public gatherings necessitated remote reporting. Unlike the pre-pandemic gradual transition to digital journalism, where online tools complemented traditional reporting, the pandemic made digital platforms the primary and, in many cases, the only means of conducting interviews, attending press conferences, and sharing news. Newman et al. (2021) support this finding, stating that the pandemic compelled journalists to embrace virtual newsrooms, with many media houses investing in digital infrastructure to support remote reporting. This transition was particularly challenging for journalists who were accustomed to face-to-face interactions, as the shift to virtual engagement limited

access to sources, reduced opportunities for investigative journalism, and increased reliance on official statements and press releases (García-Avilés, 2021).

5.2.2.2 Access to sources and information

The participants' narratives also reveal that access to sources became a challenge for journalists because of the pandemic. This required the use of new ways to interact with sources and obtain information. Some participants commented:

There were instances where sources were hesitant to speak due to fear of infection. Some refused in-person interviews altogether, which made storytelling more complex (*J2-2025*).

The biggest challenge was access. We couldn't physically go to events, making it hard to get exclusive interviews. (*J1-2025*)

Gaining access to sources was tough because many government offices were closed, and officials worked remotely. It often took longer to get responses, making it difficult to break news promptly (*J9-2025*)

The major challenge that I faced was mostly getting hold of people, ensuring that whatever I'm producing is not mediocre, meaning that I'm not doing something half-baked. Stories are not the same when sources aren't interviewed face-face; a lot cannot be seen, and it makes it difficult to really tell it like it is (*J3-2025*).

The process that I had to go through to get interviews was so stressful because I had to make sure to get tested and make sure that the people I was interviewing were also tested. At the time, there was a lot happening; people were hesitant to get tested so it meant that most interviews couldn't even be conducted, meaning most stories were incomplete without certain sources (*J4-2025*).

Investigative journalism became harder because we couldn't physically follow leads. Some stories required on-the-ground presence, but we had to settle for remote investigations, which limited our depth (*J3-2025*).

Investigative journalism became a challenge because traditional in-depth reporting requires fieldwork and face-to-face interactions. Some stories felt incomplete because we had to rely heavily on second-hand information (*J5-2025*).

The study shows that one of the most significant challenges during the pandemic was the reduced accessibility to sources, especially government officials. Many government offices operated remotely or implemented bureaucratic barriers that made it difficult for journalists to obtain timely information (Posetti & Bell, 2020). This led to delays in news reporting and limited the media's ability to provide the public with up-to-date and accurate information. Studies show that in many cases, official statements and government press briefings became the primary sources of information, raising concerns about reduced journalistic independence and overreliance on state-controlled narratives (Reilley, 2023).

Another significant challenge was the reluctance of sources to engage with journalists due to health concerns. The fear of contracting the virus led many individuals, including medical professionals, government representatives, and community leaders, to avoid direct interactions with reporters (Casero-Ripollés, 2021). This hesitation, coupled with movement restrictions, significantly limited the depth and richness of news stories, particularly in investigative journalism. Investigative journalists rely on in-person interviews and site visits to verify facts and uncover hidden information, but the pandemic forced many to conduct investigations remotely, often relying on secondary sources or leaked documents (García-Avilés, 2021). This shift weakened the rigour and credibility of investigative reporting, as journalists were unable to corroborate claims through firsthand observation.

Limited access to sources because of the pandemic led to the overreliance on other sources of information by journalists. This is reflected in the narratives below:

We had to rely more on official statements and online sources, which wasn't always ideal (*J1-2025*).

There was an over-reliance on press statements and virtual briefings. While convenient, it also meant we couldn't always ask critical follow-up questions, making our reporting somewhat constrained (*J10-2025*)

We had to rely more on press releases and online briefings, which limited our ability to ask critical follow-up questions (*J2-2025*).

With restricted movement, we relied more on whistle-blowers and leaked documents rather than in-person interactions, which sometimes made it difficult to verify information (*J4-2025*).

The limited access to sources, during the COVID-19 pandemic, forced journalists to rely heavily on alternative means of gathering information. The shift from in-person interviews and direct engagement with sources to virtual briefings, press statements, and second-hand information had significant implications for journalistic accuracy and depth. Research by Tandoc et al. (2021) highlights that while official statements and online briefings ensured continued information flow; they often restricted journalists from probing deeper into issues, limiting investigative reporting. This lack of direct engagement made it difficult to clarify ambiguous statements, challenge misinformation, or obtain exclusive insights, thereby impacting the quality of news coverage (Kyriakidou & García-Blanco, 2021).

Furthermore, the reliance on whistle-blowers and leaked documents, while valuable in certain contexts, introduced ethical and verification challenges. According to Newman et al. (2021), journalists worldwide struggled to authenticate information obtained through unofficial channels, as the absence of face-to-face interactions hindered the ability to assess credibility effectively. This challenge was particularly pronounced in politically sensitive reporting, where misinformation and propaganda could easily be disguised as legitimate leaks (Posetti & Bell, 2020). The overdependence on pre-packaged information from government agencies and corporate entities also meant that news narratives were often shaped by institutional agendas, raising concerns about media independence (Tandoc & Lee, 2022).

5.2.2.3 Pace of news dissemination

Constraints in accessing sources of news and delays in receiving government communication impacted on the pace at which news was disseminated. In addition, during the pandemic there was an unprecedented rise in misinformation, requiring journalists to

verify facts more rigorously, which in turn affected the speed at which news was published. Some participants commented:

A lot of journalists were taken aback in terms of the importance of patience, verifying information before sharing it with audiences. I think that's one thing that changed—the pace of the news—because now you can't rush these things. (J5 2025)

There were times when I felt a bit delayed, waiting for government sources to get back to us without knowing for sure when they would respond. But one thing remained intact: I was never going to compromise my ethical way of reporting (J7 2025)

The rise of fake information and misinformation was spreading like wildfires. As journalists, it is our job to ensure that we inform the public and that we are timely whilst doing so. The problem came with the need to first verify information before choosing to share it. The people that were responsible for verifying information at the time were the government center, which wasn't as efficient in information verification. As a result, we found ourselves being unable to be the ones to break certain news or be first to post because we had to wait for confirmation. In journalism, this is a setback. (J5- 2025)

More than ever, the COVID-19 era was a time where people on the ground wanted to hear the information, but it was sort of more restricted. You couldn't just put anything out; it had to be very, very accurate and precise. I had to make sure that whatever information I had was true and verified and that I presented it in a way that does not mislead or confuse anyone (J6- 2025).

The dissemination of news during the COVID-19 pandemic was significantly influenced by constraints in accessing sources and the overwhelming rise of misinformation. The urgency to provide real-time updates clashed with the necessity for accuracy, leading to delays in publishing news. Studies by Posetti and Bell (2020) highlight that journalists had to adopt more rigorous fact-checking procedures to counteract the spread of misinformation, which in turn slowed down the pace at which stories could be released. Unlike pre-pandemic

times, when breaking news was prioritised, the heightened risk of false information required a shift toward verification-driven reporting (Newman et al., 2021).

Another key factor that impacted news dissemination speed was the dependency on government and institutional sources. Research by Tandoc and Lee (2022) indicates that journalists often had to wait for official statements or clarifications before publishing, as misinformation from unreliable sources could easily damage credibility. However, government agencies were not always prompt in their responses, creating bottlenecks that further delayed news cycles (García-Avilés, 2021). This delay in obtaining verified information was particularly problematic during a fast-evolving crisis like COVID-19, where audiences expected immediate updates but also demanded accuracy.

Additionally, the shift toward a more cautious and methodical approach in journalism changed the dynamics of news production. According to Kyriakidou and García-Blanco (2021), numerous media organisations introduced internal verification processes, where multiple layers of fact-checking were required before publishing. While this approach enhanced credibility, it also slowed down the speed at which information was disseminated, putting journalists in a difficult position where they had to balance timeliness with ethical responsibility.

Ultimately, while journalists sought to meet the public's demand for fast and reliable information, the necessity for verification processes and reliance on slow-moving official sources often resulted in delayed reporting. This underscores the evolving role of journalism in crisis communication, where accuracy took precedence over speed to ensure that misinformation did not spread unchecked (Nielsen, 2022).

5.2.3 Challenges Encountered by Journalists

Findings reveal that journalists encountered various challenges in their practices. Some participants experienced pressure from government and even the public regarding information they reported on. One participant commented:

There were stories we wanted to cover, but government agencies controlled what information we could access. *(J6-2025)*

Another participant expressed the following:

I remember a colleague being stressed because there were numerical errors in their article, which was already published at the time. People on social media started picking it up, and most started reposting as other newspapers had also written on the same story. Our organization was the only one that had different values. It was a nightmare. (J9-2025)

Journalists faced increased censorship, with some governments controlling the flow of information to the public. Research by Kyriakidou and García-Blanco (2021) highlights how authorities in several countries imposed strict media regulations, limiting what journalists could report on and often framing government narratives as the dominant discourse. This environment created a dilemma for journalists who had to balance their responsibility to provide factual and objective reporting while navigating state-imposed constraints (Posetti & Bell, 2020). In some cases, media professionals also practiced self-censorship to avoid backlash from both the authorities and the public. The fear of publishing content that might attract government scrutiny or trigger public outrage led journalists to omit or downplay certain aspects of their reporting, compromising journalistic independence and integrity (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2022).

Furthermore, misinformation became a pressing issue, requiring journalists to be more vigilant in verifying facts before publishing. J4-2025 stated:

The spread of fake news was overwhelming. We couldn't just publish anything we saw online—we had to fact-check extensively, which slowed down the reporting process.

Other participants added:

It was very important for us to fact check information before publishing because a lot of fake news was already out there, thus we had to ensure that our audience get the right information. (J5-2025)

We constantly had to issue notices to the public to state that certain information was false because people would publish misinformation using our logo and this was very worrisome considering the intensity of the pandemic. (J6-2025)

According to research, the rapid spread of false information on social media further complicated journalists' work, as fake news often circulated faster than verified reports (Molina et al., 2021). This phenomenon, commonly referred to as an "infodemic" (WHO, 2020), meant that journalists were not only responsible for reporting accurate information but also had to actively debunk misinformation. According to Posetti and Bell (2020), many news organisations responded by strengthening fact-checking initiatives and collaborating with independent verification platforms to counteract the spread of false narratives. However, this additional responsibility placed further strain on journalists who were already operating under intense pressure due to increased workloads and reduced newsroom capacities (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2022). The need for fact-based reporting, coupled with the growing demand for transparency in journalism, demonstrated the evolving nature of journalistic practices in the face of digital misinformation.

The constraints imposed by COVID-19 also amplified the risks of misinformation and the spread of unverified content. With limited direct access to sources, journalists had to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape, where rumours, speculation, and conspiracy theories proliferated (Tandoc et al., 2021). This placed additional pressure on news organisations to strengthen their fact-checking mechanisms and ensure that only verified information was disseminated. Some media houses partnered with fact-checking organisations to mitigate the risks of misinformation, while others trained journalists in digital verification techniques to adapt to the changing nature of news reporting (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2022).

Another challenge experienced by journalists relates to the work environment. Participants further eluded how it was almost difficult to be productive in their work environment.

Our work environment was hardly conducive when the pandemic hit, most colleagues fell ill, as a result more pressure was put on those that were available. The restrictions imposed meant that we had to work from home and coming from an

informal settlement; I could hardly get anything done. We don't have electricity, and the environment is quiet noisy, I was hardly productive (J11-2025)

Accustoming oneself to a new way of storytelling was a challenge especially in instances where one had to make use of digital tools that they are not used too, a lot of things had to be done differently, most times we struggled with knowing whether we were on the right path or not (J9-2025).

Despite these innovations, the transition was not seamless. In Namibia, Ndjebela (2021) found that journalists faced significant digital infrastructure challenges, with unreliable internet access and limited training on virtual reporting tools affecting their ability to work effectively. This mirrors global trends, where newsrooms that lacked pre-existing digital strategies struggled to adapt (Reilley, 2023).

Furthermore, (J2-2025) explained the pressure that came with staff shortage

A lot of the other colleagues or the broadcasters had to work under pressure because staff was sort of cut. And at the same time, we had staff members that also fell ill. In that sense, a lot of staff members had to work under pressure, which was also not so convenient to the organizations because when people are more, the better it is to tell a story.

Other participants reflected on financial and sustainability challenges. They commented:

Financially, it was difficult to sustain the newsroom. Many of us were put on rotation schedules just to manage costs. It affected morale and productivity (J9-2025).

We lost major advertisers during the pandemic, which affected our budget. Salaries were delayed, and some colleagues were laid off. (J8 -2025)

Sustainability was our biggest challenge. Many advertisers pulled out, and revenue streams dried up. Salaries were delayed, and unfortunately, some colleagues had to be let go (J10-2025).

Despite efforts to minimise the challenges fostered through financial and sustainable gaps, some audiences resisted paywalls, while others were skeptical of sponsored content, fearing that journalistic integrity would be compromised. Furthermore, local businesses, which were also financially struggling, were hesitant to invest in digital advertising.

J6-2025 commented:

It was hard convincing advertisers to move to digital. Many businesses weren't ready for the shift, and it took time to build trust in online ad placements.

J8-2025 added:

Our biggest struggle was making people see the value in paying for news. Many thought everything online should be free, so getting them to subscribe was a challenge.

These sentiments are also underscored by Moges (2022), who argues that media houses in developing countries faced structural and technological challenges when transitioning to digital revenue models.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only disrupted journalism practices but also significantly affected journalists' work environments and overall productivity. Remote work became a necessity, yet for many journalists, working from home was far from ideal. Studies by Newman et al. (2021) indicate that while digital tools allowed journalists to continue reporting, disparities in access to technology, electricity, and stable internet connectivity created productivity challenges, particularly for those in resource-limited settings. Journalists operating from informal settlements or areas with inadequate infrastructure faced difficulties in meeting deadlines and maintaining the same level of efficiency as before (Tandoc & Lee, 2022). Moreover, newsroom staff shortages due to illness and budget cuts placed an additional burden on journalists. According to Kyriakidou and García-Blanco (2021), the pandemic exacerbated newsroom constraints, forcing the remaining staff members to take on additional responsibilities, leading to overwork and burnout. The increased workload also impacted the quality of reporting, as journalists had less time to conduct in-depth investigations or verify information thoroughly (Mare, 2020).

The financial strain imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected media sustainability, leading to budget cuts, salary delays, and staff reductions. Many media organisations, particularly those reliant on advertising revenue, struggled to stay afloat as businesses scaled down their marketing budgets (Nielsen, 2022). Research by Mare (2020) highlights that media houses had to implement cost-cutting measures such as rotating staff schedules and reducing operational expenses to survive. However, these measures had a direct impact on the journalists' morale and productivity, as job insecurity and financial instability became major concerns (Kyriakidou & García-Blanco, 2021).

5.3 Adaptation to Digital Journalism: Changing Methods and Embracing Technology

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally transformed journalistic practices, requiring rapid adaptation to new reporting methods and digital technologies. Traditional ways of gathering and sharing news were disrupted due to movement restrictions, forcing journalists to rely on virtual tools and platforms to maintain news production and dissemination. This study found that both print and broadcast journalists had to navigate the complexities of remote work, limited access to sources, and the urgent demand for accurate reporting in an uncertain environment.

5.3.1 The Shift in Reporting Methods

Journalists quickly adjusted their techniques as in-person interactions were restricted. The participants in this study reflected on how they had to alter their reporting methods:

We had to change from traditional methods of gathering information to relying on telephonic interviews and pre-recorded segments because in-person interactions were restricted (*J2-2025*).

Everything shifted online. Editorial meetings were held on Zoom, and physical presence became almost unnecessary unless absolutely required (*J11-2025*).

The increased reliance on digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook Live, and Zoom, became the new normal for conducting interviews and disseminating news. Social media platforms also played a crucial role in news gathering, as highlighted by one journalist:

Video conferencing became the norm for conducting interviews, and social media platforms played a crucial role in news gathering and distribution (*J5-2025*).

Such a shift is consistent with Westlund & Lewis's (2021) findings which indicate that newsrooms globally adopted digital platforms to sustain operations during the pandemic. Closely related studies also indicate that the pandemic significantly accelerated the digital transformation of journalism, with increased reliance on Zoom, WhatsApp, and social media for interviews and news dissemination (Westlund & Lewis, 2021).

The Pew Research Center (2020) also established that the pandemic led to increased digital news consumption, compelling journalists to embrace digital tools such as data visualisation and multimedia content to enhance audience engagement. Kaufhold et al. (2020) argue that the crisis acted as a "catalyst for change," expediting newsroom adoption of innovative digital reporting techniques. The rise of data journalism, including interactive graphs and visual storytelling, became essential in making complex health information more accessible to the public.

5.3.2 Embracing Digital Technology in Journalism

With the rapid shift to digital journalism, journalists had to familiarise themselves with new tools and technologies. As traditional reporting methods became less viable due to COVID-19 restrictions, virtual reporting, online meetings, social media engagement, and digital content creation became essential. The participants in this study shared their experiences of adapting to digital tools:

We had to quickly get used to digital platforms. Zoom meetings replaced physical press conferences, and WhatsApp became a primary tool for sourcing information. It was a drastic shift, but we had no choice (*J4-2025*).

I remember the first few weeks being so overwhelming. We had to learn how to edit audio and video clips for online publications and broadcasts because digital content was in higher demand (*J5-2025*).

Nevertheless, remote work presented various challenges, including unstable internet connections and limited access to newsroom resources. At the same time, these digital platforms also allowed journalists to disseminate news more efficiently. One participant explained:

We realized that technology allowed us to reach audiences faster. We started using Facebook Live and Twitter updates to give real-time news updates (*J9-2025*).

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of live streaming and digital storytelling techniques, which became essential for maintaining audience engagement. Participants noted:

We adapted by learning how to stream press conferences live on YouTube and Facebook. It was an adjustment, but it meant people could access information in real-time (*J8-2025*).

I had to learn how to use different video editing apps because more of our content was being published online. Traditional reporting had shifted completely to digital (*J11-2025*).

The necessity of this digital shift resonates with Leventi and Eryigit's (2020) findings which reflect that the pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in newsrooms, compelling journalists to use virtual communication tools and digital content creation to ensure continuous news delivery. However, the transition was not without its difficulties. Singer (2005) underscores that technological disruptions subjected journalists under increased pressure to adapt quickly to new workflows, especially when working remotely. Hujanen and Hakkarainen (2021) further observe that journalists had to diversify their roles, incorporating content creation, digital editing, and live-streaming in addition to traditional reporting.

While these challenges were significant, digital platforms offered notable benefits, such as faster dissemination of information and enhanced audience engagement. Hendrickx and Vázquez-Herrero (2024) emphasise that social media platforms have reshaped journalistic practices by enabling direct and platform-specific content delivery. Journalists not only

shared breaking news but also leveraged interactive features such as polls, comments, and reactions to gauge audience interest and foster participation (Tenenboim, 2022; Kubin et al., 2024). This shift reflects the broader trend of digital-first journalism, where content is designed primarily for online consumption and optimised for digital platforms. As Newman et al. (2020) observe, the pandemic highlighted the central role of technology in ensuring continuity in news production and dissemination, ultimately reinforcing the long-term integration of digital tools in journalism.

5.3.3 Becoming Multi-Skilled

To cope with the new demands of journalism, journalists had to expand their skill sets. The pandemic imposed new pressures on reporters, requiring them to take on multiple roles that were previously handled by specialised personnel. With newsroom operations reduced and many colleagues working remotely, journalists had to manage different aspects of content production, including video editing, social media engagement, and live broadcasting.

Participant J7-2025 explained:

Suddenly, we had to do more than just report. We were editing videos, managing social media, and even handling live broadcasts ourselves.

Similarly, J8-2025 noted:

We had to become familiar with the different ways of reporting. As a journalist, you needed to know how to do everything.

The necessity for journalists to acquire new skills extended beyond writing and reporting as noted by some of the participants:

We had to quickly learn how to edit our own videos because we no longer had the usual support staff. If you didn't know how to edit before, you had no choice but to learn (J9-2025).

We had to learn to use data visualization tools to make our reporting more engaging since people were consuming more news online (J8-2025).

Another significant area where journalists had to adapt was managing social media. Digital platforms became essential for real-time reporting, audience engagement, and breaking news dissemination. Describing the shift, J6-2025 pointed out that:

Social media became one of our main sources of news updates. We had to constantly monitor trending topics, fact-check information, and engage with the audience directly.

J11-2025 further emphasised:

Before COVID, social media was just an extension of what we did, but suddenly it became the core platform. We had to learn how to craft engaging posts and make sure we verified information before posting.

Another crucial skill that journalists had to acquire was handling live broadcasts. Due to restrictions on in-person reporting and a reduced workforce, many journalists found themselves responsible for setting up and running live news feeds without the assistance of camera operators or production teams.

Participants explained:

Journalists had to get comfortable with going live at any moment. Sometimes, breaking news would happen, and we had to go on Facebook Live or Instagram without the usual cameramen (J8-2025)

Before the pandemic, I had never gone live by myself. But with fewer people in the newsroom, I had to figure out how to set up live streams, monitor comments, and present the news simultaneously (J7-2025).

This shift highlights the growing need for journalists to be versatile and adaptive, a concept supported by Beckett and Deuze (2016), who argue that modern journalists must be skilled in multiple areas of media production to thrive in the digital age. The pandemic accelerated this trend, as journalists were forced to learn new technologies and techniques in real time to continue producing relevant and timely content.

The increased reliance on digital platforms, particularly social media, further emphasised the need for journalists to become proficient in managing real-time updates and engaging directly with their audiences. Pursuing the same thought, Hermida (2010) underscores the central role social media plays in modern journalism, particularly during crises when speed and accuracy are paramount. During COVID-19, social media became not just an extension of journalism, but a core platform for news dissemination, where journalists had to monitor trending topics, verify information, and interact with audiences more actively than before. In addition to digital tools, journalists had to become proficient in live broadcasting, a skill that, for many, was previously outside their traditional reporting duties.

This shift is consistent with Harcup (2015), who notes that the increasing emphasis on "journalist-as-producer" reflects the blurring of roles in news production, particularly in times of crisis when flexibility and adaptability are crucial. The need for multi-skilled journalists aligns with Boczkowski (2004), who emphasises the ongoing technological transformations in journalism, requiring news professionals to continually adapt to the ever-changing media landscape to remain effective in their reporting.

5.3.4 Collaborations

Faced with operational challenges, media organisations increased collaboration. The study found that partnerships between media outlets strengthened fact-checking efforts and ensured broader information dissemination.

Participants described these collaborations:

Journalists from different organizations started working together more often, sharing verified information on WhatsApp groups to counter misinformation (*J4-2025*).

We relied on networks of reporters across different regions to get accurate updates and share resources (*J3-2025*).

We worked with journalists and media from other organisations to ensure that we are productive and are well informed especially in instances where one was not able

to make it to an event or gathering; getting information and updates through teaming up with colleagues made it easier (J5-2025).

In situations where certain journalists had information pertaining to the pandemic, it was easy for them to share with the rest of us as that was the habit we all normalised to make our work easier (J7-2025).

The need for partnerships between media outlets became particularly critical as the demand for reliable and timely news surged, while many traditional reporting methods became difficult to execute because of restrictions. According to Lewis, Williams, and Franklin (2008), collaboration in journalism is often essential for expanding the reach and depth of coverage, particularly in times of crisis when the volume of information to be processed is overwhelming. The pandemic heightened this need, with journalists frequently sharing resources, cross-checking information, and collaborating on fact-checking initiatives to counter misinformation.

This shift toward collaborative journalism helped to ensure more accurate and broader dissemination of information. ICFJ (2022) asserts that the rise of networked journalism, where journalists from different organisations share resources and insights, can enhance the credibility of reporting, especially when working across multiple regions or platforms (ICFJ, 2022).

Furthermore, collaborations among journalists were not limited to information-sharing but extended to logistical support as well. In situations where journalists could not attend events in person due to restrictions, collaboration allowed them to receive updates from colleagues in different regions, ensuring that they remained well-informed. This was particularly crucial for ensuring that critical developments, such as government announcements or public health updates, were accurately reported and disseminated to the public. As Kovach and Rosenstiel (2024) point out, such collaborative practices are vital for maintaining the journalistic principle of accuracy, especially during times when fast-paced news cycles and misinformation pose significant risks to public trust.

5.4 How Selected Namibian Print and Broadcast Media Organisations Responded

5.4.1 Adapting Business Models and Operational Strategies

In order for media organisations to remain financially viable, they had to make operational adjustments. One participant commented:

We had to scale down operations, reducing the number of investigative reports we could afford to run. Newsrooms became leaner, and that affected the depth of our reporting (*J7-2025*).

The financial strain was further exacerbated by the need to invest in remote work infrastructure, including digital tools, internet costs, and protective gear for field journalists. Research by Moges (2022) reveals how African media houses struggled with these additional operational expenses while facing reduced revenue streams. Other participants also commented on the decline in revenue, specifically focusing on the decline in advertising revenue and how they responded:

Advertising revenue declined sharply as businesses struggled. We had to start looking at other options, like digital subscriptions and sponsored content, just to stay afloat (*J8-2025*).

Previously, we relied heavily on print ads. But after COVID-19, we saw a significant drop in ad bookings. Our survival depended on transitioning to online advertising and paywalled content (*J6-2025*).

The shift to digital consumption also disrupted print media, which had already been experiencing a steady decline. Nielsen (2022) points out that COVID-19 accelerated the decline of print advertising as companies moved toward digital marketing campaigns, leaving traditional newspapers and magazines with limited revenue streams. As traditional revenue streams dried up, media organisations sought alternative methods of sustaining operations. Many shifted toward paywalls and digital subscriptions to compensate for lost advertising revenue. Participant J7-2025 explained:

We started integrating more digital marketing strategies, even partnering with social media influencers to push content and attract advertisers.

Concurring, J10-2025 noted:

We had to rethink how we package our content. We started offering premium content for paid subscribers and exploring e-newsletters with sponsored ads.

These changes align with findings by Tandoc and Lee (2020), who argue that digital journalism has enabled media organisations to diversify revenue streams, but many struggled with audience resistance to paywalls and subscription models. While some audiences were willing to pay for exclusive news content, others were reluctant, having been accustomed to free digital news consumption.

To counteract advertising losses, media organisations also experimented with sponsored content and influencer marketing. Rather than relying solely on traditional display ads, news outlets began working with brands to create content tailored to online audiences.

J9-2025 observed:

Sponsorship deals became more important than ever. We collaborated with corporate partners who wanted to push COVID-19 awareness campaigns through our platforms.

J11-2025 echoed this sentiment:

We saw a rise in advertorials and branded content. Companies wanted more visibility, so instead of traditional ads, they paid us to produce content that subtly promoted their services.

This strategy aligns with Casero-Ripollés' (2020) findings which showed that news organisations increasingly turned to native advertising and branded journalism to generate income in the digital era.

According to Nielsen (2022), the global media industry experienced substantial financial instability, largely driven by declining print circulation, reduced corporate sponsorships, and a shift toward digital platforms without sustainable revenue models. Participants in this study affirmed the financial strain challenge, with many reporting salary cuts, delayed payments, and even layoffs within their organisations; as means of keeping their organisations stable.

5.4.2 Collaboration and Network Building

The collaboration and network building among media organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic became an essential strategy to combat misinformation and ensure the continuity of journalism. Many media houses formed alliances to fact-check information, verify sources, and share critical resources, reflecting a collective effort to maintain journalistic integrity in a time of crisis.

Participants in the study confirmed these collaborative efforts. For instance, J4-2025 noted:

Journalists from different organizations started working together more often, sharing verified information on WhatsApp groups to counter misinformation.

This demonstrates how the necessity of rapid and accurate reporting prompted journalists to rely on peer networks for verification and news dissemination.

Similarly, J3-2025 stated:

We relied on networks of reporters across different regions to get accurate updates and share resources.

This suggests that the sharing of resources and access to verified sources strengthened the credibility of news reporting.

Scholarly research supports this notion of increased media collaboration. Research by Miguel (2022) highlights how newsroom practices evolved during the pandemic, emphasising the importance of teamwork, fact-checking, and digital transformation to adapt to emerging challenges. Supporting this idea, Sibanda (2022) observes that journalists, especially in Africa, increasingly used digital communication tools such as WhatsApp and Twitter to coordinate coverage, access sources, and share real-time updates despite financial and technological constraints.

Furthermore, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism observed that the pandemic fostered a spirit of journalistic solidarity as media houses prioritised information-sharing to counter misinformation and disinformation (Selva, 2020). The role of collaborative efforts in preserving journalistic integrity was vital, as Verhoeven (2016) also attests that in crises,

journalists are critical gatekeepers who ensure that accurate information is disseminated to prevent panic.

5.4.3 Financial Support and External Assistance

The financial strain imposed by COVID-19 resulted in increased reliance on donor funding, grants, and international media development programs to sustain media operations. As advertising revenue declined and operational costs remained high, external financial support became a critical lifeline for many media houses. Studies by Nielsen (2022) indicate that international organisations played a significant role in sustaining media houses by providing grants and funding initiatives tailored to support journalism during the pandemic.

Some participants acknowledged the role of external financial assistance in helping their media organisations remain operational:

Some international organizations stepped in with grants and training programs, which helped us continue operating despite financial struggles (*J2-2025*).

The importance of donor funding was particularly evident in community radio stations, which served as crucial sources of information for rural populations. Many of these stations faced the threat of closure but managed to sustain their operations through external support:

Donor funding played a role in keeping some community radio stations alive, as they were critical in disseminating COVID-19 updates to rural areas (*J1-2025*).

In addition to financial aid, international organisations provided training and capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that journalists had the necessary skills to operate in a rapidly changing media landscape. Research by Matsilele, Tshuma, and Msimanga (2022) highlights that global media development agencies implemented emergency funding and training sessions to support journalists in navigating digital transformations and combating misinformation.

Participants further elaborated on how these initiatives helped mitigate the financial crisis:

The funding wasn't just about keeping the media houses afloat; it also enabled us to access training programs on digital reporting, fact-checking, and online news production (*J3-2025*).

Despite these efforts, some journalists noted that funding was not always equitably distributed, leaving smaller media organisations struggling to secure adequate financial support:

Not every media house received the same level of support. Larger outlets with international affiliations had better access to grants, while smaller, independent ones had to fend for themselves (*J4-2025*).

Overall, while external assistance played a significant role in mitigating financial distress within the media sector, the disparity in funding distribution remains a challenge. This underscores the need for more inclusive funding mechanisms to ensure that all media houses, particularly community and independent outlets, receive the necessary support to sustain journalism in crisis situations.

5.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study underscore the adaptive capacity of Namibian journalists and media organisations in responding to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By integrating Resilience Theory and Field Theory, this discussion offers a nuanced understanding of these adaptations and how they align with the study's research objectives.

Resilience theory highlights the ability of systems to adapt and recover in response to crises (Masten, 2014). In line with this theory, this study's findings show that journalists quickly adapted to new challenges by adopting digital tools, working remotely, and enhancing their fact-checking processes to maintain credible reporting under pressure. This reflects Masten's (2014) notion of resilience as an ordinary, not extraordinary, process, where daily problem-solving, cognitive flexibility and self-efficacy are essential to sustaining operations.

Participants in the study revealed the emotional and mental strain of increased workloads and disrupted routines, reinforcing the argument by Šimunjak (2023) that resilience involves not only surviving but maintaining professional efficacy under distress. The rapid shift to

digital reporting, reliance on virtual interviews, and innovation in storytelling showcase the journalists' resilience in sustaining their roles despite operational constraints. As Wasserman (2020) notes, resilience in journalism is deeply embedded within institutional frameworks that support journalists in navigating adversity, and these findings demonstrate how internal and external support systems shaped journalistic practices.

From an organisational perspective, media houses that embraced flexibility and digital transformation were better positioned to weather the financial and operational disruptions caused by the pandemic. According to Duchek (2019), organisational resilience requires adaptability, risk mitigation, and business continuity—elements that were critical during the pandemic. Over and above that, media organisations that diversified revenue streams, leveraged digital platforms for audience engagement, and fostered collaborations with other media outlets exhibited stronger resilience. These findings reflect Alsaïdi et al.'s (2024) argument, that organisations with high resilience are better able to adapt and sustain long-term sustainability, even during crises.

Incorporating Field theory (Bourdieu, 1993), the study illuminates how power dynamics and external pressures influenced journalistic practices during the pandemic. Field theory emphasises that journalists operate within a structured social space where various forces, such as economic constraints, audience behaviours, and institutional structures, shape their practices. The study finds that the pandemic-induced economic strain—reduced advertising revenue, shifting business models, and growing digital consumption—forced media organisations to reassess their traditional roles in the field. According to Benson (1999), media organisations ought to adjust to constant external pressures, such as economic and political influences, that dictate the rules of engagement within the field.

Capital in its various forms played a crucial role in how journalists adapted to the disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on Bourdieu's framework, this study identified four interrelated types of capital, namely, the cultural, social, economic, and symbolic. These are the different types of capital that shape journalistic responses to crisis.

Cultural capital in this context refers to the acquisition of new skills, such as digital storytelling, video production, and social media reporting. These competencies enabled

journalists to remain relevant in an increasingly digital environment. Participants described how they had to “learn on the go,” mastering tools like Zoom, Canva, and livestreaming platforms to continue producing content under lockdown conditions. This resonates with Benson and Neveu’s (2005) assertion that the accumulation of technological and cultural capital is essential for adapting to a rapidly evolving media landscape.

Social capital was evident in the collaborative networks that emerged among the journalists and media houses. Respondents highlighted how peer support, shared resources, and informal mentorships helped them navigate unfamiliar digital tools and workflows. WhatsApp groups, newsroom Slack channels, and cross-platform collaborations became vital spaces for exchanging information and emotional support—especially when institutional guidance was limited.

Economic capital or the lack thereof posed significant constraints. Freelancers and smaller media outlets reported limited access to equipment, data, and stable internet, which hindered their ability to produce and distribute content. However, some organisations leveraged existing infrastructure and funding to pivot toward digital platforms, demonstrating how economic capital can enable resilience when strategically deployed.

Symbolic capital emerged through public recognition and credibility. Journalists who maintained accuracy and transparency during the pandemic gained trust from their audiences, which in turn reinforced their professional standing. This symbolic capital became a resource for sustaining engagement, especially in an environment saturated with misinformation and uncertainty.

The pandemic also challenged doxa, or the taken-for-granted norms and beliefs within journalism. Doxa refers to the unspoken rules that guide journalistic practices such as the prioritisation of speed, neutrality, and institutional authority. The findings reveal that COVID-19 disrupted these norms, forcing journalists to rethink their responsibilities in balancing speed with accuracy. Delays in government communication, the spread of misinformation, and the urgency of breaking news required journalists to recalibrate their ethical compass. As Couldry (2003) argues, crises unsettle journalistic doxa, compelling practitioners to negotiate between traditional values and emergent demands.

Closely tied to this is the concept of habitus; the ingrained dispositions, routines, and professional instincts that guide journalistic behaviour. The pandemic exposed the limits of habitual practice, as journalists had to abandon familiar routines and embrace new modes of production. For example, field reporting was replaced by remote interviews, and newsroom hierarchies were flattened by digital collaboration. These shifts illustrate how habitus, though durable, is not fixed; it can be reshaped through experience and reflection. The findings suggest that journalists who were able to adapt their habitus by embracing flexibility, innovation, and self-directed learning were better positioned to navigate the crisis.

The interplay between capital, doxa, and habitus offers a nuanced understanding of how Namibian journalists responded to the pandemic. Their adaptive strategies were not merely individual acts of resilience but were shaped by structural resources, cultural norms, and professional dispositions. This reconfiguration of journalistic practice underscores the importance of organisational support, continuous learning, and reflexivity in building media resilience.

As Hackett and Zhao (1998) argue, such crises challenge the editorial independence of media organisations and force journalists to reconsider their roles in safeguarding public trust. The study's findings indicate that journalists were caught between adhering to journalistic standards and responding to the pressure of delivering information promptly in a rapidly evolving news environment. The struggle for journalistic credibility and trust—particularly in the era of misinformation reinforces the need for journalists to navigate external pressures while maintaining professional ethics.

5.6 Summary of Findings

This chapter analysed the findings based on qualitative interviews with selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists, focusing on their adaptive capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed that the media industry underwent significant transformations, particularly in newsroom operations, access to information, and investigative journalism. Journalists had to shift from traditional reporting to digital methods, including virtual interviews and live-streamed press briefings, as a result of

movement restrictions. The rise of misinformation necessitated rigorous fact-checking but delays in verification processes often hindered timely reporting. Financial challenges emerged as media houses experienced declining advertising revenues, forcing them to explore alternative revenue models such as digital subscriptions and sponsored content. The emotional and psychological impact on journalists was profound, with many experiencing stress, burnout, and a lack of institutional support. Additionally, press freedom and ethical concerns were prominent as governments-controlled access to COVID-19-related information, leading some journalists to practise self-censorship. Despite these challenges, media professionals demonstrated resilience, innovation, and adaptability by leveraging digital tools, collaborative networks, and alternative storytelling methods to ensure the continuity of journalism. The findings suggest that while the pandemic disrupted traditional journalism, it also accelerated necessary digital transformations and highlighted areas that require long-term structural improvements for the sustainability of the media industry in Namibia.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings discussed in Chapter 5. The primary objective of this study was to examine media and journalists' adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19 in Namibia, with a focus on selected broadcast and print media. The findings are aligned with the study's three research objectives: (1) assessing changes in the media and journalism industry before and after COVID-19, (2) examining how journalists responded to these changes, and (3) understanding how media organisations adapted to the crisis. This chapter provides a summary of the key findings, draws conclusions based on these findings, and offers recommendations for media practitioners, policymakers, and future research. The limitations of the study are also discussed.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The summaries of findings are presented in line with the objectives of this study. The chapter highlights and discusses a summary of each research objective in order to determine whether the objectives were answered.

6.1.1 Assessing Changes in the Media and Journalism Industry Before and After COVID-19

The study found that the media industry in Namibia experienced significant transformations due to the pandemic. Journalists had to shift from traditional reporting methods to digital and remote practices, such as conducting virtual interviews via Zoom, WhatsApp, and phone calls. Investigative journalism was also impacted due to limited field reporting, forcing journalists to rely on secondary sources and leaked information. Additionally, the study found that journalists faced challenges accessing government sources and official information, which led to delays in reporting. These findings align with global studies that highlight the shift toward digital journalism and the increasing reliance on technology for news gathering and dissemination.

6.1.2 Examining Journalists' Responses to Changes in Journalism Practice

Journalists responded to the changes imposed by COVID-19 by rapidly adapting to digital reporting methods and leveraging technology to sustain news production. The shift from traditional face-to-face interviews to virtual interactions via Zoom, WhatsApp, and live-streamed press conferences became necessary as movement restrictions limited access to sources. This aligns with Westlund and Lewis (2021), who note that the pandemic accelerated digital journalism, thus, compelling media professionals to integrate new technologies. Similarly, Kaufhold et al. (2020) describes COVID-19 as a "catalyst for change," expediting the adoption of data journalism and multimedia storytelling. However, the transition was not without challenges—journalists had to quickly develop skills in video editing, live-streaming, and social media management while coping with increased workloads and remote work limitations. Despite these difficulties, the shift offered notable benefits, including faster news dissemination and enhanced audience engagement

6.1.3 Understanding Media Organisations' Responses to the Pandemic

Media organisations in Namibia faced severe financial difficulties due to declining advertising revenues. Many were forced to cut staff salaries, lay off employees, and adopt alternative business models such as digital subscriptions and sponsored content to sustain operations. Some media houses formed collaborations with other organisations to share resources and verify information, improving the credibility of reporting. External funding from NGOs and international organisations provided some relief to struggling media houses.

6.2 Conclusions Based on Findings

This study set out to examine the adaptive capacity of Namibian print and broadcast journalists in response to the changes imposed by COVID-19. The findings revealed that the pandemic fundamentally altered journalism practices, newsroom operations, and media sustainability, necessitating rapid adaptation to digital platforms, alternative reporting methods, and new business models. The conclusions drawn from the study are presented in line with the research objectives, supported by relevant literature.

6.2.1 Assessing Changes in the Media and Journalism Industry Before and After COVID-19

The study found that prior to COVID-19, journalism practices in Namibia followed traditional models of news gathering and reporting, relying heavily on face-to-face interviews, on-the-ground reporting, and in-person newsroom collaboration. However, the pandemic had caused an immediate and drastic shift to digital journalism, with journalists increasingly using remote interviews, social media, and live-streaming to continue reporting. This is consistent with findings of Kyriakidou and García-Blanco (2021), who argue that the pandemic had disrupted established routines and forced journalists worldwide to embrace digital-first news production. Additionally, the crisis highlighted pre-existing financial vulnerabilities in the industry, accelerating newsroom downsizing and job losses, which Mare (2020) identifies as a long-standing challenge in the African media landscape.

6.2.2 Examining Journalists' Responses to Changes in Journalism Practice

Journalists had adapted to the new reporting environment by embracing digital tools, becoming multi-skilled, and shifting towards more independent reporting methods. The study revealed that journalists had to learn video editing, social media management, and digital content creation to remain competitive in the evolving media space. This is consistent with Hanitzsch and Vos (2022), who argue that crises often push journalists to redefine their roles, leading to increased technological integration in reporting. However, the rapid digital transformation also introduced challenges, including difficulties in accessing reliable sources, verifying information, and managing ethical dilemmas surrounding misinformation. According to Tandoc and Lee (2022), the rise of fake news during the pandemic had placed additional pressure on journalists to balance speed with accuracy, reinforcing the importance of fact-checking and media credibility.

6.2.3 Understanding Media Organisations' Responses to the Pandemic

The study established that media organisations implemented various strategies to sustain operations amidst financial constraints and operational disruptions. Many shifted towards digital subscription models, diversified revenue streams, and sought external funding to counter declining advertising revenues. This supports Nielsen's (2022) argument that the pandemic forced media houses to rethink traditional business models and explore

alternative funding mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Additionally, news organisations strengthened collaborations with fact-checking networks and engaged more with audiences through social media to maintain credibility and trust. This aligns with Posetti and Bell (2020), who emphasise that media resilience during crises is shaped by adaptability, innovation, and audience engagement strategies. However, despite these efforts, financial instability remained a key concern, with newsrooms struggling to generate sufficient revenue to maintain staffing levels and uphold quality journalism.

6.3 Recommendations Based on the Findings

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- To enhance the resilience and sustainability of the journalism industry in Namibia, it is crucial for journalists to engage in continuous professional development, improving their digital reporting skills and investigative techniques to adapt to evolving media landscapes.
- Media organizations should implement structured mental health support programs to help journalists cope with stress and emotional strain, ensuring their well-being while maintaining high-quality reporting. Employers must prioritize journalist safety by providing protective measures, including clear safety protocols and access to mental health support services, especially for those reporting in high-risk environments.
- Additionally, fact-checking and media literacy initiatives must be strengthened to counteract misinformation, thereby enhancing public trust in journalism.
- Financial sustainability remains a key concern; therefore, media houses should explore alternative revenue models, such as paid digital content, partnerships, and donor funding, to reduce their dependency on traditional advertising revenue. Collaborative journalism should also be encouraged, allowing organisations to share resources, improve information verification, and enhance overall media credibility.
- On a policy level, government agencies should ensure transparency by guaranteeing unrestricted access to public information, reinforcing the role of journalism as a

pillar of democracy. Legal protections must also be strengthened to safeguard press freedom, preventing undue censorship and restrictions that could hinder objective reporting. Additionally, supporting independent media through grants or subsidies can help sustain the industry during crises, ensuring the continued flow of reliable information to the public.

By implementing these recommendations, the Namibian media industry can strengthen its adaptability and resilience, thus, ensuring that journalism remains a sustainable and credible profession in the face of future challenges.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

This study focused on a selected number of print and broadcast media organisations in Namibia, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the research relied on self-reported experiences, which may introduce bias. Future studies could incorporate a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the evolving nature of journalism in crisis situations, future research should explore the long-term impact of COVID-19 on journalism in Namibia, particularly regarding newsroom sustainability, journalists' well-being, and digital innovation. Studies could also examine the role of government policies in shaping press freedom and media independence during a pandemic. Also, research on audience trust and news consumption patterns post-pandemic would provide valuable insights into the evolving relationship between journalists and the public.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter summarised the key findings of the study and provided recommendations to improve media resilience in times of crisis. The study highlights the adaptability and resilience of Namibian journalists and media organisations in responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19. This research demonstrates that journalism does not merely survive crises, it evolves. The pandemic accelerated necessary transformations, but also exposed vulnerabilities in journalistic structures that require urgent reforms. Moving forward,

sustainability, journalist welfare, audience engagement, and credibility enhancement should be prioritised to ensure journalism remains resilient in future crises

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Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (F-REC)
DECISION/FEEDBACK ON THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Dear Lamyaa Linus (219096732)

RESEARCH TOPIC: AN EXAMINATION OF MEDIA AND JOURNALIST'S ADAPTIVE CAPACITY IN RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN JOURNALISM PRACTICE IMPOSED BY COVID-19 IN NAMIBIA: A CASE OF SELECTED NAMIBIAN PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA

Supervisor (if applicable): Dr Nkosinethando Mpofo

Qualification registered for (if applicable): Master of Journalism and Media Technology

(Reference number of application: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE REGISTRATION NUMBER: **FREC - 70/24**)

Re: Ethical screening application No: **FREC - 70/24**

The Faculty of Computing and Informatics Ethics Screening Committee of the Namibia University of Science and Technology reviewed your application for the above-mentioned research. The research as set out in the application has been:

Approved

(Indicate with an X, and N/A if not applicable and proceed)

We would like to point out that you, as a researcher, are obliged to maintain the ethical integrity of your research, adhere to the ethical guidelines of NUST, and remain within the scope of your research proposal and supporting evidence as submitted to the F-REC. Should any aspect of your research change from the information as presented to the F-REC, which could affect the possibility of harm to any research subject, you are under the obligation to report it immediately to your supervisor or F-REC as applicable in writing. Should there be any uncertainty in this regard, you must consult with the F-REC.

We wish you success with your research and trust that it will make a positive contribution to the quest for knowledge at NUST.

Any ethical issues that need to be highlighted?	Why are these issues important?	What must/could be done to minimize the ethical risk?
No	N/A	N/A

Recommendation: The application is approved.

Sincerely,

Prof. Suama I. Hamunyela
Chairperson: Faculty Ethics Screening
CommitteeTel: +264-61-207-2522
CC: Co-supervisor:



Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form



Informed Consent Form for media and journalists

This informed consent form is for media organizations and Journalists in Windhoek, who we are inviting to participate in the research titled “**An examination of media and journalist’s adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia: A case of selected Namibian print and broadcast media**”. The principal investigator is Lamyaa Linus, from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Lamyaa Linus; I am doing my Masters degree in Journalism and Media Technology at Namibia University of Science and Technology. I am conducting research to examine media and journalists’ adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask me or another researcher.

Purpose of the research

The main objective of this study is to examine media and journalist’s adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia, with a focus on The Namibian Newspaper, New Era, The Republikein, Fresh FM and Touch FM

The study will address the following sub-objectives:

- To assess changes observed in the media and journalism industry before and after Covid-19 by selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists

- To examine how selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19
- To establish how selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in an interview that will take about an hour or so.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as media organisations and journalists can contribute to our understanding and knowledge on the impact of COVID-19 on print and broadcast Journalists in Namibia.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate in all the services, what you receive will continue and nothing will change. Choosing to participate or not will not have any bearing on your job or job-related evaluations.

Procedures

We are asking you to help us learn more about the adaptive capacity of print and broadcast media and journalists in Namibia. We are inviting you to take part in this project. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with me. During the interview, I will sit down with you; at any place that you consider comfortable (this can be in your home or a friend's home, or a suitable place of your choice). If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except for you, the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept on a table or desk where it is visible and able to record without any hindrances. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except you, the researcher, and the supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes will be kept for the duration of study and 2years after completion of study.

Duration

The research takes place over a period of three weeks in total. During that time, I will conduct the interviews once.

Risks

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, I do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about how media and journalists were able to adapt and respond to changes in the journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided with any incentive to take part in the research. However, we will give you taxi money for traveling expenses that are incurred during the duration of the research.

Confidentiality

I will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number is, data will also be protected in a password locked computer. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except my supervisor.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you will share with be accessed by anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop

participating in the interview at any time that you wish without your job being affected. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to Contact

For any questions regarding the research, or to get more clarity, please feel free to contact:

Lamyaa Linus

+264 81 4360903

lomyaalinus@gmail.com

or

Dr Mpofu @ mpofun@gmail.com

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Research and Ethic Committee of NUST, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. You may contact Dr Phillip Santos (psantos@nust.na), who is the Ethics Committee representative, should you need more information about ethical clearance.

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been invited to participate in the research about an examination of media and journalist's adaptive capacity in responding to changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19 in Namibia: A case of selected Namibian print and broadcast media.

(This section is mandatory)

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

*If illiterate*¹

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness _____

Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

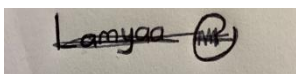
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: Lamyaa Linus

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent:



Date: 21 August 2024

¹ A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Appendix 3: Permission to conduct research.



The Namibian Permission letter



Appendix 4: Sample Research Instrument

Research Objectives

- To assess changes observed in the media and journalism industry before and after Covid-19 by selected Namibian print and broadcast journalists
- To examine how selected print and broadcast journalists in Namibia responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by Covid-19
- To establish how selected Namibian print and broadcast media organisations responded to the changes in journalism practice imposed by COVID-19

Field Questions for Participants

This study will use in-depth interviews. Some of the questions will emanate from the discussion with participants.

1. Can you describe your role and responsibilities within your media organization?
2. Describe your experience with journalistic reporting during the pandemic.
3. What changes did you observe in the media and journalism industry before and after Covid-19?
4. What were the major challenges you faced during the pandemic in terms of news gathering and reporting?
5. What were the major challenges you faced during the pandemic in terms of managing media organisations?
6. How did you (as a journalist) respond to the impact of the pandemic on your work and the industry as a whole?
7. How did your organization respond to the impact of the pandemic on your work and the industry as a whole?

Appendix 5: Turnitin Report

Lamyaa Linus Thesis Turn it in Report			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
8%	6%	2%	2%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
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78	www.diazdelmoralfoundation.org Internet Source	<1 %
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83	Gyanesh Govindarajan, K.A. Geetha, Santosh K. Patra, T.T. Sreekumar. "Enhancing social capital and reciprocity through community news media during COVID-19: a study of video volunteers", <i>Online Information Review</i> , 2023 Publication	<1 %
84	Sayyed Fawad Ali Shah, Faizullah Jan, Muhammad Ittefaq. "chapter 6 Health and Safety Risks to Journalists During Pandemics", <i>IGI Global</i> , 2021 Publication	<1 %
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93	"The Palgrave Handbook of Global Digital Journalism", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025 Publication	<1 %
94	Rana Arafat, Colin Porlezza. "Exploring News Innovations, Journalistic Routines, and Role Perceptions during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Egyptian Journalists", Journalism Studies, 2023 Publication	<1 %

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Appendix 6: Editors Confirmation Letter

17 September 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE EDITING – Mrs LAMYAA LINUS (219096732)

This is to confirm that a Master of Journalism and Media Technology thesis titled "ASSESSING THE ADAPTIVE CAPACITY OF SELECTED NAMIBIAN PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN PRACTICE IMPOSED BY COVID-19" by Lamyaa Linus, student No. 219096732, was submitted to me for language editing.

The thesis was professionally edited, and suggestions were made in the document, which if followed by Mrs Lamyaa Linus, will result in a thesis with a high standard of English. Given the nature of the process, I restricted my editing to language issues, which I feel have now been satisfactorily resolved, but I remain available for consultation as long as necessary.

Please feel free to contact me should you need more information. My contact details are:
Cell: +263 716624957. Email: jzpsasi@gmail.com

Yours faithfully



Dr Juliet S. Pasi
B. A. English & Linguistics
B. A. Special Honours in English
Graduate Certificate in Education
M.A. in English
DLit et Phil