

**MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS VERSUS COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO READERS PREFERENCES**

PADHMA MOODLEY

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MA in Communication Science

University of Zululand

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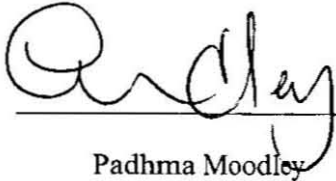
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide clarity in respect of the readers and advertisers preference between mainstream and community newspapers. As a result of the unprecedented success of community newspaper, mainstream newspapers have found themselves a new rival in the face of technological developments such as the Internet. Central to both these genres of newspapers stand the readers and advertisers'. These readers form an integral part of the existence of the newspapers and a key component in advertising. For advertisers, the community newspapers provided the perfect reach as they were aimed at a specific audience. Mainstream newspapers have been placed under duress with the proliferation of community newspapers as circulation expanded dramatically. This study provides an insight into readers' preferences using the Uses and Gratifications theory as a departure point. The results of this study will also show that in spite of both readers' and advertisers' preference, the mainstream newspaper will not be made obsolete, instead it will have to continue to reinvent itself to keep abreast of the changes in the environment.

DECLARATION

I, Padhma Moodley, declare that this study is my own work and that no part of the study is plagiarised. Where necessary, credit has been given to authors when their works were used or cited. A bibliography has been provided to indicate references which have been used.



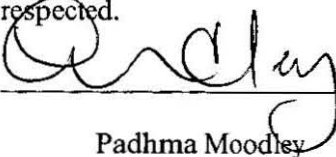
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ETHICAL ISSUES

No person has been quoted without their permission. Respondents' privacy has been respected.



Padhma Moodley

31-01-11

Date

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The completion of this thesis was made possible with the unwavering support and confidence of the following persons:

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WRITING CONVENTION

- The Harvard system of referencing is used in this study.

Names of newspapers are represented in italics. For example, *The Daily News*.

Newspaper terminology, which has been coined by authors, is indicated within single inverted commas.

A conscious effort has been made to limit the use of footnotes as far as possible in order to facilitate the uninterrupted reading of the thesis.

For commonly used terms full terms are used in headings. Acronyms are used in paragraphs.

Illustrative tables and figures are all given as Figures 1 – 29 and Tables 1 – 6 in their chronological sequence of appearance.

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ACRONYMS

ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation
AIP	Association of Independent Publishers of South Africa
ASNE	American Society of Small Newspaper Editors
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
MDDA	Media Development and Diversity Agency
MTV	Music Television
NAA	Newspapers Association of America
NAB	Newspaper Advertising Bureau
PMSA	Print Media South Africa
SA	South Africa
SPI	Sol Plaatje Institute
TV	Television listing
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder
WAN	WAN

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Chapter One

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

According to Kantor (2006) mainstream newspapers are facing a crisis. This is largely due to the Internet and community newspapers that are threatening to erode their readership and thus the revenues from advertisements. The much decentralised, fragmented regional structure that poses problems for the regional newspapers has created opportunities for a more localised form of communication: the community newspaper. RedInk also reaffirms that often growing out of weekly papers; the community newspapers have moulded their content to local community interests. In particular, they cater to the increased involvement of community residents in the affairs of their smaller scale local governments and to their need for increased information about those affairs. These community newspapers (weeklies) have expanded their circulation dramatically, placing the regional newspapers under further duress.

Picard (2007) contends that community newspaper advertising offers niche area targeting for specific markets and has excellent coverage in their own footprint areas. A popular advantage that the community newspaper holds is that their news content is purely localised focusing on the immediate community at hand. Community newspapers present opportunities regularly to reach occasional readers, to change non-readers into readers, and to create new advertising sales. They face threats from paid daily news papers (dailies) that may respond with their own free products and from digital broadcasting. By comparison strengths of paid dailies include their regular audience, their reputations, their wide coverage strength, their analysis and comment on public events and their position as the primary outlet for retail and classified advertising.

DEFINING OPERATIONAL TERMS

1. **Mainstream newspapers:** Refers to newspapers that have a high readership which is paid for by readers. These newspapers usually encompass a wide geographical area.

2. Community newspapers: Refers to newspapers that has a geographically contained readership which is offered free of charge to readers. These newspapers are targeted to specific communities.

3. Readers preferences: This ultimately is the choice readers make on what suits their needs. In the context of this study it is based on perceptions of readers that shape their choice of newspaper.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Duncan in Tomaselli & Dunn (2001:78), the rapid growth of community newspapers in South Africa is a clear indication that large gaps exist within the market of the print industry. Yet while community newspapers readership has steadily grown, the market for mainstream newspapers in South Africa is on the decrease. This study aims to determine readership preferences when it comes to community and mainstream newspapers. This research will highlight the perceptions of these readers in this regard.

OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

Mainstream newspapers versus community newspapers: An investigation into readers' preferences.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

PROBLEM 1: What are the perceptions in respect of attitudes and opinions of selected advertisers of *The Daily News* and community newspapers?

PROBLEM 2: What are the perceptions in respect of attitudes and opinions of selected readers of *The Daily News* and community newspapers?

PROBLEM 3: What impact has the proliferation of community newspapers had on *The Daily News*?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the perceptions of selected advertisers of *The Daily News* and community newspapers.

2. To establish the perceptions of the readers in respect of attitudes and opinions of *The Daily News* and community newspapers
3. To ascertain the impact, the proliferation of community newspapers has had on *The Daily News*.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This investigation will explore the perceptions of readers of both mainstream and community newspapers in order to ascertain their preferences. The research is essential in outlining the perceptions of the readers as this will highlight the changing behaviour of readers of community and mainstream newspapers. This change in behaviour has resulted in the decline in readership in mainstream newspapers and has escalated the readership of community newspapers.

Kaniss (1991:31) explains that while metropolitan newspapers have been losing their national advertising base to television and radio, another perhaps more threatening form of competition has moved in on the local advertising base. She further emphasises the very decentralised fragmented regional structure that has posed problems for the metropolitan papers has created opportunities for a new more localised form of communication outlet- the suburban daily newspaper more often referred to as the community newspaper.

Community newspapers in South Africa have moulded their content to a new community way of life. Kaniss (1991:31) further explains that community newspapers were not only able to meet the local news needs of suburbanites better than metropolitan newspapers could, but they were able to offer more important advantages to advertisers as well. This dependence on advertising for revenue has seen a tremendous growth of advertising in newspapers in the nineteenth century, which has caused a notable shift within the industry from being news-led to becoming market-led. This trend has caused newspapers' responsibility towards its audience to shift towards its greatest source of income which is advertising.

According to Editor and Publisher (2009) the newspaper industry faces plenty of challenges. The decrease in readership amongst all demographic groups has caused the industry to pay more attention to what is going on in their market and in readers' minds.

Local and small business enterprises have been provided with a cheaper, yet more effective form of advertising through the community newspapers. This alternate avenue of advertising

for small businesses would have serious implications for mainstream newspapers which this study aims to highlight.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the basis of the study. A definition of the operational terms was given to explicate the title of the study. The problem statement around which this study is based was then discussed. The research problems were highlighted from which the objectives for the research were derived. Finally the significance of the study was explored to provide a basis for the balance of the study. In the next chapter the discipline of communication is explored and the many contexts of communication is discussed.

Chapter Two

COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines communication, thereafter a comprehensive discussion of the different forms of communication that takes place in different contexts is provided. The context of mass communication is discussed in detail, as this forms the focus for this chapter. The difference between mass media and mass communication is highlighted as these are easily misunderstood terms in mass communication. This chapter is ended with a brief viewpoint of persuasive communication in newspapers.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

According to Steinberg (2007:39), in the scientific study of communication, there are two basic views of communication: a technical view and a meaning-centred view.

TECHNICAL VIEW OF COMMUNICATION

Steinberg (2007:39) states from a technical point of view, communication can be defined very simply as “sending and receiving messages”, or the transmission of messages from one person to another.

MEANING CENTRED VIEW OF COMMUNICATION

According to Steinberg (2007:39), this second view of communication, which is regarded as “more complex view of communication”, states that in addition to the transmission of messages, it involves their interpretation and meaning. Steinberg further states that this view considers communication as a human phenomenon and the central aspect of human existence.

A more staid look at communication is provided by Mersham and Skinner (1999:2) which says that most people agree that the verb to communicate means to exchange thoughts, feelings, and information; to make known; to make common; and to present something that somebody else understands. Language plays an important role in all human activity and in human interrelationships. Language is most certainly man’s primary form of communication.

According to Atkinson (1991:23) humans use signs and symbols to convey a thought, feelings, or an idea. How humans communicate is greatly significant in our lives. Humans spend most of their time communicating with each other. Humans develop, maintain and end relationships through communication. Communication influences the experiences and the happenings in an individual's environment.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

There are several different forms of communication which is applied in different contexts. These include:

- Interpersonal communication
- Intrapersonal communication
- Small group communication
- Organisational communication
- Mass communication

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

According to Gerard (2006:29), interpersonal communication can be defined as a two - way communication process of conveying a true understanding between at least two people. It is accomplished in a precise, clear and forthright manner. A true understanding occurs when the sender and receiver fully comprehends what has been communicated - verbally and none verbally.

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

According to Mersham and Skinner (1999:87) intrapersonal communication is the internal communication which occurs when the message, the expression of an idea, arises in the mind of the communicator. This occurs when an individual communicates with him/herself.

SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

According to Cleary (2003:37), she defines a small group as a collection of between 3-25 individuals who are involved in a face to face interaction to achieve a common goal. Mersham and Skinner (1999:113) state that if the group is too large, the members will not be able to communicate easily with one another. Some examples of small groups are, the family, study groups, social clubs, and work groups.

ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

According to Grunig (1992:5) organisational communication can be defined as communication managed by an organisation for the organisation. Mersham & Skinner (199:148) provides a more succinct definition by describing organisational communication in terms of the levels, hierarchies and communication networks in the organisation.

MASS COMMUNICATION

According to Steinberg (2007:253), mass communication can be defined as a process of delivering information, ideas and attitudes to a sizeable and diversified audience through a medium developed for that purpose. This context of communication forms the focus of this chapter and will be discussed in detail. Mass media are the technologies and social institutions (such as newspapers, radio and television) that are involved in the production and distribution of messages to large audiences.

ELEMENTS OR VARIABLES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

De Beer (2007:8) states mass communication shares basic elements or variables with the other contexts of human communication mentioned above. He identifies the following elements:

THE COMMUNICATOR

According to Steinberg (2007:254), the communicator in mass communication is not a single individual but a member of a team within an organisation (such as a newspaper or television station) involved in the production and distribution of messages.

RECIPIENT OR AUDIENCE

Audience is an important part of the communication process, since it is the receiver of the message. Steinberg (2007:254) states that the recipients of mass communication are not single individuals but consist of large audiences who are not personally known to the communicator or even to each other. The audience is also too large for the communicator to interact with personally.

De Beer (2007:8) explains that these audiences are not homogeneous but comprise all sectors of society. Also receivers of mass communicated messages can turn a television or radio newscast off, or decide not to buy a particular newspaper or magazine.

MESSAGES

According to De Beer (2007:10), mass communication messages are public in nature. These messages are not exclusive and are far more strongly bound by normative and legal constraints than individuals who might say something in the privacy of their homes.

CHANNELS

De Beer (2007:10) explains in interpersonal communication we may use sound, sight, smell, touch or any combinations of these channels to convey a message. Mass media opens us incredible new possibilities in the integration of fibre optic, digital network, computers, newspapers and television as channels for mass communication.

FEEDBACK

According to Steinberg (2007: 254), there is little or no feedback from the audience back to the communicator because the audience members are unable to use the same medium to reply to the communicator. She explains their access to the mass media is restricted by the media organisation, and the complex technology involved means that most people do not have the specialised skills required to encode their messages in a mass medium.

EFFECT

The effect of the messages transmitted via mass media on recipients is a rather contentious topic. De Beer (2007:11) explores this area by asking these relevant questions: Are all of us really influenced by the media and if so to what extent? How are we influenced? He goes on to explain that mass media does have a certain effect on our lives. What is important to understand is the content of the mass communication is an important variable as this will determine the effect mass communication will have on its recipients.

THE FUNCTIONS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

This study is focuses on the perceptions of readers which are ultimately promulgated by the function each genre of newspaper serve. For this reason exploring the functions of mass communication is pivotal to this research. According to Steinberg (2007: 256), researchers, particularly in the United States, became interested in gaining insight in to the effects of mass media messages on people and society and the contributions they could make to restoring

society's balance. This kind of effects approach to the study of mass communication is functionalism.

De Beer (2007: 13) proposes that a functional approach to mass communication depicts media as essentially self directing and self correcting within certain parameters. He goes on to explain that the functional approach wrestles with the problem of what mass communication should or could do in society.

According to Steinberg (2007: 257), two theorists, Lasswell and Wright identified four basic functions of mass communication: surveillance of the environment, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment. Each of these functions will be explored further.

SURVEILLANCE FUNCTION

According to Steinberg (2007:257), this function is considered the information and news providing function of mass communication. Society is kept informed as information is passed on to individuals through the mass media to help them make decisions about certain aspect of their lives. She explains further, that the media also keeps us informed about national and international news, updates on crisis around the world, and also to inform people what is expected of them thereby minimising confusion and contributing to social order.

CORRELATION AND TRANSMISSION FUNCTION

According to De Beer (2007:14), the media analyze and interpret events in society, putting facts into perspective, explaining the importance of events, giving perspective on different opinions and often persuading people to act in a certain way. Steinberg (2007:257) further explains our attitudes and opinions about political figures are often influenced by the impressions we receive from the mass media.

De Beer (2007) raises a relevant point to this research when he states that mass communication helps to structure the lives of the audience, and also sets the agenda of daily news and other events. By deciding what stories are featured in newspapers, on radio and television, the media have an impact on what people will think about and discuss.

According to Steinberg (2007:258), the transmission function is a teaching function of mass communication in that it tries to create common bonds among members of society. De Beer (2007:15) further explains this function where it assists members of a community to agree on certain values and forms of behaviour which are acceptable to the individuals living in that

community, thereby socialising people in society. De Beer (2007) introduces the persuasive function of mass communication here as many mass communication activities are geared to educating or persuading members of the audience and further afield. The purpose of persuasion is to benefit the originator or some other agent that utilises the media. He further explains that persuasion may be applied in a number of ways: by strengthening attitudes, changing attitudes, persuading people to act, and in providing individuals with certain values.

ENTERTAINMENT FUNCTION

According to Steinberg (2007:259) the fourth function of mass communication, refers to the media's ability to present messages which provide a form of escapism and relaxation to its audience members. Mass media has a relative advantage over live entertainment in that it is cost effective and convenient. People can sit in the comfort of their homes and watch television or read a newspaper without the added expenses of going out.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MASS COMMUNICATION AND MASS MEDIA

Mass communication and mass media have often been used interchangeably, however, there is a distinct difference that exists between these terms.

MASS COMMUNICATION

Scannell and Lorimer (1994:25) provides a revised definition of mass communication to the one provided by Sullivan *et al.* (1983:131) by adding that mass communication is the practice and product of information and leisure entertainment to large often unknown and increasingly fragmented audiences. When undertaken by means of modern technologies, this process involves institutionally financed and organised, state regulated, high technology, organisations that provide commodities and associated free services, in print, on screen, electronically and by electromagnetic broadcast. When undertaken by more traditional means, mass communication includes any means of providing information, images and / or entertainment to large numbers of people from all social strata and demographic groups but who are homogeneous in their behaviour of choosing to attend to an informational source

(adapted from O Sullivan *et al.* 1983:131).

Lorimer (2002) points out that O Sullivan's definition provides a foundation on which to understand the concept of mass communication. He further adds that the past ten years of technological change have set in place communication on a mass scale. As a consequence, we are now in a position to put forward a new definition of mass communication with three different subsections. Mass communication is state- and interstate-organised transmission of intelligence, including:

- Centralised mass information or entertainment dissemination (encompassing radio, television, newspapers, film, magazines, books, recorded and performed music, and advertising);
- Decentralised information or entertainment dissemination (on the World Wide Web); and
- Provision for decentralized media-based interaction on a mass scale (via, for example, telephone, the mail, e-mail, pagers, two-way radio, and fax).

MASS MEDIA

Mass media is a contraction of mass communication. O'Sullivan (1983) and his colleagues provide a definition of mass media by providing a list, which are usually understood as newspapers, magazines, cinema, television, radio and advertising; sometimes including book publishing (especially popular fiction) and music (the pop industry). (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, & Fiske, 1983, p. 130).

Lorimer (2002) suggests adding interactive media (such as CD-ROMs, especially games) and certain uses of the Internet. This list of mass media, even with these two additions, amounts to concrete examples of centralized mass communication institutions.

In light of the widespread technological changes, the term mass media then can be defined as Lorimer (2002) points out as the sometimes state-regulated, corporately financed, and industrially organized institutions of information and entertainment dissemination such as newspapers, magazines, cinema, television, radio, advertising, book publishing, music publishing, recording and performance, and all interactive media that are engaged in providing entertainment and information to large, unknown audiences for both private and public consumption. The mass media also include Internet activities (e.g., Web sites) designed to disseminate information broadly. Finally, the mass media encompass those

technologies and organizations which allow communicative interaction on a mass scale - phones, faxes, postal services, cell phones, Blackberrys, Palm Pilots, and the like.

MASS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY

Lorimer and Scannell (1994:1) state that Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan were the first modern scholars to study the connection between the means of communication available to a people and the ways in which their means of communication contribute towards shaping the character and scope of their society, its economic life, politics and culture.

Narula (2006:53) offers a communications perspective where the human actions are seen as the process by which people collectively maintain social realities. Human beings simultaneously live in a symbolic universe and are engaged in sequences of interactions with their environments and with other people. Narula goes on to explain that they actively strive to create coherent stories drawing from their resources of their social reality and from the practices in which they are engaged with others.

Lorimer and Scannell (1994:21) explains that the ideas of oral, literate and electronic media provide a panoramic and somewhat historical view of the role of communication in society. They further explain that the modern mass media have an impact on society that derives not only from the organisational biases inherent in such communication forms but also from a complexity of variables that define their nature- the laws under which they operate, the technology they use, their organisational form, the professions they employ, their perceived aims and goals and their orientation to their audiences. Lorimer and Scannell (1994) sees the mass media as social institutions that function with certain political and legal constraints employing a distinctive mixture of trained personnel following specific information gathering procedures to create material for either visual auditory or conceptually oriented media. They have a particular view of society and work under definitive financial constraints.

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

According to De Wet (2010:5), persuasion predominates in our life worlds. In every field of human existence people partake in and are confronted with persuasion. De Wet continues to say that persuasion pervades human communication in all its forms: in intrapersonal, small group and mass communication. He proceeds to define persuasion as a process of

communication in which the communicator succeeds in voluntary forming, sustaining or changing the attitudes of the recipient or group of individuals in accordance with what the communicator intends by his or her message.

Persuasive communication in newspapers is employed by advertisers to shape the minds of consumers which involve a conscious attempt to modify the thought patterns of consumers. The persuasive function of advertising is to aid consumers in the search for goods and services and to satisfy their needs.

According to Cheek (1992:121), individuals are influenced by persuasive communication to the extent that they have learnt the content of the message given. The more they have assimilated the content the greater the likelihood the persuasive communication encounter will be effective.

Perloff (2003: 176-177) has identified three message factors which is needed in order for the message itself to be persuasive. These are the structure of the message- how it is prepared and organised; the content of the communication- its appeals and arguments and finally the third factor is language, how the communicators use words and symbols to persuade an audience. He further states that persuasive messages change attitudes because they stimulate thought, arouse effect and mesh with the receivers' motivations and needs.

Ungerer (2000:1) states that all texts must seduce their audience if they want to put their message across successfully. They must tempt them into reading and into accepting the message. He further explains for media texts this seductive quality is particularly important because, though their prospective audience is often unlimited, attention is never assured and if gained at all is difficult to maintain.

CONCLUSION

The discipline of communication was introduced in this chapter and the various contexts within which communication occurs was explored. Each of these contexts of communication were explained, placing emphasis on mass communication as this formed the focus of this chapter. The context of mass communication was given special focus as this was integral to the medium of newspapers and a brief viewpoint of persuasive communication was provided. In the next chapter the concept of newspapers is explored as this is one of the most important variables of this study.

Chapter three

THE CULTURE OF NEWSPAPERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on literature review which is pertinent to the traditions of newspapers. It also considers previous research done in this focus area. The first part of this chapter deals with the importance of news and the impact it has on its readers. A brief outline of newspapers is provided with special reference to community and mainstream newspapers. Each genre is further explained within the context of South Africa. The growth and decline of newspapers in South Africa is examined to demonstrate the changing behaviour of readers in South Africa. A preview of the growth of mainstream and community newspapers in South Africa is given to provide a departure point for this study.

According to Kantor (2006) mainstream newspapers are facing a crisis, since Internet and community newspapers are threatening to erode their readership and revenues from advertisements. In this respect, this issue is broadly looked at considering both *The Daily News* and the community newspapers. Newspaper circulation and readership take the focus to highlight the importance of these factors that in many ways contributes towards the success of a newspaper. This information is then related to *The Daily News* and community newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal. Advertising as an important variable that provides the financial impetus for newspapers is critically examined. The focus is then shifted towards the audience or readership of both community and mainstream newspapers. The way in which the audience is informed by news and advertisements in both community and mainstream newspapers is scrutinised.

NEWSPAPERS

Our need for news is not an idea born in the twentieth century; instead it has been in existence even before the advent of the first form of mass media. According to Martin and Copeland (2003:5), there is evidence that societies found many ways of communicating news beyond face to face spoken reports. He refers to pictographs that were found in America which are

4000 years old which include symbols and signs scratched into the rock face at easily readable locations. Martin and Copeland further contend that news conveyance is an integral part of every successful culture.

Hiebert and Gibbons (2000:156) state that newspapers are a mass medium on the local level and to survive and grow in the twenty first century most experts and newspaper executives agree they need to expand their definitions of content and audiences, build their circulation and compete for advertising.

Petley (2004:4) highlights the sole purpose of newspapers is to deliver or disseminate news and to keep people informed. This is achieved through a variety of ways within a newspaper. Ungerer (2000:131) states that it is commonplace that daily newspapers contain more or less distinct text categories, like news, leading articles, obituaries and many others.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER AND MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER

The link between newspapers, their communities, editors and readers, was forged with the first and early independent and free press (Nord, 2001:109). Even today, in the broadest context newspapers consider their readers as 'the community', both from a world view, as belonging to the 'community of communities', and as that of a community, separated from the overall populous. Broad applications of the definition "community newspaper" and the inter-change of terms such as "provincial" with "community newspaper" have contributed some confusion to specific areas of community newspaper research.

Davidson and Cotter (1997:660) explored the possible relationship between the psychological sense of community and interest in reading the local newspaper. The term 'psychological sense of community' refers to a strong attachment that people may experience toward others based on where they live and work or based on with which groups they affiliate (social, political, religious, cultural, occupational). The psychological sense of community is often defined in terms of personal orientations such as feelings of belongingness and connectedness and beliefs that one's relationships with others are characterized by shared values and reciprocal influence (McMilland and Chavis, 1986, as cited in Davidson & Cotter, 1997:660).

Based on the premise of Davidson and Cotter, the Rising Sun group of community newspapers, based in KwaZulu-Natal which owns a number of community newspapers such

as *The Phoenix Sun* and *The Chatsworth Sun*, caters for each community individually. Their public mandate is to promote the general welfare of the community. Each community within KwaZulu-Natal has its individually named community newspaper e.g. In Chatsworth: *The Chatsworth Sun*, *Chatsworth Tabloid*; In Phoenix: *The Phoenix Sun*, *Phoenix Tabloid*. The formats of these newspapers, although emanating from different newspaper houses, are similar in content and quality.

To ascertain the differences between both genres of newspapers, it is important to understand the criteria that can be used to distinguish a community newspaper from a mainstream newspaper which are: frequency, interest, locale, exclusion, circulation size, accessibility, content categories, geography, format, diversity of format, and catholicity.

FREQUENCY: The Australian Press Council (1994) defines provincial newspapers as those not published daily (1994: 9). Publications issued over periods of more than one month would be termed periodicals (Cryle and Cosgrove, 1999).

INTEREST: Bomann (1999:1), writing on the growth of publications and circulation of community newspapers in the United States, defines community newspapers as a general interest newspapers which are published less than four times a week .

LOCALE: Blexrud (1972:18), using an approach related to geographic locale, discovered that small town dailies had picked up the label 'community newspaper', though he defined community newspapers for the purpose of his study, 'Rural Community Identification and the Press', as any weekly publication addressed to the residents of a specific area and its population centre.

CIRCULATION SIZE: Lauterer (2000:84) draws on the definition applied by the American Society of Small Newspaper Editors (ASNE) to a small newspaper, which is based on circulation size. A community newspaper is any newspaper with a circulation of less than 50,000 copies. Ninety-seven per cent of all newspapers in the United States have circulations under this figure (Lauterer, 2002:84).

ACCESSIBILITY: Lauterer (2000:84) suggests accessibility is also a core defining factor in a newspaper's 'community quotient'. Accessibility is determined by how easy/difficult it is for the community to get in touch with the editors, reporters and photographers.

CONTENT CATEGORIES: According to Canadian Heritage (2009) community newspapers can be defined as: non-daily, free and serving the community, containing editorial and local

council information along with classifieds, and general local items. Community newspapers contain community - specific reporting and editorial content and are typically published from within a community rather than an external perspective observing the community.

GEOGRAPHY: This variable determines the size of a community within which a number of categories for community newspapers could exist such as:

- suburban,
- metro (inner city) and
- regional (outer suburbs) publications.

Barnhart (1974) made distinctions between three types of weekly newspapers, which he called:

- Small town, in preference to the widely used terms 'country' weekly and 'rural' weekly;
- Suburban and
- Community (urban), by which he meant weekly, or less-than-daily, newspapers situated in and serving neighbourhood areas of large cities.

FORMAT: From the aspect of commercial journalism, 'community "newspaper" must be produced by a traditional newsprint process. Anything else could be viewed as a community newsletter/notice sheet' (Damian Bester, Editor, *Derwent Valley Gazette*, 22 July 2002).

From these definitions and qualifications it is reasonable to propose that a community newspaper can be defined in terms of a broad set of criteria pertaining to, frequency, interest, locale, circulation size, accessibility, content, geography and format.

THE CONCEPT OF FREE NEWSPAPERS

The appearance and apparent success of free community newspapers requires managers of paid newspapers to give them attention and to deliberately fashion a strategic response in markets where they now exist or can potentially appear. The strengths of the community newspapers include their easy acquisition, the fact that readers do not have to pay money for them, their quick readability, their captive audiences and the fact that their advertising is more effective than most paid daily newspapers. All newspaper publishers are in favour of a free press. But how many are in favour of free newspapers?

Free newspapers in many countries have experienced a steady increase in numbers, circulation and advertising revenues in recent years. Penetration has increased in a majority of countries for which data is available in the past five years. *Metro* which was originally published in Stockholm is an example of a free newspaper (Anderson & Grant, 2000) that is aimed at urban communities. As a daily newspaper, circulation figures were in the region of 200,000 copies a day. As a free newspaper, *Metro* was an immediate success. In their report based on a seminar in London 2000, organised by WAN, Anderson and Grant states that *Metro* quickly became the second daily newspaper of Stockholm after *Dagens Nyheter* (353 000). To date, *Metro* is published in 12 cities, including Philadelphia and Santiago de Chile (Anderson & Grant, 2000). Research shows that before *Metro* was published in Stockholm, a large portion of the population did not read newspapers. By launching *Metro* in London, Associated Newspapers set out to reach a demographic whose preferences may have been somewhat neglected by the newspaper business up to then: commuters. No other newspaper had previously targeted the 400 000 subway users who did not read a national newspaper. It was a huge market with potential that was still untapped. Advertisers were sceptical at first, but soon found that the response received from this newspaper indeed put paid to any doubt advertisers would have had.

Free newspapers have heralded new competition to existing markets and have cost advantages because of their distribution methods (Competitiveness of the European Union Publishing Industries, 2003). The appearance of free dailies worldwide has caused considerable concern among publishers of paid circulation daily newspapers, who fear the new dailies will further erode their circulation and undermine their advertising base. These concerns are not without basis because the fact that free papers are surviving in the face of significant opposition from existing daily newspapers reveals that they are serving a need of readers and advertisers that has not been met by traditional newspapers (Picard, 2001:172). Like their counterparts in the paid circulation market, free community newspapers also participate in a dual product market. They market content to audiences and then market access of those audiences to advertisers.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS OR TABLOIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The much decentralised, fragmented regional structure that poses problems for the regional newspapers has created opportunities for a more localised form of communication – the

community newspaper. Often growing out of weekly papers, the community newspapers have moulded their content to local community interests. In particular they cater to the increased involvement of community residents in the affairs of their smaller scale local governments and to their need for increased information about those affairs. According to RedInk Publishing (2006), these community weeklies have expanded their circulation dramatically, placing the regional newspapers under further duress. Community newspaper advertising offers niche area targeting for specific markets and has excellent coverage in their own footprint areas.

A popular advantage that the community newspaper holds is that their news content is purely localized focusing on the immediate community at hand. Community newspapers present opportunities regularly to reach occasional readers, to change non-readers into readers, and to create new advertising sales. They face threats from paid dailies that may respond with their own free products and from digital broadcasting. By comparison strengths of paid dailies include their regular audience, their reputations, their wide coverage strength, their analysis and comment on public events and their position as the primary outlet for retail and classified advertising (Picard, 2001).

According to Wasserman (2010:2), in an era where the existence of newspapers is under threat in many parts of the world, a new print media genre introduced in a developing country has met with unprecedented commercial success. He further explains that the emergence of South African tabloid is significant as it contributes towards a richer understanding of global journalism. He also points out that the emergence and growth of these tabloids are significant to the changing socio-political sphere in South Africa after democratisation. These tabloids are known for a distinctive type of content- the human interest, graphically told story, heavy on pictures, pithy, highly stereotyped prose.

Wasserman (2010:41) highlights the success of the tabloid or community newspapers in South Africa is not as a result of a format, style or genre copied from elsewhere but was generated within South Africa as a result of its new emerging socio political sphere. He further states that there is an element of interactivity between the tabloids editorial staff and the readership that extends far beyond the conventional model of news dissemination which contributes towards the success of the community newspapers in South Africa.

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The recent media history of South Africa can be divided into two main phases: during apartheid and after apartheid. These two periods define the fundamental changes that have reshaped South Africa over the last six decades. According to Gale (2006) South Africa is also different from other countries in Africa because of its long tradition of newspaper journalism that dates back to when the Europeans arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. According to South African Government Online (2006), South Africa has 20 daily and 13 weekly newspapers, most in English. Some 14.5-million South Africans buy the urban daily newspapers; while community newspapers have a circulation of more than 5.5-million.

For over 40 years the apartheid state tried to gag the country's newspapers, using legislation, harassment and imprisonment, culminating in the late-1980s States of Emergency. Through all of this, SA's press continued to report on the news they could.

With democracy in 1994, South Africa's newspapers were freed from apartheid era restrictions. Our new constitution safeguards freedom of the media, freedom to receive or impart information or ideas, freedom of artistic creativity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. Kaniss (1991:46) explains that the local news media, whether metropolitan newspapers, local television and radio stations, or city magazines, are commercial enterprises that must make a profit in order to survive. In this respect, newspapers have had to change their functioning to accommodate the needs of audiences increasingly demanding entertainment rather than news and information. This has been the result of a consumer culture that has grown and developed around the consumer goods and advertising industries fuelled by a capitalist economy. As a result, newspapers too, have begun to compete with newer media forms by becoming more market led and catering to the new entertainment needs of the public (Moddie, 2003).

GROWTH AND DECLINE OF MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2006), the South African newspaper market, in defiance of international trends, has seen rapid growth since the year 2000, marked by new entrants into the market and rising overall circulation and readership. Between 2000 and 2005, total circulation of daily newspapers increased by 38.4%, from 1.13 million per day to 1.57 million. This suggests a healthy print media sector. Closer analysis, however, reveals

a less rosy picture for the so-called “mainstream” or established dailies which also purport to be “serious” and news-focused. The increase in total daily newspaper circulation is entirely accounted for by two new publications, *the Daily Sun* and *Isolezwe*. Excluding these two publications, there has been a decline of 10.8% in the total circulation of the remaining 17 dailies monitored by the ABC. Only six recorded an increase in circulation over the period: *Beeld* (+2.5%), *Cape Times* (+1.9%), *The Mercury* (+1.5%), *The Star* (+1.7%), *The Diamond Fields Advertiser* (DFA) (+9%) and *The Pretoria News* (+14.2%).

The total circulation added by those six newspapers amounts to 11,179 (ABC, 2006). The 11 other mainstream daily newspapers (between them) have lost 121,971 copies. The biggest losers were *The Sowetan*, which declined by 35.2% from 203,352 to 131,714; *The Citizen*, which dropped 31.2% from 106,120 to 73,008; and *The Daily News*, which declined 21.7% from 65,476 to 51,251 (downloads.bbc.co.uk).

These are newspapers that compete directly, in terms of language, target readership or geographic location, with *The Daily Sun* and *Isolezwe*, which are both aimed at lower-middle-class black readers (*Isolezwe* is an isiZulu daily, while *The Daily Sun* is an English-language tabloid newspaper). This suggests that the two newcomers are not only attracting new readers, but are also taking readers away from established newspapers especially those that target the same reader types, such as *the Sowetan*, *the Citizen*, and *Daily Dispatch*.

According to the Newspaper Society Report (2003), total newspaper readership is rising, as a result of the entry of tabloid newspapers and indigenous language newspapers into the market as well as community based newspapers. While circulation figures in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia suggest readership of daily newspapers is declining, regional, community and local weekly press circulations are growing.

CHALLENGES FACED BY MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

According to Duncan McIntosh Company (2006) internationally, newspapers and other “traditional media” face fundamental problems as their audiences drift towards new media and their stakeholders demand better returns on investments. Fitch, a New York City based company, adds that the outlook for the traditional media segments continues to be negative for 2007.

According to Belden Associates (2007) the newspaper industry faces plenty of challenges. The decrease in readership amongst all demographic groups has caused the industry to pay more attention to what's going on in their market and in readers' minds. In order for newspapers to adapt, they must build upon their strengths, minimise (and, in some cases, overcome) weakness and embrace new technology, promotion, alliances, and even cultures - to deal with these challenges. Beldenassociates.com states the following challenges newspapers are facing:

- Readers' lack of time. The number one cited reason readership is declining.
- The marked decline in single copy sales, notably Sunday newspapers.
- Competition. The increasing number of media outlets fragments time further.
- Younger readership. It is not lost, but requires attention and nurturing.
- The Internet: what to do and how?
-

Belden Associates (2007) cite two of the main strengths which newspapers can leverage:

Newspapers are a superior source of local news: newspapers generally surpass the competition. Belden's average of several markets show that local news is the number one interest of readers (65% are very interested in this topic) and 82% rate newspapers excellent or good.

Newspapers are a source of useful information to readers: Newspapers are the leading source of advertising information overall, especially for real estate, grocery shopping and new or used vehicles. When people need to buy a product that requires more information, they consult with newspapers, a bonus with advertisers. Newspapers are also a great source for TV listings, places to go and things to do.

The mainstream newspaper industry, worldwide, already suffering from circulation problems, could be looking at its worst numbers in more than a decade. In USA, circulation numbers released in 2005 by the Audit Bureau of Circulations will show industry-wide declines of 1% to 3%, possibly the highest for daily newspapers since the industry shed 2.6% of subscribers in 1990-91(Angwin and Hallinan, 2005). The biggest publishers may show the largest declines: Gannett Co., which owns about 100 newspapers, says it will be down "a couple of points" from last year's levels. Long stuck in a slow decline, U.S. newspapers face the prospect of an accelerated drop in circulation. The slide is fuelling an urgent industry

discussion about whether the trend can be halted in a digital age and is forcing newspaper executives to rethink their traditional strategies.

Angwin and Hallinan (2005) suggests that rather than simply trying to halt the decline, which can be done readily through discounts and promotions, they are being forced to try to “manage” their circulation in new ways. Some publishers are deliberately cutting circulation in the hope of selling advertisers on the quality of their subscribers. Others are expanding into new markets to make up for losses in their core markets. Some are switching to a tabloid format or giving away papers to try to attract younger readers. Others are pouring money into television and radio advertising and expensive face-to-face sales pitches to potential subscribers.

The losses come at a time when Americans have many news outlets that did not exist 20 years ago, including cable-television news channels and Internet sites, as well as email and cell phone alerts. Many newspapers have substantial and free online sites offering much of what is in the printed paper. These sites might not hurt readership overall, but they can erode a newspaper’s paying audience. At the same time, many newspapers have undercut the print product itself, trimming staff and coverage. They also have failed to figure out how to attract younger readers to their pages. Others say newspapers are simply facing the familiar fate of TV and magazines, which have also lost audience in the past 20 years and have tried to adapt by focusing more on demographic groups. “Mass media in general has just become a little bit less mass,” says Jason E. Klein, president of the National Newspaper Network LP, a sales arm of the industry (Angwin and Hallinan, 2005). Daily circulation of American mainstream newspapers peaked in 1984 and had fallen nearly 13% to 55.2 million copies in 2003, according to the Newspaper Association of America. At the same time, advertising revenue, adjusted for inflation, has barely budged. In 1985, newspaper advertising, adjusted for inflation, was \$43.04 billion, not much less than the \$44.94 billion reported in 2003. That’s just 4.4% real growth over 18 years. During that same period, the gross domestic product, measured in current dollars, grew 161%.

Based on a 1998 NAA study, mainstream newspapers fall short of expectations or underperform when it comes to:

- Credibility.
- Being engaging: newspapers need to engage readers better.

- Providing depth and seriousness of purpose.
- “Connecting” with the audience: TV and others are more likely to create an emotional connection.
- Being enjoyable.

Belden Associates (2007) states while not necessarily a weakness, this study also mentions newspapers fare poorly vis-à-vis other media for topics other than local coverage. When seeking world/national news, business and finance, features (such as health and fitness), and professional and local sports, readers are as likely to rely on others.

The market for mainstream newspapers in South Africa today is on the decrease. The country has the second lowest number of titles in the world in relation to population, and newspaper circulation shrank from 19% to 17% between 1990 and 1996 (Duncan, 2001:78).

Duncan (2001:78) sees this as a result of an extremely high unemployment rate: ‘The more unemployment increases, the more the circulation of print media decreases, and the more the media will be characterized by concentration of ownership as they seek to maximize advantages to attract a portion of the shrinking advertising cake’. At the forefront of the problems besetting South African mainstream newspapers is the proliferation of community newspapers that has impacted on the regional newspapers in South Africa. With the advent of the television came widespread speculation that it would mark the end of the newspaper. Still, the newspaper survived all of the hype and both the television and the newspaper found its place in society to co-exist, albeit, against all odds. Similarly, the Internet has now become the new threat that is much debated, but this does not mean that it would completely take over the newspaper or obliterate its existence. The Internet, like the television, will find its place in society and co-exist, with the one complementing the other. The question then arises, which newspapers will it be that survive this transition? This does not question which company or conglomerate will survive, but rather which genre of newspaper will survive the transition

GROWTH OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Independent publishers of community newspapers have a name for the onslaught by the big media players: The Borg race, named after the race to conquer aliens in the television series Star Trek. Their conquests are always prefaced by the ultimatum: “Resistance is futile; you

will be assimilated...” writes the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) in a report on challenges facing grassroots publishers of community newspapers. “Opponents who refuse assimilation are annihilated, regardless of the cost,” the AIP continues in the preliminary findings of its Census 2006 report that counted some 238 independent community newspapers countrywide - about half of the vernacular press in South Africa (Mail & Guardian Online: 2006).

The explosion of community newspapers and, more recently, community magazines, is staggering. Data from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), in its quarterly figures from January to March this year, showed a more than 30 percent increase in the circulation of community newspapers, and the birth of 28 new titles in the past year (Grobler: 2006). ABC figures represent only 118 community newspapers - a fraction of the estimated 500 community newspapers in circulation. According to Nielsen¹ (Grobler: 2006), conglomerate community media earned more than R600-million from above-the-line advertising revenue in 2004 and that excludes inserts and other revenue streams. According to the Association of Independent Publishers, Community print is the only print advertising sector to show dramatic year-on-year growth over the past five years (Grobler: 2006). In 2004, “conglomerate community media posted a 51 percent increase,” notes the AIP report. When Caxton, a major conglomerate publishing house in South Africa, became the first to enter the community press market in the late 1970s, few realized how profitable this would become. Caxton and its subsidiary companies currently own more than 155 community titles, including some 18 Get It community magazines (and more are being launched) and 11 Urban Newspapers, while Media 24 comes a distant second with some 40 community titles. Independent Newspapers and Johncom both own fewer than 20 titles each, according to the AIP census data (Grobler, 2006).

Caxton inherited many local newspapers from the old Perskor media group. The dominance of conglomerates on the community press front has always been geographically based - with Caxton having control in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, Johncom being dominant in the Eastern Cape and Media24 and Independent Newspapers in the Western Cape. Caxton is breaking into the Western Cape market with its hugely successful Get It magazine while Media24 is launching a similar title in Gauteng. John Bowles, joint managing director of the

¹ A global marketing research firm

Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB), a Caxton division for national sales and marketing says that, in general, the community newspapers do not compete with each other but there are a few hotspot areas (Grobler, 2006). Bowles points out that Caxton has in the past year launched 10 new community newspapers in Soweto and should it plan to launch even more newspapers, it would again focus on areas with major new developments. According to community newspaper publishers, many are not in favour of having their circulations exceeding more than 40,000 as it becomes too expensive for the local stores to advertise; instead they would rather launch a new publication for the newly developed area, as they had done with the Northside Chronicle on the West Rand in Gauteng (Grobler, 2006). About 70 percent of advertising revenue in community publications comes from local businesses and retailers.

According to Lucille van Niekerk, general manager for My Week North, research showed a need for a publication designed “to keep communities informed of all interesting events in their neighbourhoods”(Newswatch, 2010). Cathy Pestana of Print Media South Africa (PMSA) says the secret of the community press’ success is exactly that. She explains that “the community newspapers have a closer and more intimate relationship with their respective communities because they carry local news and specials within their own communities”. She also added that “it is the format, frequency and delivery method that together has made it a popular medium for today’s modern society”. (Newswatch, 2010)

Funded by the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), SPI (Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Management) conducted a study of six independent community newspapers with the goal of assisting small independent newspapers by exploring and publicizing the many challenges that they face in their efforts to become sustainable enterprises (News Watch: 2010).

According to the Milne (2006), an in-depth study involving the case studies of six successful South African newspapers serving their local communities was carried out in 2006 by the Sol Plaatje Institute. Newspapers were selected from a pool of 20 newspapers, which were nominated as successful ventures by MDDA and the Association of Independent Publishers of South Africa (AIP). All 20 newspapers were sent questionnaires. These collected information on each newspaper’s background, money matters, the composition of staff, and the manager’s perception of the opportunities and difficulties facing the small independent community newspapers. Based on the researchers’ interpretations of responses in the

questionnaires, SPI selected six newspapers for the case study phase of the research. A key finding made by the SPI relevant to this research is that “grassroots or independent community newspapers yield good returns on advertising spending”. The report further recommends that advertisers and particularly national advertisers, need to rethink entrenched perceptions of small newspapers and the communities they serve.

The intent, according to the institute, was to reveal key business and editorial strategies successful publications have adopted to assist them in overcoming these challenges. According to Milne (2006), Rose and Bruce Stepherson, co-owner of the *North Coast Courier* maintained in the SPI research that the letters section was a way for the locals to “own” the paper. The focus of the news that is reported remains very local. They claim to have a policy that anything outside of their distribution area does not happen. They believe that their strength as a community paper is that local news is very seldom covered by the larger publications or the television news (Milne, 2006). By adhering strongly to local news they are able to provide the community with information that they are not able to get from anywhere else; the KZN Community Newspaper, does not publish articles that position the community in a negative light. Stories are written with the intent to empower the community, get help for the people involved, or to educate people on their rights and how to access these.

According to the research conducted by the SPI, the owner-editor of the *Southern and Soweto Globe*, Shirley Govender indicated that she had the final say on the paper’s editorial content. Govender is adamant that individuals and organisations do not dictate what the paper can or cannot publish; *Limpopo Mirror* editor Wikus Lee maintained there is concerted effort to ensure that reporting is factual and unbiased and publications opt for giving airtime to multiple perspectives, particularly when an issue is contentious. The *Eastern Free State Issue* has an unwritten policy that the paper does not run stories that show one segment of the population providing handouts to another. Finally *Ikhwezi News* makes a point of presenting readers with news and feature articles that illustrate how people from disadvantaged backgrounds have been able to get ahead.

The paper includes a regular feature about a prominent person in the community and a business section that provides news about successful businesses operating in the surrounding areas (Newswatch, 2010). The research conducted by the SPI also revealed each community newspaper adapted a strategic editorial style to suit the community within which it existed. This was based on a community’s culture, lifestyles, interests, opinions, attitudes and needs.

Community newspapers are not only able to meet the local news needs of a specific community within which its circulation lies better than regional newspapers could but also offer important advantages to advertisers. Many of the community based retailers want to reach only a submarket of the regional market: consumers living within a certain radius of their store. These advertisers, according to Kaniss (1991:32), are not concerned with a newspaper's total circulation but rather with its penetration of that local market.

ADVERTISING IN NEWSPAPERS

There is substantial evidence that media content is affected- both directly and indirectly- by both advertisers and audiences (Shoemaker and Reese 1996: 190). This was not always so: advertising played only a minor role in the financing of newspapers and magazines prior to the late 1800s. The trend toward industrialisation of the United States in the nineteenth century brought with it a need to sell the new products being produced. Manufacturers approached newspapers and magazines about advertising their products, but nineteenth-century publishers often did not have a strong marketing orientation: publishers tolerated advertising but did not treat advertising 'with the reverence they do today. One nineteenth-century advertising agent had to importune a publisher to reveal the circulation of his magazine. Reluctantly furtively the publisher scribbled a number on a scrap of paper and handed it to the agent" (Peterson, 1981:19).

There has been a notable shift within the newspaper industry from being news led to becoming market led. In other words, newspapers no longer practice their allegiance solely to their audience who are to be their primary concern; instead, their allegiance has swayed somewhat towards advertisers who generate the bulk of their revenue. The dramatic increase in advertising attests to the growing readership of newspapers. In the early decades advertisements occupied about 27% of the newspaper, while by mid-century they commanded on average 42% and in several newspapers over 60% of newspaper space (Stabile, 2004). The current newspaper trend is typically based on a ratio of 60% advertising to 40% editorial.

Advertising is one of the most fundamental requirements of all businesses. Most successful businesses utilize newspaper advertising because of its ability to reach a large portion of a specific geographical population. Newspaper advertising reaches millions of people who may never find their business on the internet. According to Hagen and Wasko (2000:214), the

commercial media industry is primarily concerned to ensure profits by delivering audiences to advertisers and is interested in audience preferences only to the extent that this is profitable. Like all advertising venues, newspaper advertising has its pros and cons.

Newspapers are generally the cheapest way to reach a mass audience, and the timing is fast. An advertisement can appear just days after deciding to advertise. Advertisements can be changed frequently and convey a lot of information, and often the newspaper will assist with the design and production at little or no charge. They can also provide valuable information on the buying habits of their readers, which is helpful when evaluating future marketing options.

A study conducted by Whitehill-King *et al.* (1997), of 'Large-Agency Media Specialists' Opinions on Newspaper Advertising", examined advertising practitioners' opinions about newspapers as an advertising medium for national accounts. This study surveyed media specialists in the top 200 U. S. advertising agencies to find out what they thought of newspapers as a medium for national advertising. Agencies represented in the study ranged from less than \$75 million to more than \$300 million in 1993 domestic billing. Results showed newspapers coming in second to last, only ahead of billboards, when rated for effectiveness on factors used to select media for national accounts. Network television was judged the most effective medium for national advertising accounts by eighty seven percent of the respondents in the study.

According to Whitehill-King *et al.* (1997), amid many negative perceptions, newspapers were perceived to be more effective when compared to others as a secondary medium, for coordination of promotion with image advertising and as a vehicle for complex sales messages. Newspapers were judged low on their ability to meet cost, efficiently target a market or offer opportunities for creative execution. Also, media specialists were interested in having the newspaper industry look for ways to increase the medium's targeting abilities.

According to The Trust for Public Land (2002), an organisation whose interest lie in conserving the land, most major cities in the USA now have only one major newspaper, often with circulations in excess of 100,000. As a result, advertising is expensive and targeting is difficult. These newspapers can, however, reach a broad audience (including a community's decision-makers) with high impact, persuasive messages and images.

Advertisers increasingly want to communicate ideas in a more personal way. Each national newspaper has its own distinct identity and user profile. This enables advertisers to target specific groups very cost-effectively. National newspapers also offer a wide range of sections that reflect the passions of their readers: fitness, fashion, property, gardening, sport and other interests.

Brassil (2005) maintains that, mainstream newspapers are a popular advertising medium for most local businesses. They are the oldest forms of mass media, and they continue to be one of the largest, as measured by volume of advertising dollars. Industry giants, as well as the local convenience stores, use newspapers to advertise. Every community has its own newspaper. There are over 1,600 paid-circulation daily newspapers in America and several thousand additional local weekly papers as well. Every advertising medium has characteristics that give it natural advantages and limitations. There are a number of characteristics of paid-circulation newspapers that make them especially appealing to advertisers: Most paid-circulation papers, both daily and weekly, reach the majority of homes in their primary city or town. Almost every home in the United States receives a newspaper, either at the newsstand or by home delivery. Newspapers permit an advertiser to reach a large number of people within a specified geographical area. The printed advertising message has both permanence and desired obsolescence.

According to Brassil (2005) a reader can refer back to, or even clip and save, a particular ad, yet tomorrow's edition is new and fresh and as eagerly sought by the same reader. The newspaper offers a predictable frequency of publication: once, twice or seven times a week. Newspapers have immediacy. Short deadlines permit quick responses to changing market conditions. People expect to find advertising in their newspapers. Many people buy newspapers just to read the ads from the restaurants, movies and discount stores. Reading the newspaper has become a habit for most families. It has something for everyone. Certain segments of a market can be reached by placing ads in different sections of the paper such as: sports, comics, crosswords, news and classifieds. An advertiser has flexibility in terms of ad size and placement. Production changes can be made quickly; if necessary, a new insert can be added on short notice. Advertisements can be examined at leisure. Exposure is not limited, so readers can take their time reading the messages. It offers a great variety of ad sizes. A series of small advertisements can be run if an organization does not have a large budget.

Many options are available to advertisers. Newspaper supplements often feature certain subjects that readers pull out and save (Brassil, 2005).

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2006), the decline in circulation of the mainstream newspapers, referred to earlier, has not resulted in a decline in profits of the publishers. This is mainly due to the fact that South Africa's consumer boom – fuelled by interest rates at three-decade lows, as well as a series of tax cuts affecting mainly lower- and middle-income earners – has led to increased advertising and enabled newspapers to charge higher advertising rates. Total advertising spending on newspapers increased by 44% between 2002 and 2005, from R2.97 billion to R4.29 billion.

THE NEWSPAPER AUDIENCE

The characteristics of individual media outlets or content options to which audiences are exposed also affect the value of media audiences. At the most basic level the market may value different media audiences differently on the basis of its perceptions of the differences in the effectiveness of messages delivered by the different media (Boivin and Coderre, 2000:22). Just as advertiser demands affect the structure and behaviour of the media industry, advertiser demands affect the structure and behaviour of the audience measurement industry (Napoli, 2003:80).

According to Dominick (2005), since 2003, 56 million copies of morning and evening papers either purchased at the newsstand or delivered to the doorstep, found their way into American homes every weekday. Daily newspaper circulation, in absolute terms has decreased since 1970, as a glance at the Table 1 shows. The population however has been increasing (2005:115).

Year	All daily papers	All weekly papers	Daily circulation per 1000 adults
1960	58 882 000	21 328 000	475
1970	62 108 000	29 423 000	428
1980	62 201 840	40 970 000	360
1990	62 327 962	56 181 047	329
2000	55 772 847	70 949 633	287

Table 1: Daily and Weekly Newspaper Circulation.

(Dominick, J., R., 2005:114 *The Dynamics of Mass Communication*)

Watson (2003:53) explains that the audience is prone to doing things that the communicators do not wish them to do, or to be more precise, what the communicators wish audiences to do with their publications or their programs is not always what audiences actually do with them. The editorial team of a newspaper would clearly wish readers to follow the paper's agenda that is take note of the major stories of the day as signalled by the front page headlines. However, many readers may have their own agenda, their own priorities. They may turn straight to the sports page or the TV schedules. Watson (2003) thinks it is this 'untidiness' of people that helps substantiate claims that audiences are less vulnerable to media influence and more proactive consumers of media than some commentators believe. At this stage in understanding the audiences of media, it is important to note that they have their own lived experience to connect with the mediated experience derived from reading the papers, listening to the radio, watching TV or going to the cinema.

According to Picard (2001:169) the audience of free newspapers be it community or dailies, differs from that of paid newspapers. The potential audience of newspapers includes the literate population in a market but there are three important subgroups of that potential audience: Picard (2001:170) identifies the different groups of readers; the first group are the habitual readers. These are core readers who regularly read newspapers and wish a regular flow of information to understand the world around them and to make decisions. Second, there are occasional readers who want information and diversion but are less committed to devoting time or money to newspapers. Finally there are those who can read but out of choice, simply do not read. They have never acquired the habit and believe that newspapers are not interesting enough to spend time or money on.

Paid dailies have traditionally targeted habitual readers as their primary market and then sought to pick up more circulation among less committed or occasional readers. Free dailies are primarily targeting the occasional reader and some habitual and non- readers. To attract these readers, free daily newspapers create an editorial profile based on short stories designed for quick reading (Picard, 2001:170). As a result of New Media, the media audience has become more fragmented. In the midst of this emerges a genre of newspaper, not in the least bit threatened by the modern spoils of technology. The community newspaper that vies for a more specified audience leaves behind a remnant which is rigorously sought after by their regional counterparts.

AUDIENCE APPEAL

Not only do gatekeepers select information for its newsworthiness, or audience appeal, they present it in ways designed to meet audience needs. In a newspaper the stories must be readable, the photos arranged properly on the pages, the headlines composed to direct reader attention (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991:93). News media depend very much on their audience for economic reasons. They have to publish whatever makes people buy their newspapers, listen to their radio programs, or tune in to their TV shows and stay tuned through the commercial breaks. According to Fog (2006) newsworthiness is about catching the attention of the audience by presenting something spectacular, unusual, emotionally touching, and something that people can identify with. The media are keenly interested in the size and demographic characteristics of their audiences. Most of this information is gathered so advertisers will know where to place their messages so as to reach their target audiences.

Audience data helps gauge public acceptance after the fact but are not of direct help in guiding the countless choices that go into producing media messages (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:110). Given the nature of the product, 'what's new?' is inherently a more difficult question than 'what sells?'. Entertainment producers have a more direct link to the audience than their news counterparts. By watching the best-seller list, the top grossing movies, and the highest rated television programs, they know 'what sells'. Unlike news producers, movie studios can even try out different endings with preview audiences. An editor, for example cannot consult audience members before making selections. Audience research may give media workers ideas about general interests of viewers, listeners, and readers, but it does not come often enough to help much in the many other daily choices (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:110). Lacking this feedback, audience needs have long ago been incorporated into stable, enduring craft norms. As Schlesinger (1978: 115/6) states that production routines embody assumptions about audience members. The audience is part of a routine way of life. When it comes to thinking about the kind of news most relevant to the audience, newsmen exercise their news judgement rather than going out and seeking specific information about the composition, want or tastes of those who are being addressed.

This news judgement is the ability to evaluate stories based on agreed-on news values, which provide yardsticks of newsworthiness and constitute an audience oriented routine. That is, they predict what an audience will find appealing and important; and in practice, they direct gatekeepers to make consistent story selections.

REVENUE GENERATED THROUGH ADVERTISING

Shoemaker and Reese (1996:149) suggest the commercial mass media make their money by delivering audiences to advertisers, to the extent that they are consumed by desirable target audiences. According to Dominick (2005:111), newspapers derive their income from two sources: advertising, which provides about eighty percent of the total revenues, and circulation, which accounts for the other twenty percent. Advertising revenue is closely related to circulation since papers with a large circulation are able to charge more for ads that will reach a larger audience. Newspapers take in circulation and advertising revenues on a daily basis which makes them good cash flow businesses. Dominick (2005:111) explains that the majority of community newspapers enjoys a monopoly in their markets and represents a

cost-effective way for advertisers to reach a local community. Advertising revenue comes from four separate sources:

- local retail advertising
- classified ads;
- national advertising, and
- Prepaid inserts.

Local retail advertising is purchased by stores and service establishments. Department stores, supermarkets, auto dealers, and discount stores are the businesses that buy large amounts of space. Classified advertising, which is bought by local businesses and individuals, is generally run in a special section in the back of the newspaper. Buyers and sellers purchase classified ads for a wide range of products and services. National advertising originates with manufacturers of products that need to reach a national market on a mass basis. The majority of these ads are for automobiles, food, airlines and Web-based companies. Prepaid inserts or preprints are advertising supplements put together by national, regional, and local businesses that are inserted into the copies of the paper (Dominick 2005:112).

REVENUE GENERATED THROUGH CIRCULATION

The circulation revenue includes all the receipts from selling the paper to the consumer. The newspaper, however, does not receive the total price paid by a reader for a copy of the paper because of the many distribution systems that are employed to get the newspaper to the consumer (Dominick, 2005:112). The most common method is for the paper to sell copies to a distributor at wholesale prices, usually about 25% less than the retail price. Other methods include hiring full-time employees as carriers and billing subscribers in advance. According to Dominick, one closely studied factor important in determining circulation revenue is the effect of increased subscription and single-copy prices. In 1970, 89% of newspapers were priced at 10 US cents a copy. In 2003, none cost less than 25 cents. Most cost 50 US cents or more. The rising prices of newspapers have probably had some negative impact on circulation revenue. Several papers in the USA have noted a decrease in subscriptions among older, fixed-income residents following price increases (Dominick, 2005:112).

CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the literature which considered previous research done in the area of this thesis' focus. A preview of the growth of mainstream and community newspapers, in South Africa was given as it forms an integral part of this study. *The Daily News* was discussed at length as it is an important variable in this study. Focus was then given to specific differences between a community newspaper and a mainstream newspaper. Two important aspects of the newspaper were then discussed, i.e. revenue and the audience. In the next chapter, the conceptual framework is discussed which was applied to this research.

Chapter four

COMMUNICATION THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The research objectives and research questions in this study pertains to the preferences of the readership of both or either community newspapers and or mainstream newspapers which forms a large part of the uses and gratifications theory. This theory creates a conceptual framework around which this study is based. In this chapter the theory and its applications in relation to this research study is discussed.

DEFINITION OF USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Ming (1997) states that in addition to being historically applied to mass media study and thus applicable to considerations of newspapers and online media, uses and gratifications is a receiver based communication theory.

Evans (1990:151)) defines uses and gratifications as a framework in which audience gratification is primary and media consumers are seen as rational agents whose various uses of media offerings depend upon how these offerings serve various psychological functions.

According to Levy and Windahl (1984:51), uses and gratifications is a receiver oriented concept supposing an active audience. Katz (1959:2) discussion of the tradition states that in a uses and gratifications framework, the question is not what do the media do to people but rather, what do people do with the media?

Ming (1997) further states almost any consideration of media from a uses and gratifications standpoint explicitly asserts as its central maxim the idea of an active, rational, goal-seeking audience. Katz, *et al.* (1974:20) provides a classic seven point précis of the uses and gratifications tradition. They confer that the uses and gratifications studies concerns itself with the social and psychological origins of needs, which in turn generate expectations of the mass media which lead to differential patterns of media exposure which ultimately results in needs gratifications and other consequences.

According to North (2000), the first assumption of uses and gratifications theory is that a change in one part of the system, will of necessity, cause a change in another part of the

system. Much as VCRs changed television viewing, the internet is now changing the way we interact with all other forms of media. Two examples of this are ABC's Enhanced TV, and MTV's Direct Effect, both of which combine television with interactive web sites. The second assumption of this theory is that audiences use the media to fulfil expectations. Media use is a means to satisfy wants or interests. The third assumption of uses and gratifications theory is that audience members are aware of and can state their own motives for using mass communication.

APPLICATION OF THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The application of this theory to this research study rests on the second and third assumptions of this theory: The audience use the media to fulfil expectations and that audience members are aware of and can state their own motives for using mass communication systems. Community newspapers provide a range of uses to its wide yet specified audience members. This comes in the form of horoscopes, community news, advertisements, letters, classifieds, sports, motor news and inserts. Each of these components are evident not just in community newspapers but also in mainstream newspapers. The difference lies in the content of each of these components presented in the different genre of newspapers. The content determines the use for each audience member who decodes the information presented. To gain readers' attention, free newspapers must meet the needs of those people. They do so by serving an important audience need for basic information about what is happening within their community.

According to Watson (2003:54) the Gratifications approach works from the premise that there is a plurality of responses to media messages, that people are capable of making their own minds up, accepting some messages, rejecting other, using the media for a variety of reasons and using them differently at different times. A crucial factor, given special emphasis by Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz in *The Uses of Mass Communication*, (1974), is the influence upon members of the audience of the cultural and social origins from which their needs arise. Blumler, McQuail and Brown (1972) posed four major categories of need which the media serves to gratify:

- **Diversion:** We use the media to escape from routines, to get out from under problems, to ease worries or tensions. For example a newspaper not only offers hard news but also news of entertainment value that provides a form of escape for readers.

- **Personal Relationships:** We integrate our media experiences in the pattern of our actual relationships: it serves as a 'coin of exchange'. For example news reports of children abducted causes parents to exercise extra caution with their own children, especially when children are left in after care.
- **Personal identity:** Through news articles, we may seek reassurance about our own lifestyle, our own decisions, even our own values. For example, news reports are generally based on items of events that are out of the ordinary or that causes society to examine what is the acceptable norm.
- **Surveillance:** We use the media to gain information about our world, our community, to keep an eye on things and clarify what we think about it. For example, news reports or even advertisements that help members of society to scan the environment for relevant information that would impact on their lives.

Lopez and Enos (1973:115) state that cultural needs may be a structural variable that can influence media use. Research on ethnic media use for example has found that choice of media is influenced by demographic variables.

Robertson & Kassarian, (1991:129) claims that research has also examined how different motivations can lead to different outcomes of media use.

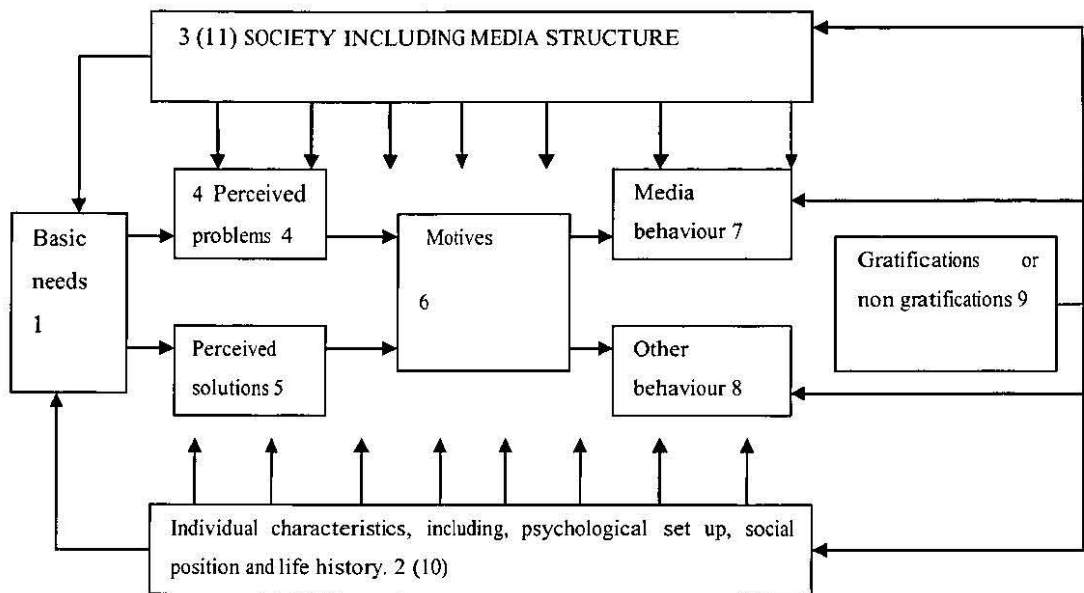


Figure 1: Rosengren's visualized paradigm for uses and gratifications research

(Blumler and Katz 1974 in Lull 1995:95)

Karl Erik Rosengren (1974:270) presented what he calls a visualised paradigm of media Uses and Gratifications. He tried to straighten up the untidiness of Uses and Gratifications theory by proposing a communications systems model, the type of which was very much in vogue at the time. The model figure 1 was designed to account for the process wherein an individual media audience member, situated in a complex society, uses the media. Rosengren (1974) argues that human biological and psychological needs should be the theoretical starting point for the complicated journey toward gratification. According to his model, needs generate perceived problems and suggest solutions which motivate contact with mass media and inspire other forms of social activity which then either successfully or unsuccessfully gratify the need. According to Lull, (1995: 94) as the model indicates, this is not a simple or straightforward process. Rosengren added an abundance of little arrows from boxes representing 'society' and 'individual characteristics'. This was done to show that people engage the media to gratify their needs under the apparent constant influence of strong but conceptually vague external and internal influences which he made no systematic effort to explain.

The Uses and Gratifications paradigm suggests that there may be several reasons why people would attend for example to advertisements. Most research on advertising use has focused solely on consumers' need for information prior to purchases and their desire to reduce post-purchase dissonance. However, as Bloch (1986:120) has pointed out, attention to advertisements can also occur outside of a purchase situation. He found that recreational and hedonistic motivations were more important than informational ones. Thus, people may attend to ads not just to gain information, but also for surveillance, for entertainment and for alleviating boredom.

Finally, one of the attractive things about Uses and Gratifications theory is that it conceives of the consumer as something more than the unwitting recipient of advertising, or even as an individual actively seeking information supplied by the marketer. Robertson and Kassarian (1991:130) describe it as seeing consumers having many different agendas, and as using advertising for many purposes other than those intended for by advertisers- perhaps as entertainment, or diversion or in order to derive any number of gratifications. The Uses and Gratifications Approach views the audience as active, which according to Rossi (2002) means that they actively seek out specific media and content to achieve certain results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs.

McQuail (1987:73) offers the following typology of common reasons for media use which is relevant to the respondents' reasons for reading their favourite sections of the newspaper:

INFORMATION

- finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world
- seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices
- satisfying curiosity and general interest
- learning; self-education
- gaining a sense of security through knowledge

PERSONAL IDENTITY

- finding reinforcement for personal values
- finding models of behaviour
- identifying with valued other (in the media)

- gaining insight into one's self

INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

- gaining insight into circumstances of others; social empathy
- identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging
- finding a basis for conversation and social interaction
- having a substitute for real-life companionship
- helping to carry out social roles
- enabling one to connect with family, friends and society

ENTERTAINMENT

- escaping, or being diverted, from problems
- relaxing
- getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment
- filling time
- emotional release
- sexual arousal

According to Willians (2003:190) audiences interpret media messages and their ability to do this is determined by a range of individual, social and cultural factors. Specific audiences exist for particular media products. What audiences think and what they do is more central to understanding the influence of the media.

For the sake of this research, the audiences in question are those who consume a particular product: the newspaper, more specifically, the community newspaper and/or the mainstream newspaper.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a communication theory around which this study is based was discussed. A definition of the uses and gratifications theory was provided in relation to the study. The applications of the uses and gratifications theory to this study were explained. In the next chapter the focus is on the conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter five

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the Uses and Gratification Theory. This chapter examines the role of community newspapers and mainstream newspapers in conjunction with the Shannon and Weaver Model of Communication. Further, the Uses and Gratification Theory is used to understand how interferences (or distortions) of messages are eliminated. The chapter associates the concepts and theories of communication that are connected to the positioning of community and mainstream newspapers within the media industry. The theories will provide a background or model of how communication occurs with regards to community and mainstream newspapers.

THE TRANSMISSION MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

The Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's Mathematical Theory of Communication is an important and influential catalyst in the development of other models and theories of communication (Severin and Tankard,1992). This theory is also known as the transmission model of communication. Although the model was based on electrical principles, it aptly identified the aspect of interference in message transmission.

This model involved the breaking down of an information system into subsystems and communication is composed of six main elements. These are:

- Encoder
- Channel
- Message
- Decoder
- Receiver

Severin and Tankard (1992) note that the information source produces the message to be communicated out of a set of possible messages. The messages may consist of the spoken or written words, pictures and music. The transmitter converts the message to a signal suitable

for the channel to be used as illustrated in figure 2. The channel is the medium that transmits the signal from the transmitter to be receiver. The receiver will then perform the inverse operation of the transmitter by reconstructing the message from the signal .The destination is the person or thing for which the message is intended. If there is correspondence between the two meanings the result is communication.

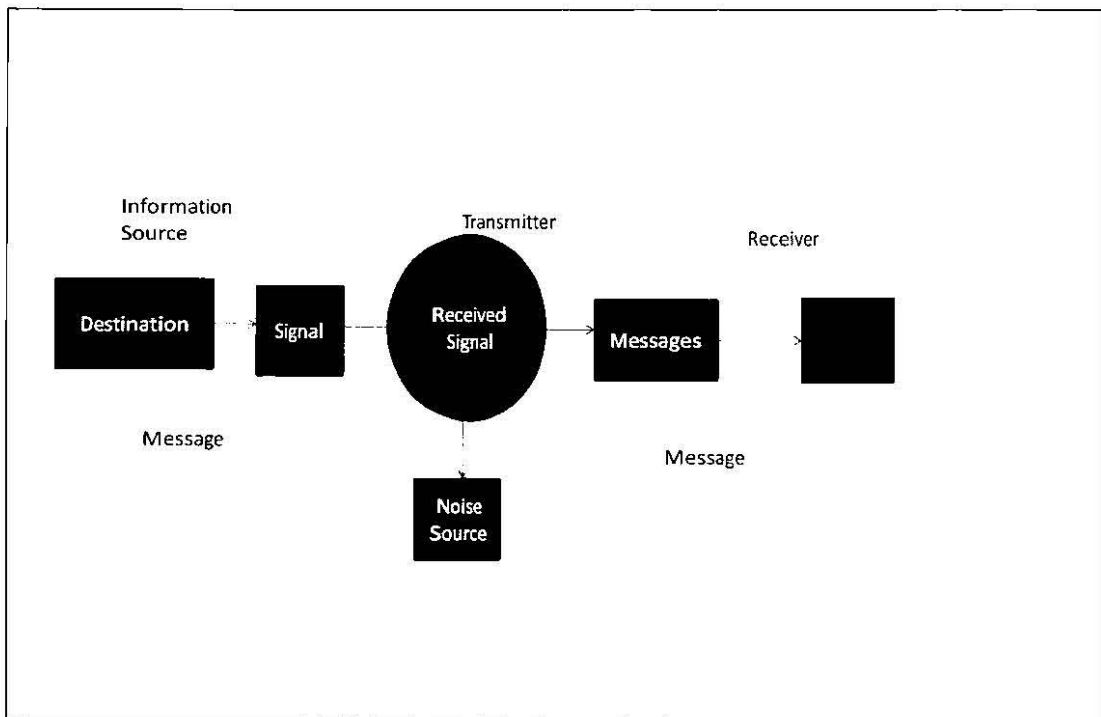


Figure 2: The Schematic Diagram of Shannon and Weaver Communication System

Adapted from The Mathematical Theory of Communication (Shannon and Weaver, 1949, The Schematic Diagram of Shannon and Weaver, Urbana, New York, University of Illinois Press)

USING THE SHANNON AND WEAVER COMMUNICATION MODEL TO IDENTIFY DISTORTION

Figure 2 explores possibilities of distortion (interference) of news in mainstream newspapers as well as in community newspapers. At this point it would be wise to reiterate that mainstream newspapers have a wider audience which may be aimed at an entire province or at the entire country.

When applying the Shannon and Weaver model of communication to understand the area of distortion of news (and possibility events), the primary node of distortion would occur when news is encoded at a specific terminal and transmitted to a variety of cultural groups. An ideal example of such diversity is the South African 'rainbow nation'. Mainstream newspapers would most probably fail in ensuring that the news is decoded similarly. It should be noted that even mainstream newspapers are somewhat gaining the tendency to lean towards subtle community type news; for example the *Daily News* has a wider White readership, whereas the *Sowetan* has primarily a Black readership.

Application of the Uses and Gratification Theory assists in guiding the understanding of 'interference reduction'. As explained in the previous chapter, people have a tendency to gravitate towards news which has direct relevance to their existence. This means that a community would appreciate (and use) news which has a direct bearing to their lives. They would obtain gratification by gaining knowledge which empowers them at a local level. The community newspapers fill this need at a greater level than the mainstream newspapers.

The Shannon & Weaver Communication model	Mainstream Newspapers	Uses & Gratification theory	Community Newspapers	Uses & Gratification theory
Source	Mainstream Newspapers	Used to supply news for a divergent population	Community Newspapers	Used to supply news and events about a specific community
Encoder	The encoder is the editorial team who collects news from a broad or diverse population group	The news is encoded (compiled) to address the needs of a diverse population.	The encoder is the editorial team who collects news from a specific or convergent population group	The news is encoded (compiled) to address the needs of a specific population group.
Channel	The channel is the newspaper which is produced in extremely large quantities and distributed nationally	Used by readers who normally want to know what is happening in and around the country	The channel is the newspaper which is produced on a smaller scale and distributed locally	Used by readers who normally want to know what is happening within their community
Message	The message is diverse	The news is diverse	The message is primarily	The news generally relevant

			specific	to the specific community. Interference of interpretation is minimised.
Decoder	Interference or distortion normally occurs at this point. General news is perceived differently by various cultural groups and may be decoded differently by various groups and individuals	News is rarely personal	Interference or distortion normally occurs at this point. News and events have relevance to a specific community and interference is minimised when decoded by the reader.	News is normally personal and there is immediate gratification
Receiver	The receivers are not necessarily readership of the same cultural orientation.	The reader uses the news to gain knowledge about events and happenings at a national level	The receivers are normally readership of the same cultural orientation.	The reader uses the news to gain knowledge about events and happenings at a local level

Table 2: Understanding the Uses and Gratification of News and Events From the Shannon and Weaver Perspective

SUMMARY

The association of the components of the Shannon and Weaver model and the Uses and Gratifications theory is important to this study as it identifies key areas within the realm of communication that have encouraged the preference of readers' and advertisers of both genres of newspapers:

The Source: The news disseminated through mainstream newspapers has a far more general significance as it targets a diverse audience. The differences with this diverse audience rest predominantly with their cultural beliefs and language and geographical locale. As a result of this diversity, the source will be forced to address its primary audience who inadvertently are those that can afford to purchase the newspaper. The community newspapers on the other hand provide news that directly impacts a particular community with specific needs. Whilst the racial quota of communities are rapidly changing due to democracy, the basis of community newspapers rests on the majority of community members from a particular race group. The news disseminated here is of a far more intimate or community specific nature when compared to the broad yet vague news that is sourced through the mainstream newspapers. The usage of the news whether through community or mainstream newspapers serve the audience's varied needs.

The Encoder: Mainstream newspapers try to feed the need of their audiences by ensuring a constant and fresh supply of news. This process involves purchasing news from international press associations and employing a number of highly paid journalists. Community newspapers have a far more different approach to collecting news as their journalists are mainly local based. The purpose of this is to ensure that news from the immediate surroundings of the audience is secured to feed the need of their audience.

The Channel: The stark contrast between mainstream newspapers and community newspapers lies in their circulation numbers. Community newspapers have a print circulation that is a fraction of the circulation of the mainstream newspapers. Whilst this may seem intimidating in respect of the number of newspapers printed, there are a number of community newspapers that exist within a specific geographical locale.

The Message: The information that forms the makeup of a particular newspaper is varied. Some newspapers carry sections other than news reports, such as: horoscopes, sports, entertainment, health and beauty and many others. It's this core feature – the message which

generates the uses and gratification the audience derives that creates the interest for the audience. It is also at this point that the interference that Shannon and Weaver mentions in their model that comes to the fore. However the interference is not technical but lies within the content of the message. There is lesser interference with community newspapers as the message has far more relevance to its readers than the news disseminated through mainstream newspapers. This too is based on the needs of the audience.

The Decoder: The audience of both community and mainstream newspapers decode or interpret the news on the basis of culture, language, education and other factors. Once again, the decoder will decode news that will satisfy or appease a certain need that needs to be gratified. Interference occurs at a greater rate in the decoding process for the reasons listed above. Information or news that is not relevant will be ignored, irrespective of its importance to the community or region.

The Receivers: The diversity of the audience especially with mainstream newspapers or the cultural orientation of community newspapers is the deciding factor on the type of content that is disseminated to its audience. It is at this point the receivers utilize the information to gratify a variety of needs.

CONCLUSION

These theories are intrinsically entwined through the communication process. Each component within the communication process has a definitive impact on: the way in which the information or news is gathered; the type of information and news that will be disseminated through the different channels; the process of decoding the news and information and finally the audience who act as receivers and how the news and information is utilised to satisfy needs that must be gratified. The Uses and Gratifications theory has provided this study with the reasoning behind which the audience decides on their preference of newspapers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the methodology undertaken to fulfil the objectives of the research. This process is initiated by outlining the research objectives, which progress towards the research design. The researcher has undertaken to implement both quantitative and qualitative research as they complement each other in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the collection of the primary data and the sampling of the respondents followed by the selection of the newspapers and advertisers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research method selected for this study follows from the research objectives. For that reason, the objectives are listed hereunder.

- To determine the perceptions of selected advertisers of The Daily News and community newspapers.
- To examine the perceptions of selected readers of The Daily News and community newspapers
- To determine the impact that the proliferation of community newspapers has had on The Daily News.

RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005:144), the research design is the strategy used to tackle the research problem of the study. This research is based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods, to answer the research questions and satisfy the objectives of the study. In varying situations, applied research as with other roles of research, can assume one of two functional roles. Such research can either be exploratory, or it can be predictive. In an exploratory study, an investigator may try to draw out from a small group of people their perceptions of a product or even a product category. In this study, one of the researcher's aims is to determine reader's perceptions of community newspapers and *The Daily News* to deem the success of each.

THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE

DuPlooy (2002:100) states that sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a larger population. He further states that, the term “population” not only refers to people, but can also be defined as any group or aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, social artefacts/objects, or social interaction and events.

In order to collect accurate data about all the members of a population, we could question, analyse or investigate every member. DuPlooy calls this a *census*. However due to constraints such as time, costs and geographical distances, a census becomes impractical. As this research utilises both qualitative and quantitative research, a sample of the population must be drawn in such a way that it is representative of that particular population.

SAMPLING METHODS

According to Welman, *et al.* (2005:57), before researchers draw a sample of the population for analysis, they should obtain clarity about the population, or units of analysis to which their research hypotheses apply. This involves a sampling frame. Welman, *et al.* provides a definition of a sampling frame which is a complete list in which each unit of analysis is mentioned only once.

In this instance the researcher was able to identify the population size based on the hypotheses of the research. Table 3 provides a guideline for population sizes in respect of the number of respondents.

Rampersad (2007:32) states that a sampling frame is required in order to select sample units. Data can be obtained from membership lists, census lists, telephone, and maps from various organizations. Rampersad (2007) further states that the sampling frame comprises the complete list of all the units from which the sample is drawn.

Welman, *et al.* (2005:56) state that two sampling methods can be distinguished: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. They further state that in the case of probability sampling, that the probability can be determined, that any element or member of the population will be included in the sample. However, in non-probability sampling the probability cannot be specified. In order to satisfy the requirements for this research study, a brief explanation of the two types of sampling methods are provided. This explanation will form the basis on which sampling method will be selected.

PROBABILITY SAMPLING

According to Bertrand and Hughes (2005:66-67) probability sampling methods produce a sample which is statistically representative of a large population, allowing generalisation from the sample to the population, on the assumption that repeated sampling would produce similar results, so that sampling error can be measured.

According to Stacks and Hocking (1992:176-188), probability sampling meets the following requirements:

- every unit in the population has an equal and therefore probable (p) chance of being selected as part of the sample ,
- ensuring that the sample will have the same parameters as the population;
- the researcher does not predict or control the random choice of units of analysis;
- a sampling frame can be compiled and every possible combination of units can be drawn from the sampling frame,
- Thereby eliminating bias that occurs when excluding certain units.

NON- PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Bertrand and Hughes (2005:67) state that non-probability sampling methods produce a sample which bears no known relationship to any population. Non-probability samples can be used within a positivist or post-positivist framework, for exploratory research before hypotheses are developed for more rigorous testing or within non-positivist research where the results are not intended to be generalised to a whole population.

The definitions offered above provide adequate clarity between probability and non probability sampling. Based on the objectives of this research and the fact that the results of this research can be generalised to the greater population, the researcher will be using probability sampling for this research study. Every unit of population within the KwaZulu Natal area will have an equal and probable chance of being selected as part of the sample. The researcher will not have control over the random choice of the units of sampling. This will also allow the researcher to include every possible unit drawn from the sampling frame.

THE SAMPLE SIZE

As this study was aimed at generalisability of the findings, the sample drawn had to be representative of the population of KwaZulu-Natal. According to Babbie (1983:415-416) convention has been established we should aim for at least a 95% confidence level for any response. Table 3 is a depiction of how the sample size was chosen.

POPULATION SIZE	SAMPLE SIZE
INFINITY	384
500 000	384
100 000	383
50 000	381
10 000	370
5 000	357
3 000	341
2 000	322
1 000	278

Table 3: Simple random sample size at 95 percent confidence level.

(DuPlooy 2001:104)

The sample size for this study in respect of audience survey was 384 respondents. Individuals were represented by both genders and these represented all age groups. These individuals were readers of both community newspapers and *The Daily News* and they lived within the area of circulation of a community and *The Daily News*. In this respect three areas were pre-selected which has a circulation of at least two community newspapers as well as *The Daily News*. They were, Chatsworth, Phoenix and Umhlanga. Phoenix is regarded as a relatively low income based area with a relatively large Indian population. Chatsworth is

regarded as a low to middle income area with a large population of Indians. Umhlanga on the other hand is a high income area with a mixed population. These areas represented different demographics that would inadvertently impact on the different advertisers targeting different audiences.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

According to Dillon *et al.* (1993:308), validity is concerned with the soundness and effectiveness of the measuring instrument. Validity questions the elements that test measures, the accuracy of that measurement and finally, whether the test measures what it is supposed to measure. To establish the validity of a study, a factor analysis is done. In this study, the researcher applied content and construct validity. Construct validity refers to the degree to which a measure confirms a network of related hypotheses generated from theory based on the concepts or constructs. According to Zikmund (2000:304), construct validity implies that the empirical evidence generated from the measuring instrument is consistent with the theoretical concepts. It is therefore established during the statistical analysis of the data. Face or content validity is a subjective criterion which reflects the extent to which items are meaningful and appear to represent the construct being measured (Zikmund, 2000:291). In this study the researcher purports to evaluate the perceptions of the readers of both newspapers as well as the perceptions of advertisers of both genres of newspapers.

The measuring instrument that the researcher utilises in this research is a questionnaire. The validity of this questionnaire can be tested by a brief analysis of the questions that form the questionnaire. Each question is in relation to the objective of the research and uses an exhaustive technique in addressing each aspect of the objectives.

Reliability is defined as the degree to which a measuring instrument is free from error and therefore yields consistent results (Zikmund, 2000:300). According to Colosi (1997) there are two ways that reliability is usually estimated: test/retest and internal consistency. For this study internal consistency was used as it estimates reliability by grouping questions in a questionnaire that measure the same concept. The questions in the questionnaire were formulated to collect reliable information about the perceptions the readers held towards the newspapers. Various questions were framed to address a single concept.

DATA COLLECTION

The methods used for collecting the primary data will be discussed. The main research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. The reasons for using this method are listed below:

- Questionnaires could be handed out or sent electronically.
- This is a cost effective way of collecting data.
- The time involved in this procedure was far lesser compared to personal interviews.
- The survey method of collecting data was suited to the quantitative research method implemented.
- This research engages the usage of the questionnaire as it is a reliable measuring instrument in gauging the perceptions of the readers and advertisers alike. The respondents can be reached electronically, however in this instance there was no need for electronic dissemination of the questionnaires as the respondents were readily available. The questionnaires also provided the researcher with a cost effective way of collecting primary data and gave the researcher the opportunity to maximise on the usage of time. Finally this research involved the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods which the questionnaire was able to adequately support.

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was made up of open ended and closed-ended questions that addressed the audience of both genres of newspapers. The content for the closed ended questions were tabulated to determine the frequency of each characteristic found. Thus the researcher was able to quantify the content and was able to consider the same content as being qualitative (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:143). The open-ended questions encouraged the respondents to express attitudes and opinions in their own words. The researcher considered the order in which the questions were arranged, which impacted on the participant's responses and the findings of the survey.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was developed with the assistance of the study leader during one of the study sessions. Firstly, the topic was formulated and the type of questions to be compiled.

Thereafter ranges of questions that focused on aspects relative to readers preferences between mainstream and community newspapers were developed.

THE TITLE

The title aimed to determine which of the two genres of newspapers are preferential amongst the readership in KwaZulu-Natal. This study will focus on the impact of community newspapers on mainstream newspapers.

THE INSTRUCTION AND PERMISSION SECTION

The researcher assured the respondents in Section A and B that their personal data would remain private and confidential. The information provided would be used as proof that permission was granted by them to use their responses to contribute towards the research being conducted.

SECTION A -QUESTIONS 1 TO 5

The questions formulated in this part of the questionnaire represented the demographic information, the researcher deemed necessary to compile this study. Each of these categories played an important role in determining the type of readership for the different genres of newspapers that was utilised in this study.

SECTION B

In the following section, questions 1-17 were closed ended questions which were concerned with the community newspapers and readers preferences that respondents were requested to answer. Of these questions 4-9 compared the community newspaper with the mainstream newspaper. Question 18-39 represented closed ended questions which were concerned with mainstream newspapers and readers preferences that respondents were requested to answer. Of these, questions 21-26 compared the mainstream newspaper against the community newspaper.

PRE-TESTING

According to Babbie (2010:267), no matter how carefully researchers design a data collection instrument such as a questionnaire, there is always the possibility of error. He further states that the surest protection against such errors is to pre test the questionnaire in full or in part.

The questionnaire was pretested by four colleagues to ascertain its accuracy and relevance.

INTERVIEWS

Two in-depth interviews were carried out in this research. One was between the researcher and influential media personnel of *The Daily News*. This interview was partially structured, allowing the researcher to deviate and ask follow up questions based on the participant's response.

The second in depth interview was carried out between the researcher and selected companies that advertised in either or both of the newspapers. These interviews were structured which standardised the procedure that was carried out with selected advertisers of both genres of newspapers. The structured questions made analysing the responses easier. Less time was also used for the administration of this survey.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This is an important step in the research process because the analysis and interpretation of this data will contribute significantly towards the basis of the findings and conclusions. To facilitate the capturing of the responses, the questionnaire required the respondent to select one of three alternatives for each of the closed ended questions asked by either placing a tick or a cross in the appropriate spaces. This therefore required the utilisation of specialised statistical software such as Moonstat. Moonstat provided the researcher with the appropriate yet effective software with which to capture the completed questionnaires.

SETTING UP THE ENCODING PARAMETERS IN MOONSTAT

Once the program was launched, it opened to a default page. The researcher then selected "create a data set" to create a new data set wherein the responses could be captured.

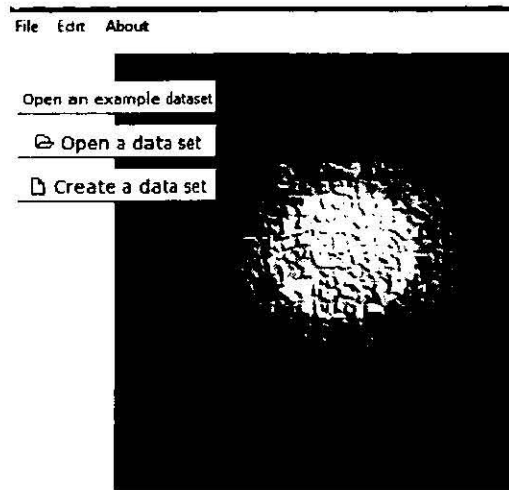


Figure 3: Default page view

The researcher clicked on "create a data set" and a window opened within the application which allowed the researcher to create a file name for the data as illustrated in Figure 3.

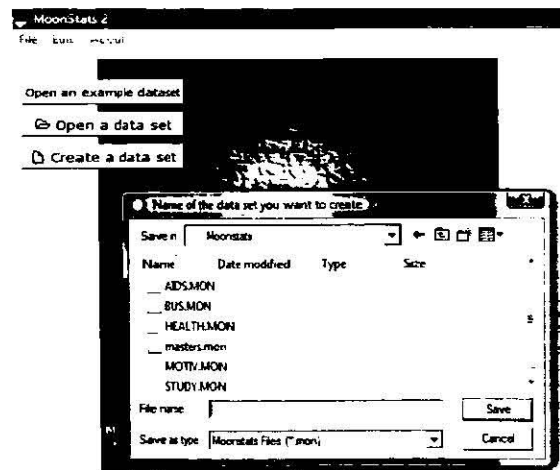


Figure 4: Creating a file for data

Once the file was created, a new window opened which is illustrated in figure 4. This allowed the researcher to capture the closed ended questions by allocating a value to possible alternatives the respondents could choose.

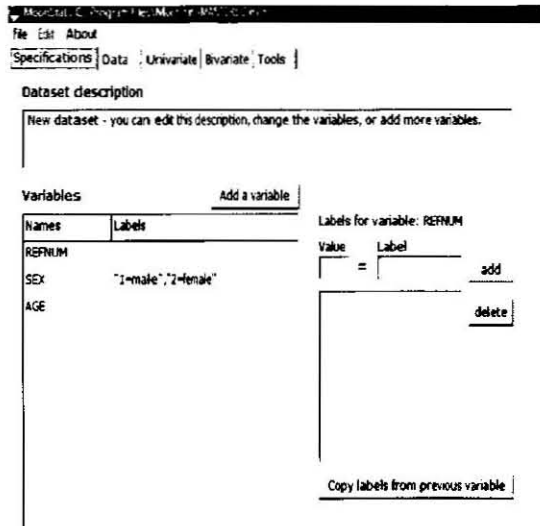


Figure 5: Dataset description

Under the “Names” column, the “sex” is a given variable as an example which the researcher could follow. The “Labels” referred to what the value would refer to. For example in Figure 5, “1”(represented the value) = “male” (represented the label) and “2”=“female”.

Variables		Add a variable
Names	Labels	
REFNUM		
SEX	"1=male", "2=female"	
AGE		

Labels for variable: AGE	
Value	Label
1	20-30

Figure 6: Creating a value/label

The researcher then added a value for "Age" as seen in figure 6 and assigned a label to it by clicking on the "add" button.

To add a new variable, the researcher clicked on "Add a variable" and immediately "var 4" appeared in the "names" column as seen in figure 7. The researcher then deleted this by backspacing and typed in the name of that variable as seen in figure 8.

/variables		Add a variable
Names	Labels	Click here to add a v
REFNUM		Value
SEX	"1=male", "2=female"	
AGE	"1=20-30"	
var4		

Figure 7: Adding a new variable (a)

Variables		Add a variable
Names	Labels	
REFNUM		
SEX	"1=male", "2=female"	
AGE	"1=20-30"	
EMPLOYED		

Labels for variable: var4	
Value	Label

Figure 8: Adding a new variable (b)

To complete this process, the researcher then assigned value 1 and provided a label “ yes” then clicked on “add”. Figure 9 shows this process being completed.

Variables		Add a variable
Names	Labels	
REFNUM		
SEX	"1=male", "2=female"	
AGE	"1=20-30"	
EMPLOYED	"1=YES", "2=NO"	

Labels for variable: var4	
Value	Label
3	STUDENT
1=YES	
2=NO	

Figure 9: Assigning a value to each label

This process was followed for each of the questions from the questionnaire which was added in the “Names” column and values and labels were then created.

Figure 10 is a sample screen shot of what the completed process looked like.

Variables		Add a variable
Names	Labels	
REFNUM		<input type="checkbox"/>
SEX	"1=Male", "2=Female"	
AGE	"1=20-30", "2=31-40", "3=41-50", "4"	
EMPLOYED	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=STUDENT"	
RACEGROUP	"1=Indian", "2=White", "3=Black", "4"	
READCOMNP	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
ENJOYREADC	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNAREFREE	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERNE	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERAD	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERS	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERMO	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERS	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	
CNBETTERCL	"1=YES", "2=NO", "3=NOT SURE"	

Labels for v:

Value =

Copy label

Figure 10: Sample of completed layout

ENTERING THE DATA FROM EACH QUESTIONNAIRE IN MOONSTAT

In order to capture the responses of the respondents the researcher then clicked on the "Data" tab at the top right hand corner of the application. The page opened up allowing the different values to be assigned according to the responses received.

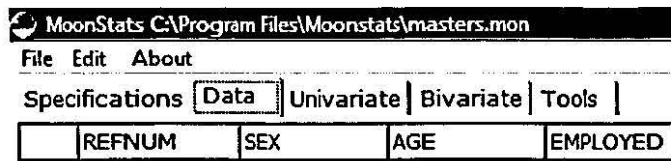


Figure 11: Opening the data view

The figure below (figure 12) illustrates how each question was assigned a value. This figure is a depiction of just ten respondents with six variables.

	REFNUM	SEX	AGE	EMPLOYED	RACEGROUP	READCOMM
1	1	1	2	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	1	1	1
3	3	2	1	1	1	1
4	4	2	3	2	1	1
5	5	1	1	2	1	1
6	6	1	3	1	1	1
7	7	1	4	2	1	1
8	8	2	1	1	1	1
9	9	2	1	1	1	1
10	10	2	1	1	1	1

Figure 12: Completed data view

In order to produce a pie chart, graph or even a table for each of the variable, the researcher then clicked on “Univariate” tab key which is situated next to the “Data” key.

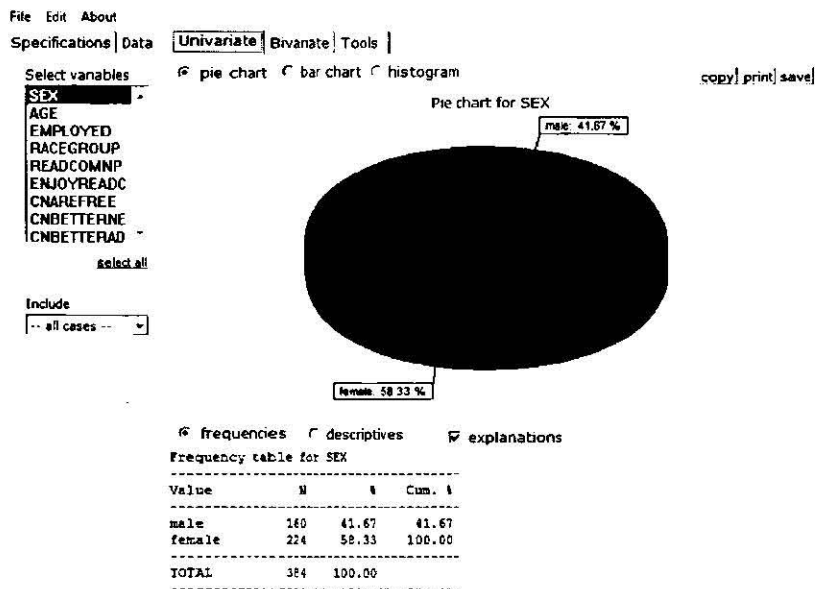


Figure 13: Selection of univariate option

This page of the application provided the option of a “pie chart”, a “bar chart” or a “histogram”. The pie chart depicted above for “sex” was automatically done as this was the first variable. On the top right hand corner of the pie chart is the options “copy”, “print” and “save”. This provided the researcher with the option of copying this pie chart into the data

analysis. However, the researcher opted for the table below the pie chart which provided me with a table that could be copied into my analysis for the research.

VERIFYING THE ACCURACY OF THE CODING PROCESS

The accuracy of the encoding process was verified by double-checking each code that had been entered after the questionnaire was encoded onto the database.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines the research methodology implemented in this research. It also explains the procedure that was followed when conducting the survey with the respondents and the advertisers as well as a detailed explanation of the statistical program used to capture the data. The next chapter examines the analysis and findings of the study.

Chapter seven

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the analysis and the findings of this study. To understand the results obtained from the research, the findings will be organized according to the research questions of this study whereby the researcher will try to answer each of the questions formulated at the outset of this research study. The following are the research questions which this study attempts to answer:

- What are the perceptions of selected advertisers towards advertising in community newspapers and *The Daily News*?
- What are the perceptions of the audience in respect of *The Daily News* and the community newspapers?
- What impact has the proliferation of community newspapers had on *The Daily News*?

RESPONDENTS RESPONSE

The researcher will now provide the findings according to the responses received for each of the questions asked. These findings will be presented in the form of pie charts, graphs and tables.

GENDER

The gender of the respondents is as follows: 41.67% (160) were male and 58.33% (224) represented the female gender.

Frequency table for Sex			
Value	N	%	Cum. %
1	160	41.67	41.67
2	224	58.33	100.00

TOTAL	384	100.00	

Table 4: The gender of the respondents

Table 4 represents a frequency table for Gender or Sex of the respondents. A frequency tabulation is a listing of the values or scores and how frequently they occur. The values are in the "Value" column and the number of cases obtaining each value in the "N" column. The "% column shows the number of cases as a percentage. For example, in the table above, the value "Female" was obtained by 224 cases, which is 58.33% of the respondents.

AGE

Frequency table for AGE			
Value	N	%	Cum. %
20-30	152	39.58	39.58
31-40	120	31.25	70.83
41-50	96	25.00	95.83
51-60	16	4.17	100.00
TOTAL	384	100.00	

Table 5: Age of the respondents

Table 5 provides a table representing the age distribution of the respondents who participated in this survey. Approximately 39.58% of the respondents that participated in this survey can be classified as “young adults”. Whilst 31.25% of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40, slightly lesser than these were the 41-50 year olds that represented 25% of the respondents. A very small percentage (4.17%) of respondents was in the 51-60 year range. Further into this research, the relevance of the various age groups will be discussed to reveal the behavioural patterns and reading trends amongst these respondents.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

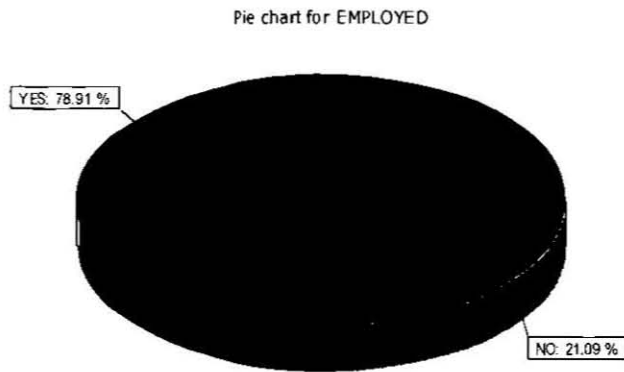


Figure 14: Employment Status of Respondents

The pie chart in figure 14 is a depiction of the employment status of the respondents. Considering the bulk of the respondents were aged between 20-40 years old (272), is nearly relative to the employment status of the respondents. At least 78.91 % which represented 303 respondents were employed at the time of the survey being carried out whilst 21.09 % (81) respondents were unemployed.

RACE GROUP

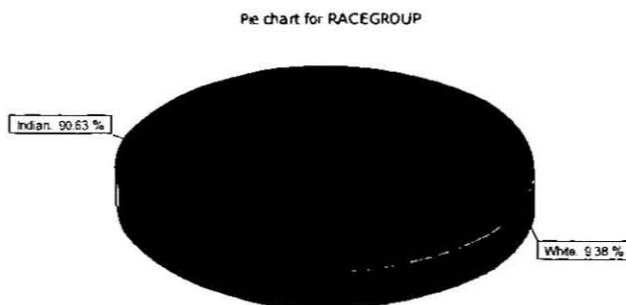


Figure 15: Race Groups

Figure 15 outlines the different race groups that participated in this research. Considering the areas used to gather the data, it is expected that the bulk (90.63%) of the respondents would be Indian as shown in Figure 15. The minority (9.38) of Whites represented here would have emerged from surrounding areas where the research was undertaken. It must be said that it was not intentional to address respondents from a particular race group; this was purely a geographical occurrence.

COMMUNITY AND MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

The basis of this research was to gauge readers' preferences between the two genres of newspapers. A number of different questions were posed to the respondents in this regard. These questions addressed both community newspapers and mainstream newspapers. To provide a comparative analysis, the responses for both community and mainstream newspapers will be presented together.

READERS OF COMMUNITY AND MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

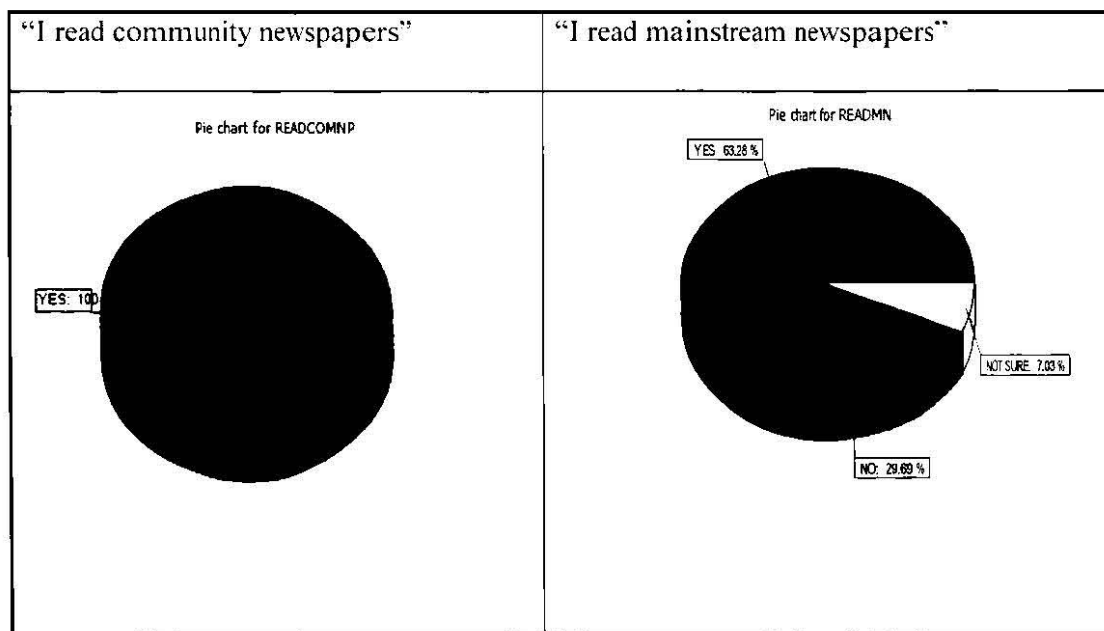


Figure 16: Readers of community and mainstream newspapers

According to Grobler (2006), community newspapers are the only print advertising sector to show dramatic year on year growth over the past five years.

Figure 16 100% of the respondents answered “yes” to this statement “I read community newspapers “. This is a strong indication of the proliferation of community newspapers within the KwaZulu Natal region. A significantly lesser number of respondents replied “yes” to mainstream newspapers compared to community newspapers. Figure 16 shows 63.28% (243) respondents read mainstream newspapers whilst 29.69% (114) of the respondents do not read mainstream newspapers. One of the reasons for this disparity between the two newspapers could be that community newspapers are free compared to mainstream newspapers which carries a distribution cost which is recoverable from the reader.

READERS' PREFERENCES

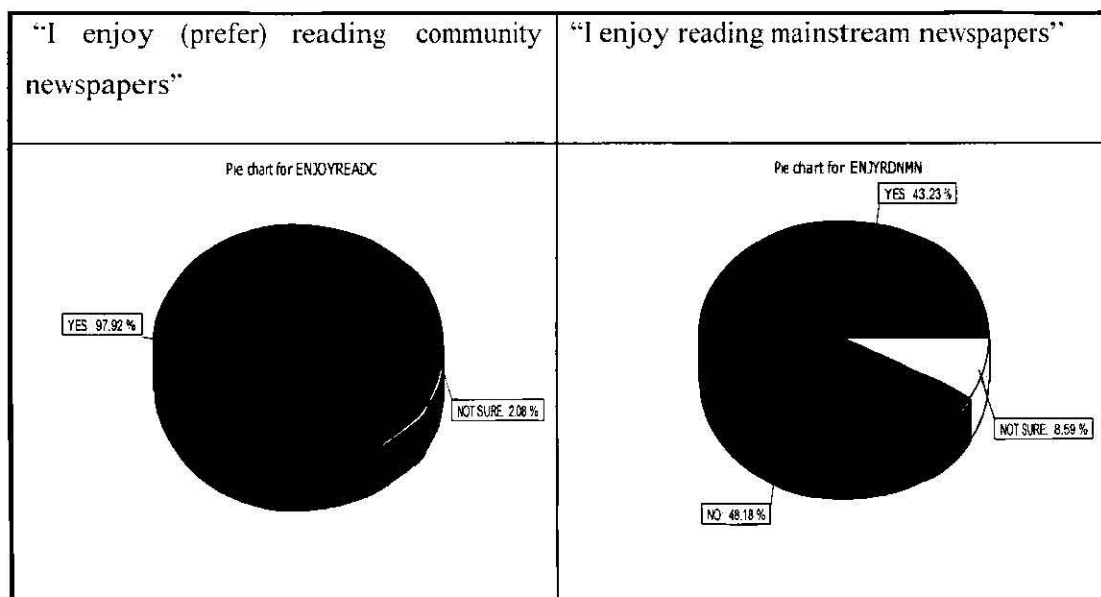


Figure 17(a): Readers that enjoy reading community newspapers

Figure 17(b): Readers that enjoy reading mainstream newspapers

According to Figure 17, 376 respondents enjoy reading community newspapers which represents 97.92% of the respondents. According to the uses and gratifications theory, there are many reasons why people enjoy reading a newspaper bearing in mind that the content of a newspaper is not just made up of news and advertisements. A paltry 2.08 % (8) respondents were “not sure” if they enjoyed reading community newspapers. An interesting fact that emerges from this question is that none of the respondents replied “no”. Figure 16 shows

43.23% of the respondents enjoyed reading mainstream newspaper whilst a staggering 48.18% (185) respondents who did not enjoy reading mainstream newspapers. A small percentage (8.59%) of respondents was “not sure” about whether they enjoyed reading mainstream newspapers or not.

AFFORDABILITY

Frequency table for Community Newspapers are free			
Value	N	%	Cum. %
YES	384	100.00	100.00
TOTAL	384	100.00	

Table 6: Community newspapers are free

The above is a validation that the distribution costs for community newspapers is not recovered by the households that receive them. Table 6 shows that 100% of these respondents that participated in this survey receive their community newspaper free of charge.

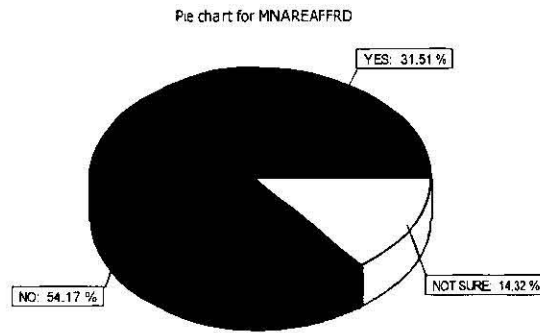


Figure 18: Mainstream newspapers are affordable

Figure 18 shows that 54.17% (208) respondents did not think that mainstream newspapers were affordable whilst 31.51% (121) respondents answered “yes” to this statement. A few respondents (14.32%) were not sure if the mainstream newspapers were affordable or not.

On the issue of affordability, questions 16 asked respondents if they would purchase the community newspaper if they had to pay for it. An emphatic 180 (46.88%) respondents answered “no” whilst 32.81% (126) respondents who answered “yes”. A large proportion of respondents 20.31% (78) answered “not sure” to this question.

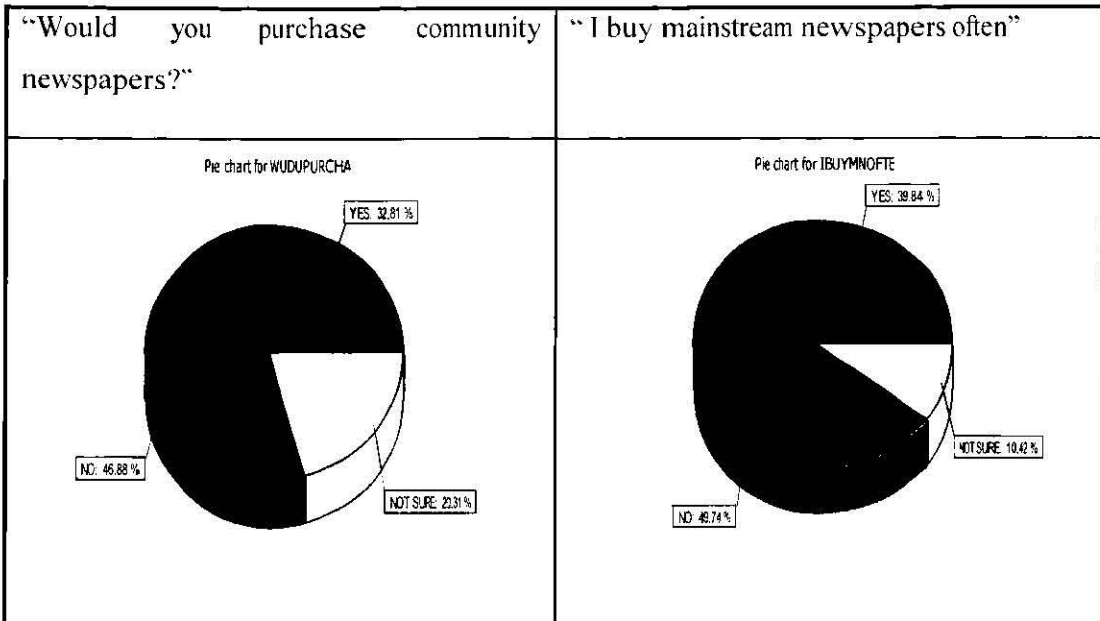


Figure 19: Affordability of the newspaper

Question 37 investigated the frequency at which respondents purchased the mainstream newspaper. The result of this question is illustrated in Figure 19 where 39.84% of the respondents maintained that they purchased the mainstream newspaper often whilst 49.74% of the respondents answered “no” to this question and 10.42% of the respondents answered “not sure”.

NEWS

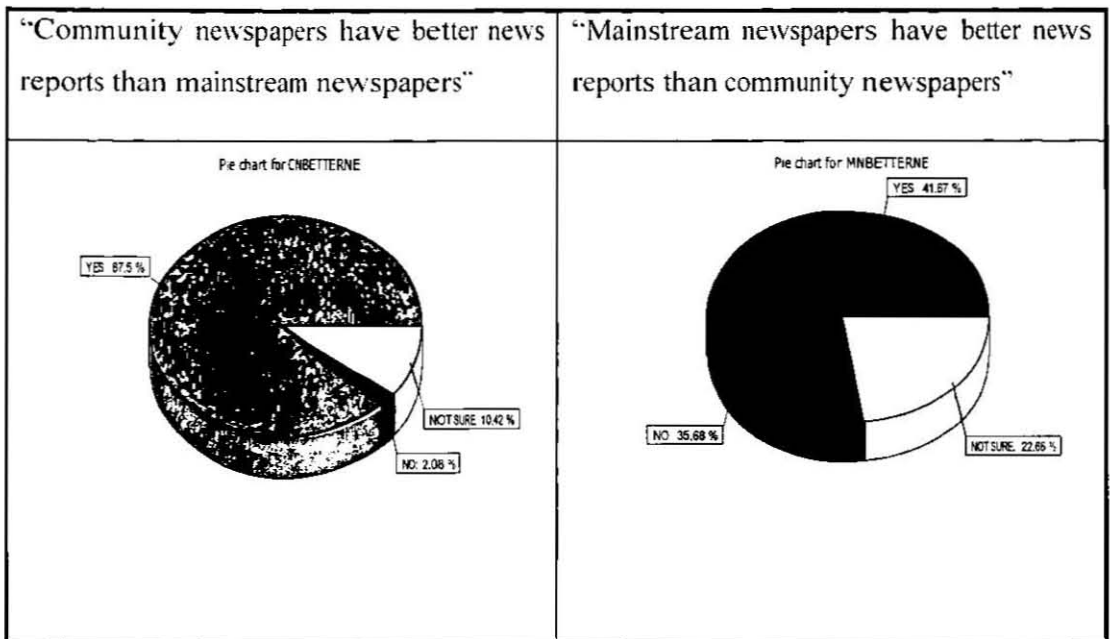


Figure 20: Readers perception of newspapers that provide better news

News reports and advertisements make up the content of a newspaper. Figure 20 depicts 87.5% (336) of the respondents who thought that community newspapers provide better news than mainstream newspapers whilst 10.42% (40) respondents answered “not sure” and 2.08% (8) who answered “no”. A similar question was posed to the respondents with regard to the mainstream newspaper. Figure 18 illustrates 160 respondents who say that mainstream newspapers provide better news than community news, whilst 35.68% (137) respondents answered “no” and 22.66% of the respondents who were “not sure”. At a glance it is evident that the news reported by community newspapers is more favourable than that reported by the mainstream newspapers.

To validate the readers’ preference between the two genres of newspapers reporting on news, questions 11 and 28 sought to highlight if the “news” in the newspaper was the respondents favourite section. Figure 21 shows 85.42% of the respondents who say that news reported in community newspapers are their favourite section whilst 36.2% of the respondents chose news reported in mainstream newspapers as being their favourite section in the newspaper.

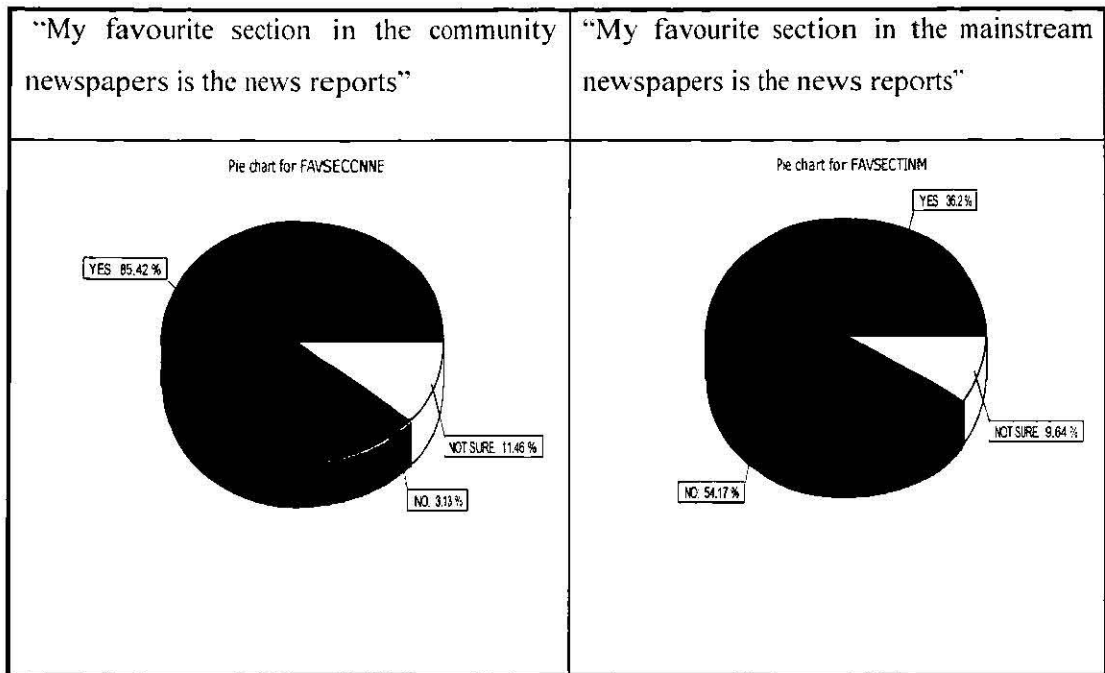


Figure 21: News as the favourite section in the newspaper

One of the reasons that can be attributed to such a stark contrast of "news" being selected by respondents between community newspapers and mainstream newspapers is the importance and relevance of local news to respondents.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements are the key driving force in respect of revenue generated for all genres of newspapers. Community newspapers provide a unique environment that is attractive to advertisers as they address a very specific audience in terms of geographical location. The circulation figures for community newspapers are far lesser than mainstream newspapers and based on the mainstream newspapers wider reach and larger circulation figures they too provide a unique environment for specific advertisers.

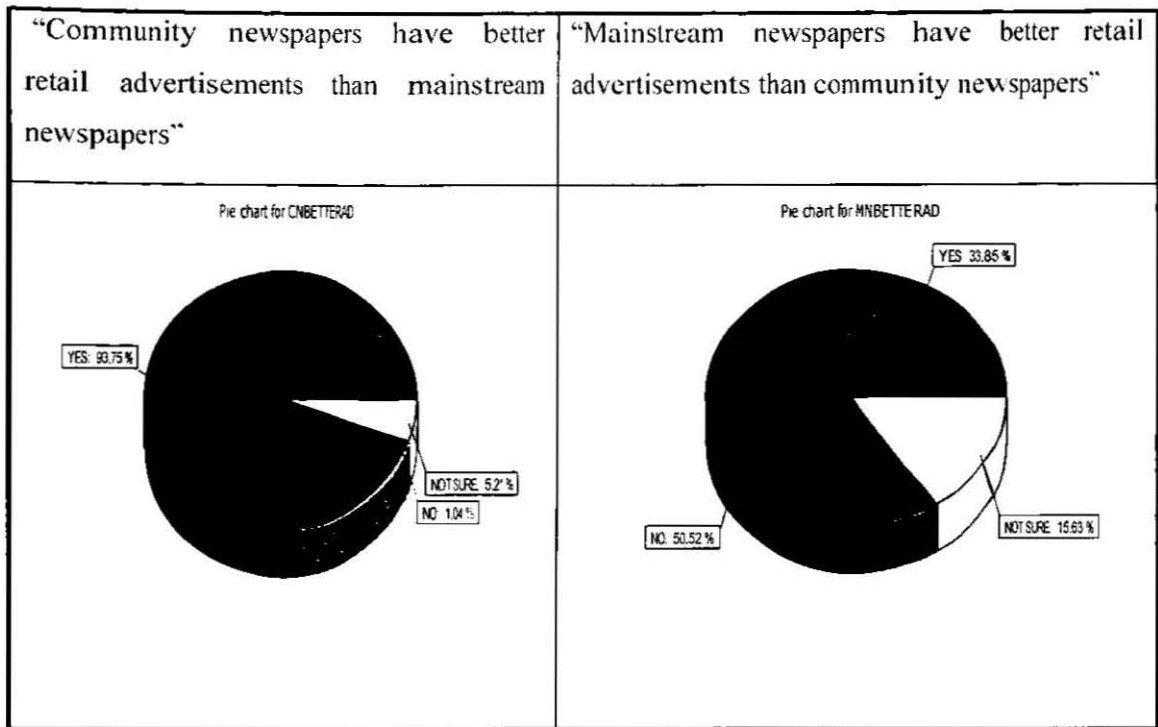


Figure 22: Better retail advertisements

The above is a depiction of which newspapers provided “better advertisements”. “Better” here meaning more effective to its audience. Figure 22 shows 93.75% of the respondents who felt that community newspapers provided “better” advertisements in comparison to mainstream newspapers. A very definitive reason for this overwhelming majority lies in the fact that the advertisers who advertise in community newspapers are geographically situated within a specific locale unlike the mainstream newspapers who are generally regionally specific. The companies that advertise frequently in community newspapers are those that are small to medium sized businesses who find advertising in mainstream newspapers far too costly.

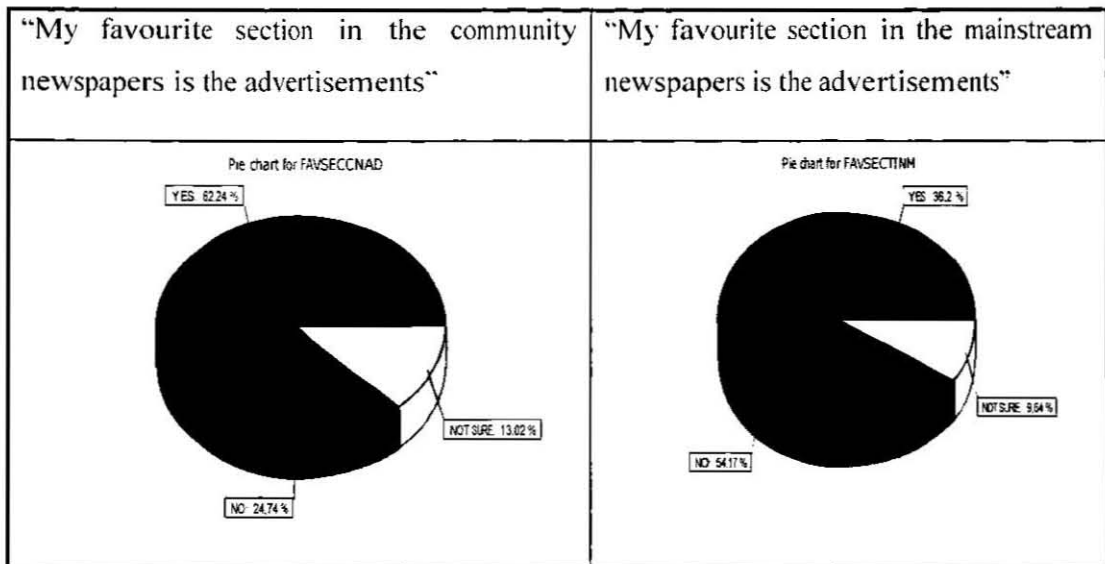


Figure 23: Advertisements as the favourite section in newspaper

Figure 23 above illustrates the response to questions 12 and 29 which asked the respondents if advertisements were their favourite section in the newspaper. The response above is also indicative of the uses and gratifications theory which explains the different reasons why people read the newspaper. In this regard, 62.24% of the respondents answered in favour of advertisements in community newspapers whilst 36.2% of the respondents favoured the advertisements that appeared in the mainstream newspapers.

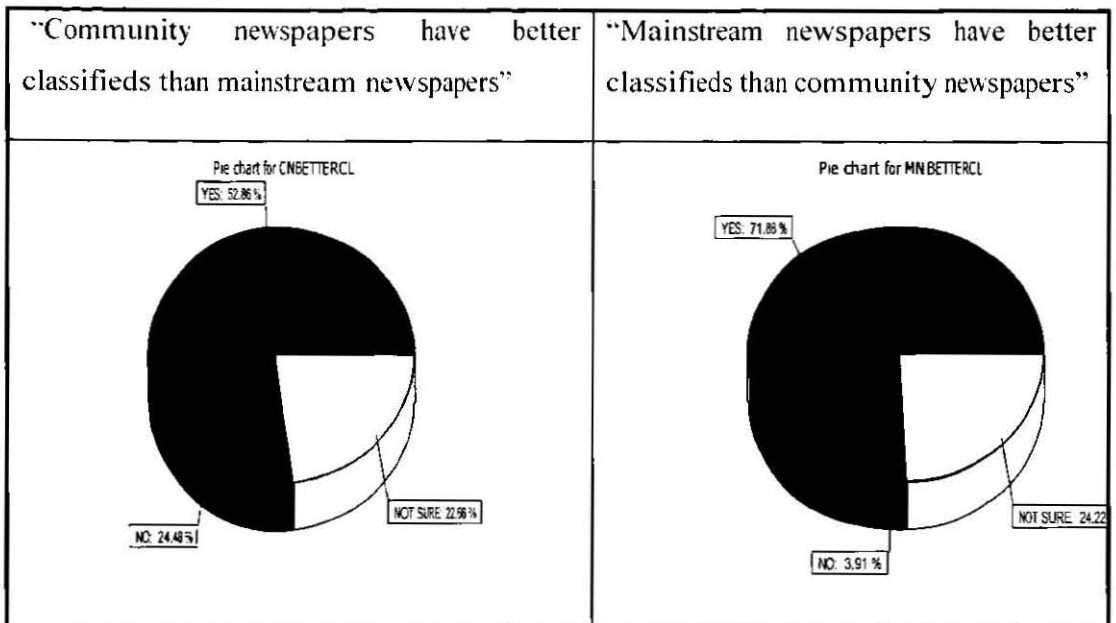


Figure 24: Better classified advertisements

Figure 24 is an illustration of the respondents preference over which genre of newspaper carries better classified advertisements. The mainstream newspaper finally won the favour with the respondents in this regard as the classified advertisements in mainstream newspapers are far more detailed and has a larger scope of what it offers compared to community newspapers. Figure 23 shows 71.88% of respondents who answered “yes”, 24.22% of the respondents were “not sure” and 3.91% answered “no”.

ADVERTISERS

Prior to the introduction and growth of community newspapers, mainstream newspapers monopolized the total market share of newspaper advertising. With the introduction of community based newspapers the size of that market began to reduce significantly. The community newspapers also provided the small to medium business enterprise with the opportunity to advertise by providing competitive advertising rates and a unique advantage in its community specific target audience.

Advertisers in both newspapers represent stores that are either national, regional, area specific or single stores that can be found within a community. These advertisers were interviewed to ascertain which genre of newspaper was preferred.

STORE CLASSIFICATION

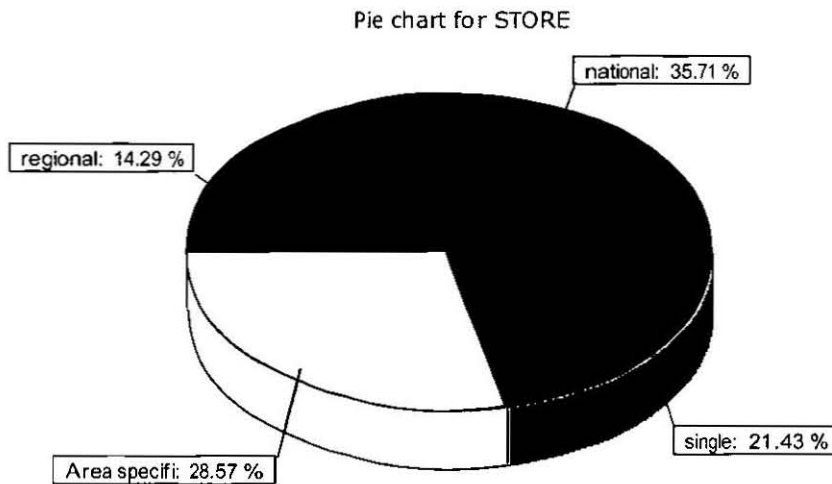


Figure 25: Store classification

The above is a representation of the different stores that participated in this survey. The relevance of this information is related to the advertisements that are targeted nationally and or regionally. In Figure 25, 35.71% of the stores surveyed represented “national” stores. Many of these stores prefer to use mainstream newspapers as their reach and awareness is far larger than community newspapers. However this was not exclusive as many of the national stores also secured the use of community based newspapers. Collectively, the regional (14.29%), single (21.43%) and area specific (28.57%) preferred to use community based newspapers as their business were classified as small to medium enterprises. Another contributing factor was the budget allocated for advertising which is much smaller than that of national stores.

FREQUENCY OF ADVERTISEMENTS

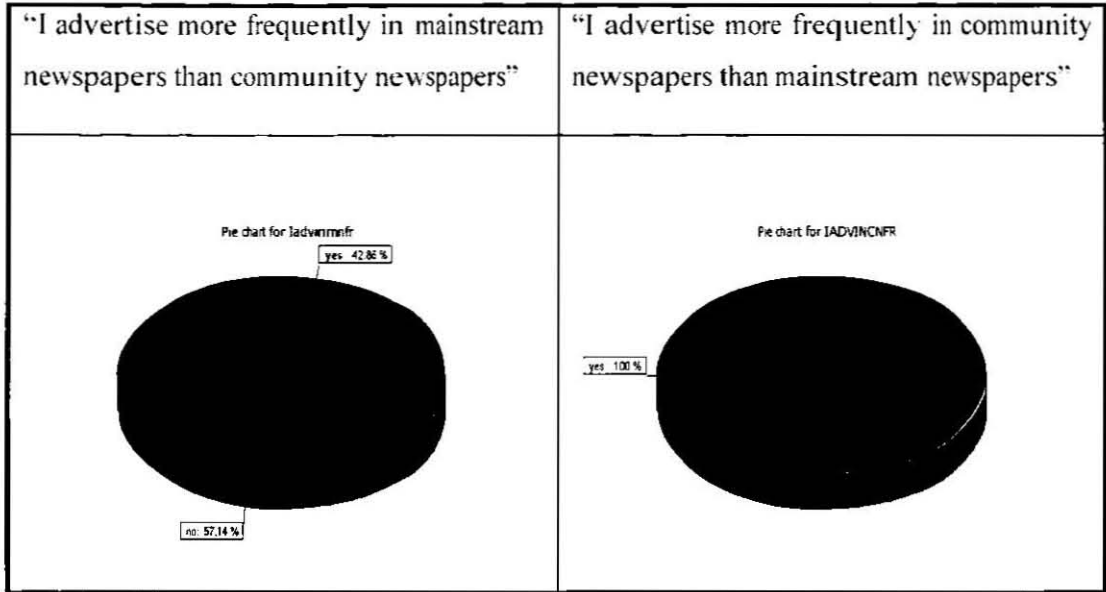


Figure 26: Frequency of advertisements

Mainstream newspapers did not feature favourably as did the community based newspapers. Figure 26 shows 100% of all advertisers interviewed advertised in community newspapers in contrast to 57.14% of the advertisers who did not advertise frequently in mainstream newspapers.

AFFORDABILITY

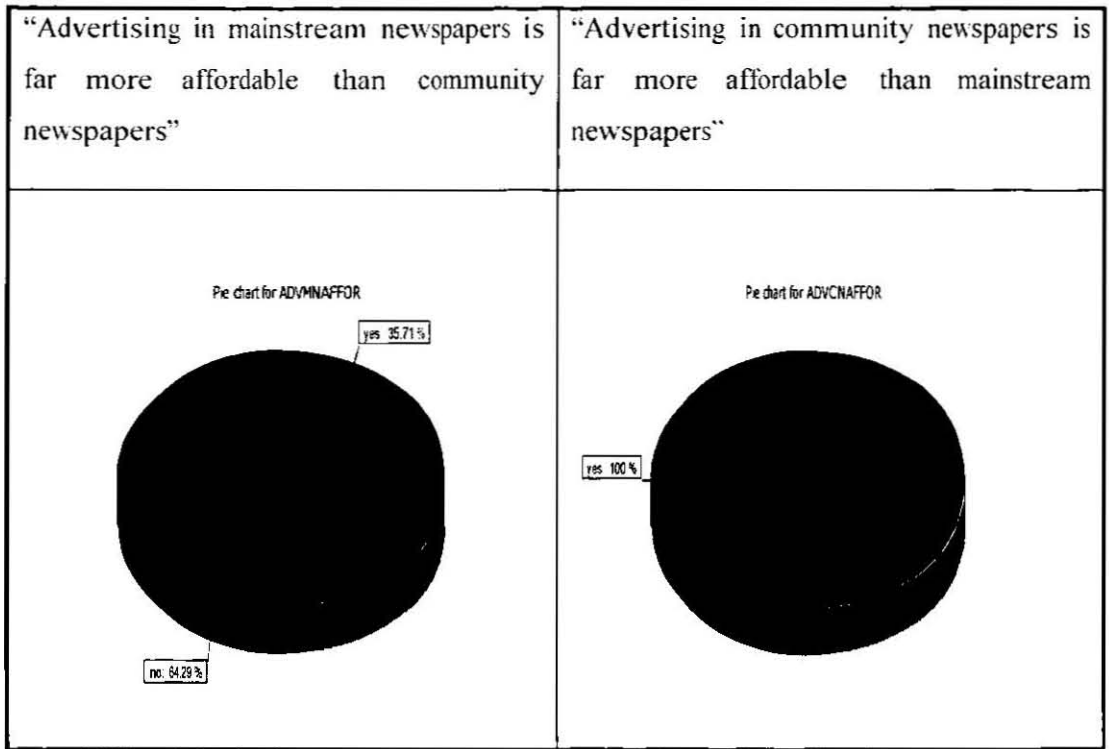


Figure 27: Affordability

The results of the survey shows in figure 27, all (100%) of the advertisers interviewed say that advertising in community newspapers are far more affordable than mainstream newspapers. Figure 26 also shows at least 64.29% of the advertisers felt that advertising in mainstream newspapers is not affordable. It is relatively expensive to advertise in mainstream newspapers than community newspapers. The advertisers who felt that advertising in mainstream newspapers was expensive were made up of national stores as well as small to medium businesses. From the “affordability” perspective, it can be seen why most advertisers not only choose to advertise in community newspapers but also at the frequency of which they advertise.

TARGET AUDIENCE

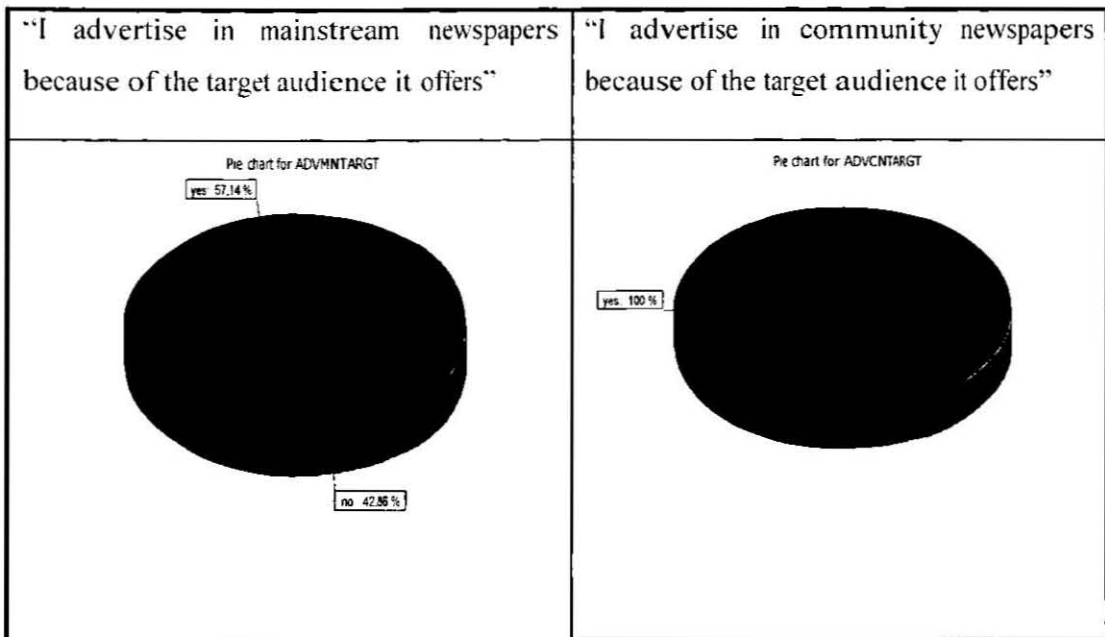


Figure 28: Target audience

The above figure illustrates a total support for community newspapers in reaching the advertisers target audience. Mainstream newspapers garnered 57.14% support in this regard. However it must be said that this is representative of all those stores that chose to advertise in mainstream newspapers. The reach of mainstream newspapers is far larger than community newspapers so in effect what is arguable is the specificity of the audience that is reached. Within a community although the reach is small compared to mainstream newspapers, it is far more definitive than mainstream newspapers. This is one of the many reasons why advertisers, both for national and regional stores, prefer to also advertise in community newspapers.

ADVERTISERS PREFERENCE

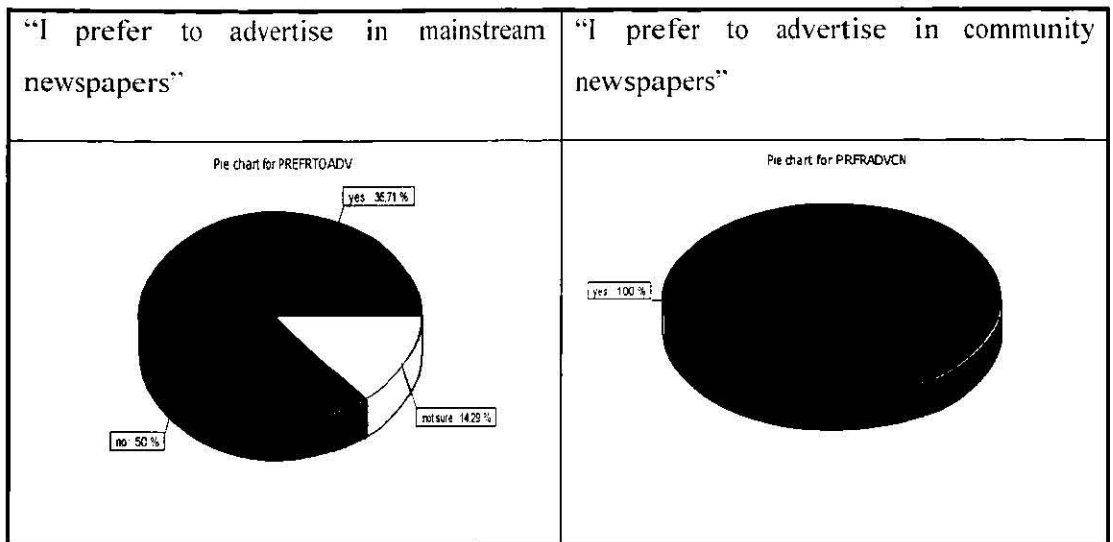


Figure 29: Advertisers preference

Figure 29 shows that 100% of advertisers preferred the community newspaper and at least 35.71% of these advertisers also preferred to advertise in mainstream newspapers. This overlap is clearly evident that there is a benefit that is derived for advertisers that choose to advertise in mainstream newspapers.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS VS *THE DAILY NEWS*

According to Picard (2001:167) the appearance of free newspapers has caused considerable concern among publishers of paid circulation daily newspapers, who fear that community newspapers will further erode their circulation and undermine their advertising base. These concerns are not without basis, because the free community newspapers are surviving in the face of significant opposition from existing daily newspapers because they are serving the need of advertisers and readers that is not met by mainstream newspapers.

Throughout the advertisers analysis carried out, there was constant evidence of some favour for mainstream newspapers although community newspapers proved to be far more popular. This “favour” is evident that the mainstream newspaper is far from becoming obsolete; instead it is a much needed tool in marketing, journalism and many other spheres within which society exists. The popularity of community newspapers among advertisers is also

evident that there is a rival within the market place which has filled a serious gap and in doing so provided small to medium businesses with the opportunity to engage in advertising and to make a significant contribution to the economy of this country. This analysis provides this study with the conclusion that there is coexistence between community and mainstream newspapers.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the findings and the results of the survey were provided. A comparative analysis was provided where necessary to demonstrate at a glance the preference of readers and advertisers. These results were further explicated through the use of graphs and tables. The next chapter outlines the conclusions and recommendations extracted from the result of the research findings.

Chapter eight

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations regarding the impact of community newspapers in Kwa-Zulu Natal on *The Daily News*: selected advertisers' and readers' perceptions.

IMPORTANT AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This study aimed to determine the impact community newspapers in KwaZulu- Natal, had on *The Daily News*. The researcher aimed to establish this through the perceptions held by selected readers and advertisers. This research is important, as it can assist mainstream newspapers in restructuring their news content to suit the audience advertisers they aim to target. Each objective together with the findings will be summarized. The answer to the main research problem will then be discussed based on these research findings.

ADVERTISERS PERCEPTION OF MAINSTREAM AND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

This question was based on growth of the community newspapers that has been propelled by a significant increase in advertising. The stores that advertise in either or both of the newspapers were interviewed in this regard. The findings of this research revealed the majority of the stores selected for this survey had previously advertised in *The Daily News*. However all of the stores selected for this survey had the experience of advertising in a community newspaper which suited many of the stores primarily due to the shoe string advertising budget each of these stores had allocated. These stores were unlike national chain stores that could afford to advertise in both genres of newspapers more frequently; however the community newspaper proved to be a far more effective medium than *The Daily News*. According to the store managers/owners, the community newspaper was a more favourable choice as it addressed a niche market effectively which in turn generated the response that they were looking for. As a result of cheaper advertising rates offered by the community newspaper, these stores were able to advertise on a more frequent basis thus creating more awareness about their stores.

Of the other stores who had advertised in *The Daily News* and community newspapers, the advertisers who advertised in the community newspapers received a better response than advertising in *The Daily News*. Based on selected advertisers' perceptions this study can also reveal advertisers advertised more frequently with community newspapers than those advertisers who advertised in *The Daily News*. On the issue of preprints or inserts, this study found more national advertisers chose to insert preprints in community newspapers than *The Daily News*. Finally, more readers chose to read the community newspapers for advertisements than *The Daily News*. Based on these findings three important criteria: response rate; frequent advertising; and audience attention which advertisers rely very heavily on, were in favour of the community newspaper.

READERS PERCEPTION OF MAINSTREAM AND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

This question was important as the audience of a newspaper shares the same importance as of the advertisers in a newspaper. In that the newspapers are reliant on both the advertisers and audience to contribute to their success. The perceptions of the audience reveal information that is vital in audience research which will benefit and possibly increase newspaper circulation. The perceptions of the audience were evaluated against *The Daily News* and the community newspapers. The findings suggest that the frequency at which *The Daily News* is read is aggregated at 33%; the frequency at which the community newspaper is read is aggregated at 49%. This concludes that selected readers read the community newspaper more frequently than they did *The Daily News*. Further to these study findings was the question of the readers' favourite newspaper. The majority (60%) of readers selected the community newspaper as their favourite newspaper, followed by twenty percent of the readers who selected *The Daily News* and ten percent each of readers selected *The Mercury* and other newspapers as their favourites. This study found that the majority of the respondents (67%) seldom purchased *The Daily News* compared to a paltry 33% who purchased *The Daily News* on a regular basis. The variety of responses received from the respondents in respect of their uses for the newspapers, encompasses the idea that people use the media to their advantage. Investigation into which genre of newspaper was able to generate more 'uses' for the reader revealed the community newspaper as being able to fulfil the readers' 'need' far greater than that of *The Daily News*.

WHAT IMPACT HAS THE PROLIFERATION OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS HAD ON MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS (*THE DAILY NEWS*)

The survey with the advertisers interviewed in this research study revealed that the community newspaper proved to be a better alternative in respect of response, reach and rate. This study reveals that on average advertisers advertised more frequently with community newspapers than with *The Daily News*. Prior to the introduction of community newspapers, the mainstream newspapers had total monopoly of newspaper advertising, though since the introduction of community newspapers, this study reveals that the audience and advertising has become more fragmented. Advertisers in this study claim to get a better response to their adverts in community newspapers as they target specific local audience. Advertisers ranked penetration more important than the broad reach that *The Daily News* offers. In order to sustain their advertisers, *The Daily News* will have to guarantee their advertisers' response and reach, an art which the community newspapers have mastered. Overwhelming evidence of this research such as the results of the frequency at which the newspaper is being purchased; the number of community newspapers that are circulated within different areas; the number of respondents who selected the community newspaper as their favourite; and the number of inserts that are included in the community newspaper, reveal the power of the community newspapers in KwaZulu- Natal. The community newspaper is more equipped at targeting a specific audience with a greater response rate than *The Daily News*, whose reach is broad but without penetration. This study reveals the number of preprints that appear in the community newspaper far outweighs the appearance of the same in *The Daily News*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on previous research carried out by the Sol Plaatje research foundation in 2006, entitled *Key Editorial and Business Strategies: A case study of Six Independent Community Newspapers*, whose findings reveal a strong growth of readership and advertisers of community newspapers in South Africa, further indicates that more research into the impact of community newspapers must be conducted to ascertain its effectiveness. The community newspaper is an interesting variable that can be researched against the communities it addresses, the audience that succumb to its blatantly localized content, the advertising opportunities that it offers to small businesses, and finally the yardstick against which mainstream newspapers can be measured. In respect of *The Daily News*, the perceptions of

the audience must be taken into account to increase its readership and the value that readers place on the newspaper. *The Daily News* and other mainstream newspapers must adjust to having to share the market with other contenders such as the community newspapers. In order to improve their circulation, *The Daily News* must conduct further audience research that would be representative of the entire population of KwaZulu- Natal, to gauge their interests and needs.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study strongly suggest that community newspapers have become a tangible force to be reckoned with. The community newspaper is committed to serving and even contributing to building a local community by providing news and information to enhance the quality of life and to forge community bonds. In doing so they have strategically positioned themselves within the community thus offering the advertisers a firm platform from which to advertise their products and services. Contrasting community and metropolitan papers, Kirkpatrick (2001) suggests that it would be very difficult for a suburban newspaper to achieve the community cohesion found in community papers. Community newspapers emit the message that the everyday life of the community is of interest and value. The overwhelming favour received by the community newspapers both by the readers and advertisers does not however suggest the complete demise of the mainstream newspapers. There will always be a need for national and international news which the mainstream newspapers deliver effectively and adequately. However what this research suggests is that mainstream newspapers will have to continuously mould their content according to the targeted audience and future readers. In respect of advertising which will always be costly for a wider reach of audience, mainstream newspapers will have to create a strategy to address this challenge to attract more advertisers.

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ADDENDA

ADDENDUM 1- QUESTIONNAIRE TO RESPONDENTS

For office use only: Respondent Number: _____

Voluntary questionnaire about newspapers

Mainstream Newspapers versus Community Newspapers: An investigation into readers preferences.

Department of Communication Science

University of Zululand

Researcher: PADHMA MOODLEY (Student Number: 200906069)

Supervisor: Prof. H. Rugbeer

Note to the respondent

- Although I appreciate your assistance, you are not compelled to participate in this survey.
- If you do not desire to take part, please return the blank questionnaire at the end of the survey session.
- Your remarks in this questionnaire will remain private and confidential. No one will be able to trace your responses back to you as a person.
- Before completing this questionnaire, you need to give me written permission to use your responses. It will be the first step that you will undertake on the next page. You are assured that this is a confidential survey and that your name will not be linked to your responses.

The questionnaire as two parts:

Section A asks permission to use your responses for academic research.

Section B asks for your opinions on community and mainstream newspapers.

How to complete the questionnaire

Tell me how you feel. Your responses are important to me.

Read each question carefully and take a moment to ponder each answer.

Please use a pen to mark your responses by placing a tick (✓) or a cross (X), in the appropriate column, or by writing down the appropriate information, wherever required.

Please do not change any of your responses afterwards (for instance: do not scratch out or tippex any of your responses).

Thank you for your participation.

Contact Details: Padhma Moodley

0027769897913

NOTE

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS: These newspapers serve a very broad community. Example, *The Daily News* is a mainstream newspaper. It serves many suburbs in KwaZulu-Natal. It is even bought by people outside KwaZulu-Natal.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: These newspapers serve a specific community. Example, *The Rising Sun* is delivered to residents in Chatsworth.

SECTION A

Please provide the following confidential information to indicate that you are giving me **permission** to use your responses in my research. *Your identity will remain confidential and will not be revealed in my thesis.*

Your city and/or suburb

CITY:			
Suburb		Postal code	

Your gender

Male	1
Female	2
I do not want to answer this question	3

Your age

20 to 30 years	1
31 to 40 years	2
41 to 50 years	3
51 to 60 years	4
Other	5
I do not want to answer this question	6

Are you employed?

Yes	1
No	2
student	3

Which race group do you belong to?

(For statistical purposes only)

Indian	1
Coloured	2

Black	3
White	4

SECTION B

Please tick (or cross) the appropriate box:

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate "yes, no or not sure" to the following statements				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
1	I READ COMMUNITY newspapers.			
2	I ENJOY (prefer) READING COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS			
3	COMMUNITY newspapers are free.			
4	COMMUNITY newspapers provide better NEWS than MAINSTREAM newspapers.			
5	COMMUNITY newspapers have better ADVERTS than MAINSTREAM newspapers			
6	COMMUNITY newspapers have better SPORTS REPORTS than MAINSTREAM newspapers			
7	COMMUNITY newspapers have better MOTORING NEWS than MAINSTREAM newspapers			
8	COMMUNITY newspapers have better SOCIAL COVERAGE than MAINSTREAM newspapers			
9	COMMUNITY newspapers have better CLASSIFIED SECTION than MAINSTREAM newspapers			

10	I prefer to search the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS for SERVICE related advertisements.			
11	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is the NEWS			
12	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is the ADVERTS			
13	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is SPORTS			
14	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is SOCIAL SCENE			
15	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is the CLASSIFIED SECTION			

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate " yes, no or not sure" to the following statements/ questions				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
16	I prefer to search the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS for RETAIL advertisements.			
17	I believe that the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS have made me more aware of other companies and services that are available to me.			
15	My favourite section in the COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER is the MOTORING NEWS			

16	Would you purchase COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS if you had to pay for it?			
17	I READ COMMUNITY newspapers very often.			

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate " yes, no or not sure" to the following statements				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
18	I READ MAINSTREAM newspapers.			
19	I ENJOY (or prefer) READING MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS			
20	MAINSTREAM newspapers are affordable.			
21	MAINSTREAM newspapers provide better NEWS than COMMUNITY newspapers.			
22	MAINSTREAM newspapers have better ADVERTS than COMMUNITY newspapers			
23	MAINSTREAM newspapers have better SPORTS REPORTS than COMMUNITY newspapers			
24	MAINSTREAM newspapers have better MOTORING NEWS than COMMUNITY newspapers			

25	MAINSTREAM newspapers have better SOCIAL COVERAGE than COMMUNITY newspapers			
26	MAINSTREAM newspapers have better CLASSIFIED SECTION than COMMUNITY newspapers			

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate ‘ ‘ yes, no or not sure’ ’ to the following statements				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
27	I prefer to search the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS for SERVICE related advertisements			
28	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is the NEWS			
29	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is the ADVERTS			
30	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is SPORTS			
31	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is SOCIAL SCENE			
32	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is the CLASSIFIED SECTION			
33	I prefer to search the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS for RETAIL advertisements.			
34	I believe that the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS have made me more aware of other companies and services that are available to me.			

35	My favourite section in the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER is the MOTORING NEWS			
36	I do not read the MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER because I have to pay for it.			
37	I buy MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS often?			
38	I DO NOT ENJOY READING MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS			
39	I READ MAINSTREAM newspapers very often.			

Briefly give your opinion about the following:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

ADDENDUM 2 QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADVERTISERS

For office use only: Respondent Number: _____

Voluntary questionnaire for advertisers about newspapers

Mainstream Newspapers versus Community Newspapers: An investigation into readers' preferences.

Department of Communication Science

University of Zululand

Researcher: PADHMA MOODLEY (Student Number: 200906069)

Supervisor: Prof. H. Rugbeer

Note to the respondent

- Although I appreciate your assistance, you are not compelled to participate in this survey.
- If you do not desire to take part, please return the blank questionnaire at the end of the survey session.
- Your remarks in this questionnaire will remain private and confidential. No one will be able to trace your responses back to you as a person.
- Before completing this questionnaire, you need to give me written permission to use your responses. It will be the first step that you will undertake on the next page. You are assured that this is a confidential survey and that your name will not be linked to your responses.

The questionnaire as two parts:

Section A asks permission to use your responses for academic research.

Section B asks for your opinions on *advertising* in community and mainstream newspapers

How to complete the questionnaire

Tell me how you feel. Your responses are important to me.

Read each question carefully and take a moment to ponder each answer.

Please use a pen to mark your responses by placing a tick (✓) or a cross (X), in the appropriate column, or by writing down the appropriate information, wherever required.

Please do not change any of your responses afterwards (for instance: do not scratch out or tippex any of your responses).

Thank you for your participation.

Contact Details: Padhma Moodley

0027769897913

NOTE

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS: These newspapers serve a very broad community. Example, *The Daily News* is a mainstream newspaper. It serves many suburbs in KwaZulu-Natal. It is even bought by people outside KwaZulu-Natal.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: These newspapers serve a specific community. Example, *The Rising Sun* is delivered to residents in Chatsworth.

SECTION A

Please provide the following confidential information to indicate that you are giving me **permission** to use your responses in my research. *Your identity will remain confidential and will not be revealed in my thesis.*

Your city and/or suburb

CITY:			
Suburb		Postal code	

Your gender

Male	1
Female	2
I do not want to answer this question	3

Your age

20 to 30 years	1
31 to 40 years	2
41 to 50 years	3
51 to 60 years	4
Other	5
I do not want to answer this question	6

Are you employed?

Yes	1
No	2
student	3

Which race group do you belong to?

(For statistical purposes only)

Indian	1
Coloured	2
Black	3
White	4

Name of your company/store

--

Are you the owner?

Yes	1
No	2
I do not wish to answer	3

SECTION B

Please tick (or cross) the appropriate box:

MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate " yes, no or not sure" to the following statements				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
1	I have advertised in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS			
2	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS frequently			
3	I rarely advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS			
4	I never advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS.			
5	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because of its reach.			
6	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because of the awareness it creates for my business			
7	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because of the target audience it offers			
8	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because it is affordable.			
9	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because it has improved my business.			
10	MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS provide a better audience for my business.			
11	I prefer to advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS			
12	I advertise in MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS because of the			

high circulation rate.			
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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS:				
Indicate " yes, no or not sure" to the following statements				
		YES	NO	NOT SURE
13	I have advertised in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS			
14	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS frequently			
15	I rarely advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS			
16	I never advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS.			
17	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because of its reach.			
18	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because of the awareness it creates for my business			
19	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because of the target audience it offers			
20	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because it is affordable.			
21	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because it has improved my business.			
22	COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS provide a better audience for my business.			
23	I prefer to advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS			

24	I advertise in COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS because of the high circulation rate.			
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