

Unethical Language and Politics: Print Media Coverage of the ZANU-PF Succession Conundrum in Zimbabwe (2014-2017)

CHIPO MUSOKO¹

Abstract

This article presents part of the findings of a broader study that was conducted to establish how the print media in Zimbabwe (The Herald, NewsDay and Daily News) appropriated and used tweets to cover the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) succession conundrum (2014-2017) and whether there were any ethical and professional violations. A purposive sampling method was used to select 45 articles for analysis. The selected sample of articles highlighted the specific ethical violations in the media coverage of the succession. At least 18 respondents (political journalists, political editors, editors, a politician, audience and political and media analysts) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews because of their direct involvement with the succession issue or as commentators. The study was underpinned by the Propaganda and Gatekeeping Theories, with the former playing a critical role in helping decipher how politicians used propaganda techniques to propagate their ideologies while the latter was constantly used by journalists to include and exclude certain stories through the media 'gates' to suit certain narratives. The data collected were analysed using qualitative content analysis. The study established that journalists used hate speech in their stories – a language that attacks or diminishes, incites violence or hate against groups (Fortuna and Nunes, 2018, cited in Vrysis et al.

¹ Department of Creative Media and Communication, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe, 0009-0009-4608-8785, cmusoko@arts.uz.ac.zw

2021). Unethical language was also prevalent in screaming headlines such as “‘Barking’ Moyo tongue lashed” (*The Herald*, 29/06/17) and “‘Childish’ Jonathan Moyo under fire” (*NewsDay*, 25/09/15) and constant use of the word “gukurahundists” mimicking hate speech employed by combined radio and television station RTLM in Rwanda which fanned genocide (*Media Professionalism and Ethics in Zimbabwe*, 2002). In Africa, unethical political language is often used as a catalyst to trigger genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity (Gwara and Mare, 2023). This was evident in Rwanda in the years leading up to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi when the then Rwandan government used all its propaganda machinery, including the media to spread bigotry and hatred against the Tutsi (Ndahiro, 2014). Similarly, during the harsh exchanges between the G40² and Lacoste³ factions, words such as “gukurahundist”, “dissident”, were often used to attack foes in ZANU-PF, evoking memories of the 1980s disturbances. Use of such language is unethical as media ethics dictate that journalists should desist from using defamatory statements. Such unprofessional conduct may result in journalists losing credibility. Hate language also propels political polarisation which has always existed in Zimbabwe, as the media and journalists are divide along political and tribal lines. The study also established that journalists fanned factionalism in ZANU-PF through publishing stories such as “Wadyajena mocks G40 ministers” (*NewsDay*, 10/11/15) that constantly brought G40⁴ and Lacoste at loggerheads hence the significance of this study to expose these malpractices and proffer solutions. Therefore, it was recommended that media houses develop an ethics guide for journalists to help them

² G40 – a faction that supported Mugabe including his wife Grace and Jonathan Moyo

³ Lacoste – a faction that was pro the then Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa whose moniker is *ngwenwa* (crocodile).

observe and uphold journalism ethics and conduct regular trainings on ethics for media practitioners and journalism students countrywide. The trainings will act as refresher courses for journalists and to bridge the knowledge gap among practitioners.

Keywords: Lacoste, unethical language, media, ethics, Twitter/X

INTRODUCTION

The media are like a double-edged sword with the power to build or destroy a person or a nation. Therefore, the unfettered powers of the media need to be kept under check to ensure that they operate ethically. It is undisputed that the media play important roles in society but meddling in the affairs of political parties is not one of them. Instead, the media should be watchdogs operating as the Fourth Estate – an independent institutional source of political and cultural power which monitors and scrutinises the actions of the powerful in other spheres (McNair, 1998). This article presents findings of a study conducted between 2023 and 2025, to establish how journalists from the mainstream public and private print media covered the ZANU-PF succession using tweets. The main objective of the study is to analyse how the appropriation of tweets by journalists compromise their ethical and professional conduct. It also seeks to propose ways by which journalists can utilise social media ethically and professionally. The question of succession was chosen because it was an issue of much public interest, often cited as the cause for exacerbation of the political and economic problems bedevilling the country. According to Amutabi and Nasong'o (2013), Africa has been the focus of global attention on regime change, succession and transition politics largely as a result of rogue regimes on the continent, many of which have been responsible for Africa's development problems. Universally, if a country experiences a succession

challenge, its political future becomes uncertain and this, in turn, affects its economic performance.

ZANU-PF SUCCESSION CONUNDRUM

Succession politics in Zimbabwe has been ongoing for decades. While Robert Mugabe, the late former president, fought tooth and nail to win elections since 2000 when he faced his first real challenge from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), it also emerged that he hung on to power for too long without a clear succession plan, resulting in internal party ructions within ZANU-PF. This led to the emergence of factions such as *Gamatox*⁵ and the *Weevils*, and subsequently Lacoste and G40. These factions are at the centre of how journalists covered mainly the fights and the race to succeed Mugabe. Macaphulana (2014) argues that many scholars and journalists had bought into the ‘truth’ that Mugabe had a succession plan, only to discover that all along his preferred successor had always been himself. While critics accused journalists of fuelling factionalism in ZANU-PF, Hamill (2016) blamed Mugabe for failing to organise an orderly transition of power. Journalist merely reflected on what was going on in the party which was inevitable with or without their coverage. Hence, one respondent said that they only gave G40 and Lacoste “fuel stations to sell their anger”. When the factional fights reached a climax in the run-up to the 2014 ZANU-PF Congress, the party began to purge members accused of fanning factionalism through “votes of no confidence”, claiming the scalps of political heavyweights, such as Vice President Joice Mujuru, hence the media quickly shifted allegiance with *The Herald* now supporting the then Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his Lacoste Faction. The G40 faction, whose members included Professor Jonathan Moyo, had now been symbolically annihilated from *The Herald*

⁵ *Gamatox* – a name given to Mujuru’s faction which referred to its opponents as *weevils*.

at a time the faction thought it was gaining momentum after the exposé by Professor Moyo narrating how the Lacoste faction was planning to ouster Mugabe. According to Tendi (2016), if Mugabe had not expunged the Mujuru faction before the congress and had Mujuru challenged him for the presidency, he would have faced defeat and an ignominious exit from power. However, the print media escalated the fights through stories they published which were full of hatred. For example, in the story “[Didymus]Mutasa a fool, says President...Labels him ‘a stray bray ass’(The Herald, 23/01/15), Mugabe attackedMutasa after he issued a statement denouncing changes to the party’s constitution. Mugabe further insulted Mutasa, calling him “individuals of little brains – disorganised mentally, deranged, if not close to being insane”, while labelling him “Gamatox”.

Although some journalists interviewed still insisted that they did not have a hand in the factional fights, the stories analysed showed a contrary picture, that of a desperate media, especially the private ones, that wanted to see Mugabe’s back. They shifted from general political reporting to political interference and activism. The journalists further reduced their work to vendetta journalism, hence failed the impartiality test. *NewsDay* and the *The Daily News* accommodated the Lacoste faction which was being persecuted in *The Herald*. From the study, it emerged that both factions were prompted to react once a story about them was published . And in some cases, the journalists actually stirred the hornet’s nest through screaming headlines such as “Moyo fumes over Mnangagwa’s I’m the ‘boss’ cup” (*NewsDay*, 03/01/17). Hence, the media houses studied not only exposed factional fights in ZANU-PF, but inadvertently ended up fuelling tensions through unethical conduct. According to Rich (2016:301),

“editors and reporters practice ethical reasoning before publishing a story. They consider how newsworthy the story is and whether the public really needs this information.”

Hence the objective of this study was to analyse how the appropriation of tweets by journalists in the coverage of the ZANU-PF succession conundrum compromised their ethical and professional conduct. Journalists failed to use Rich's three steps of ethical reasoning, namely defining the dilemma, examining all alternatives and justifying a decision in terms of weighing the harms and the benefits of publication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

HATE SPEECH

In the United States, hate speech is guaranteed under the First Amendment, hence during the war with Iran in April 2026, President Donald Trump insulted Iranians by spewing hate language on his X account *@realDonaldTrump* calling its leadership “crazy bastards” (05/04/26) and “animals”. However, according to Johnson *et al.* (2021), legal protection is valid as long as it does not communicate a clear threat or incite immediate violence. They did an analysis of the discursive construction of hate speech in U.S. newspaper editorials and opinion columns over a 21-year period. Their study reveals that opinion journalists used hate speech to articulate a libertarian interpretation of the norms of public discourse, facilitating a reductionist conception of freedom of expression whose heavily politicised and polarised nature does not live up to journalistic duties in a democracy (Johnson *et al.*, 2021:21). They also established that journalists linked hate speech to the unassailability of free speech, positioning its acceptance as necessary to a free society and warning of a slippery slope to a more censorious society should even social norms against its use in public discourse become too restrictive. Johnson *et al.*'s (2021) study is a departure from the current one in that it did not focus on social media, but analysed opinion columns only and not stories. The present study analysed stories particularly the headlines which previous studies did not focus on and also

the appropriation of political tweets to write about the ZANU-PF succession is an area that many scholars in Zimbabwe have not yet explored.

Wilson and Land (2021) wrote a paper about hate speech and questioned whether it should be regulated in the public sphere and how. They suggest a raft of measures that social media owners could consider to improve content moderation policies. These included drawing up lists of banned expressions, ensuring that content moderators are native speakers of languages and developing procedures to evaluate coded speech.

“These measures are not designed to be restrictive of hate speech, but to ensure that any restrictions that are implemented are more precise, informed and accurate” (Wilson and Land, 2020:1075-1076).

This study focused on social media platform owners unlike the current one which looked at political stories.

TWITTER AND THE MEDIA

A study by Ihebuzor and Egbunike (2018), which sought to examine why and how people use X (formerly Twitter) for political discourse in Nigeria, employed content analysis and reviewed 10 political blog posts (2012-2014). It established that political communication was hostile, divisive, bitter and inflammatory. Although the study was unrelated to the mainstream print media's use of X, it draws similarities to the present study in that it highlights the pitfalls of using the platform as a source of news.

There is limited literature on ZANU-PF succession and unethical language in Zimbabwe. Chuma, Msimanga and Tshuma (2020) explores the emergence and manifestations of “factional” or “succession” journalism in the state media in the context of Mugabe succession in 2016. They established that state media were subordinate to whichever faction controlled,

rewarded and punished specific forms of political reporting. Interviews conducted with the *Chronicle* established that journalists were instructed to frame stories using specific terms meant to soil factional rivals and would be rewarded with front-page placements (*ibid.*). These findings dovetail with this study which exposes how journalists were used as political pawns in the succession matrix resulting in them losing credibility. No matter how good you have been in the past, if you shatter the trust of your audience, you will never truly repair this sacred bond (Filak, 2016).

POLITICS AND PROPAGANDA

Gwara and Mare (2023) sought to expose how the state and social media were used by disgruntled citizens and politicians to peddle hate speech, lies, fraud, unethical and unbalanced political reportage in Zimbabwe. It confirmed that the media were misused to promote propaganda and lies. They noted that the media should be undergirded by relational ethics that value harmony in human relations as this can reshape Zimbabwean society, dethrone hate speech, political lies and pave way for development. Gwara and Mare (2023:151) advocate for the re-education of the masses on ethical use of the media. The study is a departure from the present in that it did not analyse stories or tweets, instead, case studies of political insults among politicians were used.

MEDIA ETHICS

Chibuwe (2020) interrogated the nature of X wars and discussions around key electoral candidates in the 2018 elections and its implications on democracy. The study established that one of the downsides of social media was that they provided room for emergence of cyber ghosts and netizens serving elite interests, while undermining social media's liberative potential. This resulted in irrational 'debates,' mudslinging, insults and lies (*ibid.*).

Zinhumwe's study (2023) on hate speech focused on online news platforms – *ZimEye*, *Zimbabwe Mail* and *New Zimbabwe*. He established that the publications endorsed and amplified hate speech by ZANU-PF politicians and the main opposition Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). Critical discourse analysis was used for data analysis and it was established that politicians used false arguments, linguistic conventions such as name-calling and metaphoric references to animals and insects to dehumanise and demean opponents. The study observes that the unregulated online media publications failed to uphold journalism ethics and were complicit in fanning political violence when they quoted verbatim vitriol from politicians, without subjecting it to editorial gatekeeping processes. This, according to Zinhumwe, compromised the dignity of victims and could have incited violence that broke out after incendiary speeches from politicians (*ibid.*). The above study is different from the present one because the former did not focus on X or the mainstream print media which are regulated and accessible to ordinary Zimbabweans. However, its findings draw similarities to the present study in terms of the deliberate failure by journalists to prevent hate speech from spilling into the news.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology which involved the use of in-depth interviews with journalists and media experts and sampling of relevant articles on the succession issue. Data for the study were gathered through interviews with at least 18 informants, including political journalists, political editors, media and political analysts, politicians and audiences, to get their views on the use of X by journalists as a source of political news. In-depth interviews were a preferred data collection method as they enable the research to get more information, ask follow-up questions and

seek clarification where necessary. According to du Plooy (1994:112),

“when we use in-depth interviews, we explore a topic to uncover participants’ perspective on a particular issue or phenomenon.”

A qualitative content analysis of selected articles published in the three dailies from 2014-2017 on the succession issue was conducted. Stories for analysis were limited to ones that were written about the succession using information partially or wholly obtained from X. A purposive sampling method was employed through which previous knowledge of the population can result in the research using its judgment to select the sample. The main analysis focused on contents of the articles to specifically establish whether they were balanced, fair, objective, truthful and accurate as dictated by journalism ethics.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

THE PROPAGANDA MODEL

The Propaganda Model, propounded by Herman and Chomsky (1988), focuses on the conscious and systematic efforts to use public communication to advance an ideological cause or material interest of the sender, often by covert means and without regard for anyone else’s truth or the interests of the recipient (McQuail, 2013:60). The model focuses on inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass media interests and choices (Herman, 1999:23). Propaganda is always carried out to further interests of the propagandist, not the target audience (McQuail, 2010: 531). It may be based on false or misleading information, or it may contain accurate information (Sussman, 2010:117). This theory is significant to this study because it helped to explain how the media were manipulated by politicians to propagate false narratives about the ZANU-PF succession. This was done through bribes and

threats which most respondents alluded to. Journalists became part of the propaganda processes because they accepted bribes to survive in a media industry that is declining, with organisations such as Alpha Media Holdings at the time of the interviews having gone for over six months without paying salaries. On the other hand, state-controlled media journalists were forced by the faction that had an upper hand at any given time to pander to its whims. Propaganda and media ethics are like water and oil; they do not mix because the former mainly uses deception to convince audiences to act in a certain way, while the media ethical principle of objectivity requires that journalists tell the truth all the time. Journalists are also governed by a code of conduct and media house policies but propaganda undermines professionalism, forcing media practitioners to conduct themselves in unethical manner. Also, the advertising revenue imperative pushed journalists to write sensational stories about the succession issue because they sold the articles.

THE GATEKEEPING THEORY

The Gatekeeping Theory, propounded by Kurt Lewin in 1943, is about analysing the characteristics of press and video news releases that allow them to “pass through the gate” and appear in a mass medium (Wimmer and Dominick, 2014). Journalists act as ‘gatekeepers’, giving access and directing attention to voices and persons who have some real power and purpose of their own (McQuail, 2013). The term “gatekeeping” has been widely used as a metaphor to describe the process by which selections are made in media, especially decisions regarding whether or not to allow a particular news report to pass through the gates of the news medium into the news channels (McQuail, 2010). It also refers to giving or denying of access through the ‘gates’ of the media according to organisational ‘policy’

(McQuail, 2002). Gatekeeping was at play when stories attacking one faction were given prominence by the media. Journalists and editors did not sieve information from X, resulting in hate and vulgar language passing through the editorial gates. Editorial bias and political influence have significant roles to play in gatekeeping decisions in the mainstream print media as was the case with the ZANU-PF succession coverage where some stories ended up being heavily edited to suit particular narratives, while others were spiked if they tended to attack another faction. Audiences were deprived of a proper political position from which the press contributed, analysed and interpreted political events (McNair, 2000). The role of journalists as gatekeeper was to ensure that audiences received accurate, timely and unbiased information from which they were supposed to make informed decisions. Like the *Daily News*, *Moto* a, journalists were duty-bound to remain objective and maintain professional integrity instead of practicing embedded journalism. And without a professional body similar to the Law Society of Zimbabwe, with powers to deregister offenders, organisations like the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) are reduced to social clubs without powers to register or deregister members. The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) is equally powerless to enforce ethics and punish offenders, but can only persuade journalists to act ethically. The Zimbabwe Media Council (ZMC) is concerned mainly with the accreditation of media houses and journalists than enforcing ethics. And it being a government entity that is also a player in the industry, makes it difficult for it to maintain a level playing field. However, objectivity of journalists is also hampered by use of filters by journalists such social, political and religious ones whereby one may find it difficult to separate their persona from the stories they write.

FINDINGS

X AND HATE SPEECH

The endless ZANU-PF factional infighting on X led the print media to start writing about the new wave of succession post the Weevils and Gamatox factions in 2014. The study established that some members of the G40 and Lacoste factions tended to take to X to air their grievances, respond to accusations or merely expose things that were happening in the party. Professor Jonathan Moyo, who was the Higher and Tertiary Education Minister at the time, led the pack after opening an X account in 2015. Journalists devoured his tweets as they provided cheap and fast content which subsequently boosted their papers' revenues through adverts. Social media sources have a tendency to be biased and people feel at ease expressing their political beliefs in these networks, even if this could be seen as less politically correct or even amount to hate speech (Rodney-Gumede and Hyde-Clarke, 2014). Rendering visible emotions and latent hate in the way social media do portend dire consequences if left unaccounted, unchecked and unregulated (Njoku, 2018:168). The study established that unethical language was prevalent in the stories written about the ZANU-PF succession conundrum using tweets and this was also confirmed by some respondents in interviews. Most journalists, especially those from the *Daily News*, allowed rivals to trade insults through stories which were reduced to dialogues of insults. Journalists also tended to hobnob with politicians, thus blurring ethical lines that should have never been crossed because of embedded relationships. In an interview, former Editor/Reporter 4 (*NewsDay*) bemoaned how journalists took the lead in propagating hate speech.

"In the newsroom, a politician would call a reporter to say, 'Ndamupedzera ka nhasi, nyora zvese mupfanza, nyora!' (I finished him off today, write everything, young man!)."

He noted that the media could still report responsibly by calling some people to order, especially when they were using unethical

language. Hence, Wilson (1996:28) argues that the proper relationship between a journalist and a politician is the same as the relationship between a dog and a lamp post.

Gatekeepers' Dilemma

A G40 politician alleged that,

“If Trevor Ncube (Chairman of Alpha Media Holdings, the publishers of *NewsDay*, *The Standard* and *Zimbabwe Independent*) thinks you are very bad in his eyes, he would just allow his papers to maul you.”

Ethical standards have deteriorated, with the media sensationalising otherwise straightforward stories, deliberately injuring innocent people, setting personal vendettas between editors and owners at the expense of readers (The Media Professionalism and Ethics in Zimbabwe Report, 2002). A reader noted that one faction was in control of the state media, while another was silenced, adding that the intention was to character assassinate some politicians. He accused journalists of being unethical in how they reported on the ZANU-PF succession as their reportage was influenced by brown envelopes. “It influenced the creation of fake narratives and sometimes the omission of critical information.” Former Reporter 2 (*NewsDay*) referred to the unethical stories they wrote about one politician as “a season of politics”.

” I would say with certainty that ethics were parked aside and referred to as and when we felt like. What only remained was for the media to carry a gun and shoot people but the good thing about it is that no one took the media to court. There was a desire to tell a story and the article was selling like hot cakes.” (Interview, 17/12/24).

MEDIA AND POLITICAL BIAS

Most lead stories published by *The Herald* tended to attack G40 politicians. For example, in the story “*Mutsvangwa, Moyo verbal tiff escalates*” (05/02/16), the then War Veterans Minister, Christopher Mutsvangwa, lambasted Moyo calling him a “war

deserter”, a “traitor” and “WikiLeaks spy”, while the then ZANU-PF provincial chair, Daniel Mackenzie Ncube called Moyo a “malcontent” who should be censured and brought to book. A political analyst, Tafadzwa Mugwadi, called Moyo’s behaviour “treasonous”. In the story headlined “*‘Barking’ Moyo tongue lashed*” (29/06/17), the journalist quoted the then Finance Minister, Patrick Chinamasa, “rebuking” Moyo over Command Agriculture, equating him to a “barking dog”. In another article titled, “*Analysts slate Moyo over Command Agric attacks*” (16/03/17), Mugwadi again attacked Moyo, saying that Moyo suffered from “opposition demons”.

‘TWARS’ AND HATE SPEECH

Compared to other newspapers, the *Daily News* carried most lead stories that incited violence such as “*Moyo in Twitter showdown*” (04/05/15), where the journalist quoted a ‘twar’ (Twitter [X] war) in which a follower attacked Moyo claiming that the professor went to Parliament at Mugabe’s mercy after he lost the Tsholotsho seat in 2013. Moyo retorted:

“You are now sounding like a dunderhead because you’re repeating precisely what I told you but repeating it in a foolish way!”

The gatekeepers failed to filter name-calling from the article mainly due to the revenue imperative.

In the *Daily News* story “*Lacoste youths savage Zhuwao, Moyo*” (29/12/16), the G40 members were attacked because of their alleged “corrupt activities” saying they must be “declared a threat to national security”. The reporter quoted the then Zimbabwe Youth Action Platform National Chairperson, Tonderai Chidawa, urging party members not to take their grievances to X and Facebook. “....*the worst form of indiscipline has been committed by Moyo who has been venting his rubbish on social (media) platforms.....*” (*Daily News*, 29/12/16). It also appears that the reporter was propping up Lacoste while allowing G40 to be bashed.

In another article headlined “*Wadyajena attacks Kasukuwere*” (*Daily News*, 04/11/16), it appears that the journalist wanted to draw the two politicians into a fight by quoting Wadyajena attacking Kasukuwere calling him “a commissar who rigs polls is like a doctor who kills patients. Not fit for purpose”. Other stories meant to trigger fights were “*Moyo blasts Herald over ZANU-PF wars*” (22/01/16), “*Moyo remains under the gun*” (24/10/16) and “*Moyo slams Matemadanda*” (20/09/16) in which the war veteran was labelled a “dissident”. In the story titled “*Moyo pummels ‘idiot’ Charamba*” (30/01/16), the journalist quoted the then President Mugabe’s spokesperson, George Charamba’s radio interview attacking Moyo calling him “*little fella*”, adding that he cannot climb the political ladder by tweeting. Instead, Moyo would tweet himself to eternity. Moyo lashed back:

“There is a silly Shakespearean wordsmith who thinks politics is about clever words and who sees himself as the system when he’s a factionalist!”

The whole story was based on tweets and a radio interview and the journalist allowed the two to trade unfiltered insults.

The paper also led with the story, “*Minister stole underwear*” (*Daily News*, 04/02/16) which focused on fears about ZANU-PF escalating factional and succession wars leading to “body bags” (death). In the introduction, the reporter said Moyo had “ratcheted up his return fire” against Mutsvangwa whom he accused of being a ‘petticoat thief’ during the liberation struggle and that Moyo’s “traitor uncle”, the founding President of Zanu, Ndabaningi Sithole, had been expelled from the party. The reporter quoted Moyo refuting claims that he deserted the armed struggle:

“It’s a lie by some bloke famed for stealing and selling underwear of female cadres from the drying line at the camps!”

In another story, “*Targeted Moyo remains defiant*” (06/02/16), the journalist referred to Moyo as “defiant”, “sharp-tongued”, while calling his political foes “enemies”. He further wrote that

top ZANU-PF officials, including Charamba, had thrown “missile after missile” at Moyo without success and were now agitating for his ouster. The story was based on Moyo’s tweets and no interviews were conducted with the Minister.

In a lead story titled “*Team Lacoste guns for Moyo*” (*Daily News*, 08/02/16), the use of the word “guns” and “sharp-tongued” in reference to Moyo, were combative. Another story, headlined “*Blood and thunder in ZANU-PF meeting*” (12/02/16), focused on Politburo deliberations and fights between G40 and Lacoste. Moyo and Charamba were not interviewed and the tweets used were in favour of Moyo, demonstrating that the journalists took sides in the factional fights. In an interview, the *Daily News* former Editor/Reporter 1 admitted that their stories on the succession were unethical adding that,

“When the environment is politically charged, the media is reflective of the political discourse at a particular point in time. Most stories were not ethical because it was supposed to push the narrative and agenda of certain political actors.”

Hence, Curran and Seaton (1997) argue that the power of the press and broadcasting is not necessarily greatest when the political involvement in the media is most apparent.

RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM VS COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

Articles written by the *NewsDay* on the ZANU-PF succession were front page/lead stories meant to stalk factional fights. In most stories, people were not given a right of reply to respond to allegations, attacks or to defend themselves. Former Reporter 2 (*NewsDay*) confessed that he would deliberately attack politicians such as Member of Parliament, \ Justice Wadyajena in his stories because he was “aligned to money”.

What drove us was creating controversy because it sold the article. We never went to ZANU-PF and told them this one is wrong; it’s them who came to us either through unnamed sources or tweets. We could have been wrong in some stories but by and large we were right – there were fights. What I wrote could have caused someone to respond because someone says we were fuelling [fights] but we never

gave them paraffin or diesel but a service station for them to sell their anger (Interview, 17/12/24).

Hence, the paper carried vitriolic stories such as “*Charamba, Moyo clash over G40*” (29/01/16) which was generated from an interview Charamba had with ZiFM and SFM radio stations and Moyo’s tweets. Charamba exposed Moyo as the troublesome anonymous columnist in *The Herald* called *Manheru*:

“I can assure you there is no Nobel Prize for guessing who *Manheru* is and tell those stupid politicians that there is no trophy for guessing who *Manheru* is.”

Moyo responded:

“There’s a silly Shakespeare wordsmith who thinks politics is about clever words and who sees himself as the system when he’s a factionalist.”

Although the journalist sought comments from the two government officials, he still promoted unethical language by allowing them to trade insults in a national paper, further amplifying the fights.

In a story headlined “*Jonathan Moyo saga deepens*” (*NewsDay*, 25/06/15), in which he was said to be mum about his temporary removal from government by President Mugabe, one of his followers wrote:

“....it’s being said that @ProfJNMoyo was unceremoniously fired by Mugabe, unsurprisingly – he’s an idiot”

Moyo hit back: “*The real idiots are your ancestors who colonised Africal*”

In another story, “*Childish’ Jonathan Moyo under fire*” (25/09/15), in response to Moyo’s attacks of fellow politicians on X, Wadyajena labelled Moyo “childish”, a “spiteful political crook”, “charlatan” and “low-life devil incarnate.” The tweets were inflammatory but the gatekeepers ignored it. Former *NewsDay* Reporter 2 stated that X was a good hunting ground for stories, though it had numerous legal pitfalls, particularly if one wrote libellous pieces.

“Lucky enough most of the victims didn’t sue. The media in Zimbabwe have been accustomed to the idea of maligning somebody and getting away with it.”

In the article “*Charamba, Moyo public spats shocking*” (*NewsDay*, 16/01/17), the journalist solicited a story from the then War Veterans Minister, Tshinga Dube, who declined to comment until he spoke to the officials involved. Charamba savaged Moyo, describing him as a “*useful idiot*” while Matemadanda blamed Mugabe for the fights saying Mugabe had lost touch due to aging. In another story, “*Jonathan Moyo off the hook*” (22/05/17), Moyo called the then ZANU-PF Secretary for Finance, Obert Mpofu, “*Judas Iscariot*” after Mpofu indicated that he would censure Moyo for backing Saviour Kasukuwere, a G40 member following the dropping of charges against him for abusing social media. Moyo was also accused of criticising the Command Agriculture Programme and siphoning over US\$400 000 from the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund, charges he refuted.

Other provocative headlines included one titled “*Government Ministers in Twitter wars*” (*NewsDay*, 11/08/16), where the journalist called an exchange between X followers and ministers a “war zone”. *NewsDay* also carried a story titled “*Moyo, Charamba in war of words*” (12/12/16), stating that: “*ZANU-PF factional fights turned nastier*”, with Moyo publicly taunting Charamba over his alleged ill health. In an interview, former Editor/Reporter 4 (*NewsDay*) indicated that some words could stoke factional wars or even invite lawsuits and urged journalists to call sources to get quotations to rebut inflammatory statements from X. Editor 2 (*NewsDay*) said there was need to be sceptical when using information from social media platforms.

“Most people who post on X have an agenda and we can’t be used to pursue or amplify it, so, we make sure we check and double check before publication” (Interview, 16/12/24).

ADVERTISERS' INFLUENCE ON THE MEDIA

Important functions of the media in any free country are to inform, discuss, mirror, bind, campaign, challenge, entertain and judge (Curran and Seaton, 1997). Apart from that, the media, as Chomsky (1997) avers, also exist to sell a product (audience) to a market (advertisers) with Picard (2004) highlighting that the mission of newspaper enterprises includes both commercial and social facets. Newspapers play important roles as facilitators of commerce, promoting consumption by creating consumer want for products through advertising and serving the financial interests of newspaper owners as part of the competitive economic system (*ibid.*). Two primary revenue streams for newspapers are circulation and advertising. Circulation sales have an effect on advertising sales because the desirability of a paper to advertisers normally increases as circulation rises and decreases as circulation decreases (*ibid.*). Herman, (2002) states that the government and large non-media business firms are also best positioned (and sufficiently wealthy) to be able to pressure the media with threats of withdrawal of advertising or TV licenses, libel suits and other direct and indirect modes of attack. According to Herman (*ibid.*), the professional autonomy of journalists has been reduced and due to the influence of advertisers. The media in Zimbabwe have over the years tried to strike a balance between generating revenue for shareholders, media sustenance and playing their social responsibility roles as defined by Siebert *et al.* (1956). Journalists, on the other hand, are grappling with trying to please both their employers and advertisers and keeping their jobs, resulting in what a political analyst interviewed in this study described as unethical and unprofessional conduct.

“How do you keep a job if you are too ethical and objective? For years, our journalists have had to pander to the powers that be to have a job.”

Job insecurity and commercial priorities place increasing limitations on journalists' ability to function according to their stated professional ethical framework and to fulfil the purposes

they claim should characterise their professional desire and identity (Fenton and Witschge, 2011). This dovetails with what the late Nathan Shamhuyarira who said that journalists can do anything for a job. A case in point was when ZANU-PF advertised a post for journalists. Shamhuyarira stressed that when he asked one applicant how he was going to reconcile himself with the new situation, the journalist retorted that “he knew what those at the Daily News wanted and that was what he was giving them.” In the same manner, the journalist would give ZANU-PF what they wanted as his new employer. Shamhuyarira said the explanation, =

“Displayed a calculated want for money and absolute lack of morality, in a situation where anyone who pays can get these journalists” (Media Professionalism and Ethics in Zimbabwe, 2002).

A political analyst interviewed concurred that “those who put money on the table are the ones that run the show.” Another respondent, a political scientist, noted that the private media were motivated by the motto ‘follow the money.’ *“To survive you change the slant when the money has been dangled.”* Media expert 1 concurred adding that the profit motive was at play when it came to the coverage of the ZANU-PF succession. The political scientist revealed that,

“Violating the basic standards of journalism by not balancing a story was motivated by commercial interests because it sells but breaches ethical standards that should guide a journalist. Which becomes paramount, the money or the ethics?”

He highlighted the difficulty in balancing a story, particularly in a highly polarised society like Zimbabwe, where the commercial side tended to take primacy over professional standards. He stressed that:

It is now a vicious terrain for sheer survival, particularly in our political economy. What you write is what will determine whether you will eat or not. The survival imperative subordinates the ethical and professional imperative. It’s like observing old and now

redundant standards that do not put food on the table (Interview, 10/12/24).

Respondents at *NewsDay* confirmed that the revenue imperative was the major drive behind the salacious stories they wrote in a bid to survive. Former Reporter 1 admitted that to generate revenue, negative news sold the article. He added that:

It is my considered view that we created a monster for negative news. Anything that was negative was okay so the article would sell. If it was sort of neutral or positive, either about the government or the ruling party, it would not sell the article. We wanted something that was acerbic where people were insulting each other and saying negative things. The market was just a function of an environment that was so toxic. You really can't blame it on anyone that the editors demanded negative stories, it was a function of the situation which was polarised (Interview, 27/07/23).

Hence Curran and Seaton (1997) argue that goods, including the products of the media industries, are produced not to meet the needs but to earn profits. Editor 3 said at *NewsDay*, they used the succession issue as a survival strategy because advertisers knew people would rush to read the article.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Journalists from the all publications studied here promoted use of unethical language by appropriating vile tweets and using them in stories. It appears there was a lot of political interference by both G40 and Lacoste and this was confirmed by respondents and also reflected in the stories published. Media Expert 2 said the coverage of the ZANU-PF succession was largely polarised with the state-owned/controlled media projecting the voice of the elite. He averred that:

What we saw in this period was the weaponisation and instrumentalisation of the media. The media was essentially handheld by the political elite from one faction, especially the state-owned and controlled Zimpapers and ZBC, to attack the other side while the private media attempted some form of balance by covering both sides (Interview, 24/11/24).

The stories published by *The Herald* were initially anti-G40 and pro-Lacoste which was in line with the President's support of the Mnangagwa led faction. The newspaper constantly attacked the G40 faction through stories such as "*Keep us out of your fights Prof*" (05/02/16) and "*Moyo, Kasukuwere Must Go: War Vets*" (08/02/16). Notable also is the fact that the use of the imagery, "knife" in "*Knives out for Jonathan Moyo*" (*The Herald*, 24/04/17) was meant to promote violence. However, the *Daily News* was largely pro-G40 and dedicated acres of space to allow the faction that had lost voice in *The Herald* to air their grievances. Among the stories *Daily News* wrote were "*Moyo roasts Mnangagwa*" (09/11/16) and "*Moyo accuses Charamba of 'bootlicking idiocy'*" (11/12/17). *Daily News* journalists repeatedly used the propaganda technique of name-calling such as "idiot" and "sharp-tongued" to escalate factional fights and often passed opinions as news. The newspaper published more stories carrying hates speech compared to *NewsDay*. Reporter 3 (*Daily News*) noted that X contributed to unethical reporting because some journalists wrote stories based on posts without engaging the sources and it ended up appearing as if it was ZANU-PF's position yet they were personal opinions. *The Herald*, being state-owned, exercised restraint when it came to publishing hate speech. They also carefully selected tweets to inflame hate speech while silencing other factions by denying them a voice. *NewsDay* published stories such as "*Childish' Jonathan Moyo under fire*" (25/09/15) and "*Moyo picks fight with military*" (26/10/16) which equally carried hate speech and instigated factional fights. According to Media Expert 2, the media reflected political battles that were taking place rather than sources of news that would speak to the various issues affecting citizens (Interview, 24/11/24). All three media houses and their journalists failed to uphold journalism ethics which included balance, fairness, objectivity, accuracy and truthfulness. *NewsDay* admitted that they were biased towards Lacoste because the faction was being sidelined in *The Herald*

and were also hell bent on seeing Mugabe go which, on its own, was equally unethical. *Daily News* was largely biased towards G40 while also trying to give the Lacoste faction a voice from time to time to appear balanced as part of its “middle of the road” approach. Editor 3 (*NewsDay*) confirmed that some stories they wrote were one-sided, while former Editor/Reporter 4 revealed that the stories were meant to prop up a faction because the then Editor was pro-Lacoste. Balanced treatment means being even-handed, not giving one side of an argument unreasonable attention to its advantage or disadvantage (Wilson, 1996:45). Media Expert 1 castigated journalists for their over-reliance on social media calling it “ethical poverty” and “ethical mess”.

Above all, journalists and editors failed to use gatekeeping to filter information obtained from X, a sign that they were pushing a political agenda driven by propaganda. Moyo accused *The Herald* of fanning factionalism, saying,

“Does @Herald Zimbabwe and its successionist handlers really believe they are not settling party matters on Twitter and abusing social media? If @HeraldZimbabwe and other @Zimpapers outfits continue to abuse Twitter and other social media, they will get robust responses.”

Reporter 3 (*Daily News*) admitted that they fanned factionalism although he tried to minimise their role saying

“...ZANU-PF factionalism was in existence since time immemorial and it later culminated in the sacking of Joice Mujuru in a very unceremonious way.”

Kasukuwere also vented his anger at top scribes at *The Herald* accusing them of fanning factionalism (“*Kasukuwere slams ‘factionalism fanning’ Herald scribes*”, *NewsDay*, 17/01/17). Former Editor/Reporter 4 (*NewsDay*) noted that the downside of X was that,

“Everyone now assumes the role of a journalist without ethics, hence the prevalence of hate speech, explicit language and character assassination. It is like a gun in the hands of an untrained soldier.”

Although propaganda tactics were used in the stories written about the ZANU-PF succession through screaming headlines,

exaggeration of the tensions in ZANU-PF and using the media for attacks and counter attacks, the bottom line is that some of the information written by the media were true and that there was indeed factionalism in ZANU-PF. This ultimately led to the coup in 2017 as the rifts widened. Gatekeeping which starts with the journalist when (s)he chooses a source to interview, the questions to ask, the angle of the story and the quotes to use was put to test during the succession conundrum. Journalists were supposed to ensure that hate speech was not included in their stories but for drama, fame, adverts, bribes and due to political pressures and interference, most of them decided to allow hate speech through the media gates.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the print media were regularly used by politicians to further their individual agendas, while stories written were meant to tarnish the images of real and perceived political foes. Journalists clandestinely used experts and other voices to sanitise their attacks and this was a departure from journalism norms which require journalists to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. The deployment of propaganda techniques, threats and bribes by politicians from both the Lacoste and G40 factions, weakened the gatekeeping powers of both journalists and editors hence compromised journalism ethics. Also, political interference at state media and shareholder interference and public media was curtailed to discharge their duties fully. On the other hand, media interference in the factional fights impacted the ruling party negatively as some fights were a creation of the media while others were escalated. Economic and development issues affecting the country were neglected at most time as acres of space in the media were dedicated to hate speech and fanning factionalism. It is, therefore, recommended that journalists must declare gifts to reduce bribes and for them to be regularly rotated to different news desks to reduce embedded relations

with sources. It is further recommended that media houses develop an ethics guide and offer regular trainings on ethics to media practitioners and journalism students countrywide. Ethics is not just a matter of codes of conduct or rules to be followed, but is more to do with principles concerning the rights and wrongs of human conduct, principles which have some reasoned theoretical basis and which apply objectively and impartially (Belsey and Chadwick, 1992:10). Left unchecked, journalists can become media missiles that have the power to destroy individuals and nations as was the case with the Serbian and Croatian media in the late 1980s that came under control of nationalists who manipulated them into propagating hatred, nationalism and xenophobia (Delić, 2020). Upholding ethics is key in promoting democracy, accountability and media professionalism in Zimbabwe.

REFERENCES

- Amutabi, M.N. and Nasong'o, S.W. (2013). Regime Change and Succession Politics in Africa In: Amutabi, M.N. and Nasong'o, S.W. *Regime Change and Succession Politics in Africa: Five Decades of Misrule*, London: Routledge.
- Belsey, A. and Chadwick, R. (2002). *Ethical Issues in Journalism and The Media*. London: Routledge.
- Bulawayo Bureau (2016). Mutsvangwa, Moyo Verbal Tiff Escalates, *The Herald*, 5 February, p1. Viewed 20 May 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Chibuwe, A. (2020). Social Media and Elections in Zimbabwe: Twitter War between Pro-ZANU-PF and Pro-MDC-A Netizens. *Communicatio: South African Journal of Communication Theory and Research*, 46(4), 7-30.
- Daily News* (2017). Moyo Accuses Charamba of 'Bootlicking Idiocy', *Daily News*, 11 December, p5). Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Chomsky, N. (1992). *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*. Berkeley, CA: Odonian Press.

- Chuma, W., Msimanga, M.J. and Tshuma, L.A. (2020). Succession Politics and Factional Journalism in Zimbabwe: A Case of *The Chronicle* in Zimbabwe. *African Journalism Studies*, 41(1), 35-48.
- Curren, J. and Seaton, J. (1990). Power Without Responsibility. *The Press and Broadcasting in Britain, Contemporary Review*, 272(1587), 213-215.
- Delić, A. (2020). Medium is a Weapon: Bias in Crisis Situations, *Medias Res*, 9(17), 2753-2774. <https://doi.org/10.46640/imr.9.17.10>
- Du Plooy, G.M. (1994). *Communication Research: An Introduction to Communication Course Book*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Fenton, N. and Witschge, T. (2010). 'Comment is free, facts are sacred': Journalistic ethics in a changing mediascape. In: G Meikle and G Redden (eds.). *News online : transformations and continuities*. London: Palgrave, pp. 148-164.
- Filak, V.F. (2025). *Dynamics of Media Writing: Adapt and Connect*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Government of Zimbabwe (2002). *Media Professionalism and Ethics in Zimbabwe Volume 1*.
- Gwara, J. and Mare, M. (2023). Hate Speech and Political Lies in Zimbabwe: Towards Relational Ethics in Media. *Politics, Religion and Hate Speech in Zi*, Vol and No, 151.
- Hamill, J. (2016). The Elephant in the Room: Zimbabwe's Ongoing Succession Crisis, *World Politics Review*, 12 January. Viewed 7 April 2026, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/17649/the-elephant-in-the-room-zimbabwe-s-ongoing-succession-crisis>
- Herald, The* (2015). Mutasa a Fool, Says President...Labels Him 'a Stray Bray Ass', *The Herald*, 23 January, p.1. Viewed 20 May 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Herman, E.S. (1999). *The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader*. Lausanne : Peter Lang Publishing.

- Herman, E.S. (2002). *The Propaganda Model: A Retrospective*, In: Mcquail, D (ed.), *Mcquail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Howard, J.W. (2019). Free Speech and Hate Speech. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22(1), 93-109.
- Ihebuzor, N. and Egbunike, N. (2018). Twitter as a Tool of Political Discourse in Nigeria: Dialogue, Self Aggrandizement or Party Politicking? Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA), Namibia.
- Johnson, B.G., Thomas, R.J. and Kelling, K. (2021). Boundaries of Hate: Ethical Implications of the Discursive Construction of Hate Speech in US Opinion Journalism. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 36(1), 20-35.
- Kamhungira, T. (2016). Wadyajena Attacks Kasukuwere, *Daily News*, 4 November, p.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Kamhungira, T. (2016). Moyo Slams Matemadanda, *Daily News*, 20 September p.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Kamhungira, T. (2016). Team Lacoste Guns for Moyo, *Daily News*, 8 February p.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Macaphulana, D.M. (2014). Inside Mugabe's Sealed Succession Envelope: Fear, Self-Assassinations and a Coup More Fearful than Fearsome ... President Robert Mugabe and His Wife Grace, *Newzimbabwe.Com*, 20 November. Viewed 7 April 2026, <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/inside-mugabes-sealed-succession-envelope-fear-self-assassinations-and-a-coupmore-fearful-than-fearsome-president-robert-mugabe-and-his-wife-grace/>
- Machamire, F. (2016). Moyo Blasts *Herald* Over ZANU-PF Wars, *Daily News*, 22 January p.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Machivenyika, F. (2017). Analysts Slate Moyo Over Command Agric Attacks, *The Herald*, 15 March p.1. Viewed 20 May 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.

- Manavaire, B. and Tafirenyika, M. (2016). Moyo Remains Under the Gun, *Daily News*, 24 Octoberp.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Manavaire, B. (2015). Moyo in Twitter Showdown, *Daily News*, 4 Mayp.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mashaya, B. (2016). Lacoste Youths Savage Zhuwao, *Daily News*, 29 Decemberp.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mashaya, B. (2016). Targeted Moyo Remains Defiant, *Daily News*, 6 Februaryp.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Matenga, M. (2016). Charamba, Moyo Clash Over G40, *Newsday*, 29 Januaryp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Matenga, M. and Chidza, R. (2015). Childish' Jonathan Moyo Under Fire, *Newsday*, 25 Septemberp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, The National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mcnaair, B. (1998). *The Sociology of Journalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mcquail, D. (2013). *Journalism and Society*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mcquail, D. (2010). *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mcquail, D. (2002). *Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mhlanga, B. (2017). Charamba, Moyo Public Spats Shocking, *Newsday*, 16 Januaryp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mhlanga, B. (2016). Govt Ministers in Twitter Wars, *Newsday*, 11 August, p2, Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mhlanga, B. and Manayiti, O. (2016). Moyo Defies Mugabe, *Newsday*, 19 Decemberp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.

- Mugove, T. (2016). Moyo Pummels 'Idiot' Charamba, *Daily News* 30 Januaryp.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Murwira, Z. and Moyo, A. (2017). 'Barking' Moyo Tongue Lashed, *The Herald* , 17 June 2017p.1. Viewed 20 May 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Mushava, E. and Manayiti, O. (2016). Moyo, Charamba in War of Words, *Newsday*, 12 December, p1, Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Musoko, C. (2023-2025). Interviews With Editors, Political Journalists, Political Editors, Media and Political Analysts, Politician, Audience, Harare.
- Ndahiro, K. (2014). Dehumanisation: How Tutsis were Reduced to Cockroaches, Snakes to Be Killed, *The Newtimes*, 13 March 2014. Viewed 3 June 2026). <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/104771/national/dehumanisation-how-tutsis-were-reduced-to-cockroaches-snakes-to-be-killed>
- Ncube, X. (2017). Kasukuwere Slams Factionalism Fanning *Herald* Scribes, *Newsday*, 17 January, p1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Ncube, X. (2015). Wadyajena Livid with Zhuwao, *Newsday*, 3 Novemberp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Ncube, X. (2015). Defiant Prof Moyo Digs in, *Newsday*, 5 Septemberp.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Ncube, X. (2015). Wadyajena Mocks G40 Ministers, *Newsday*, 10 November, p1, Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Ncube, X. and Mushava, E. (2015). Jonathan Moyo Saga Deepens, *Newsday*, 25 Junep.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Ncube, X. (2017). Moyo Fumes Over Mnangagwa's I'm the Boss' Cup, *Newsday*, 3 Januaryp.1. Viewed 17 June 2012, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.

- Ndlovu, N. (2017). Jonathan Moyo Off the Hook, *Newsday*, 22 May 22p.1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Njoku, G. (2018). *Countering New Media Hate Speech: The Challenge of The Old Media*, In: Omenugha, K.A., Fayoyin, A. and Ngugi, C.M. (eds.). *New Media and African Society: Essays, Reviews and Research*. Nairobi: Nairobi Academic Press.
- Phiri, G. (2016). Minister Stole Underwear, *Daily News*, 4 February.1. Viewed 5 July 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Picard, R.G. (2004). The Economics of Daily Newspaper Industry. In: Flowers, A.A.J., Carveth, R. Hollifield, C.A. (eds.). *Media Economics: Theory and Practice*, Ed: Alexander, A., J. Flowers, R. Carveth, CA Hollifield, Routledge.
- Rich, C. (2016). *Writing and Reporting News*. Kentucky: Cengage Learning.
- Rodney-Gumede, Y. and Hyde-Clarke, N. (2014). Online Journalism in Africa – Trends, Practices and Emerging Cultures. In: Mabweazara H.M. *et al* (ed.). *Online Journalism In Africa: Trends, Practices And Emerging Cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Southern Eye* (2014, 31 December). 2014 Year of Weevils, Gamatox, *Southern Eye*, 31 December, p1. Viewed 17 June 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Sussman, G. (2010). A Regime of Propaganda: The Systemic Bases of Promotional Political Culture. In: Klaehn, J. ed.), *The Political Economy of Media and Power*. Lausanne: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Tendi, B.M. (2016). *State Intelligence and the Politics of Zimbabwe's Presidential Succession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Tshuma, N. (2017). Knives Out for Jonathan Moyo, *The Herald*, 24 April.1. Viewed 20 May 2021, National Archives of Zimbabwe Database.
- Vrysis, L. *et al.* (2021). a Web Interface for Analysing Hate Speech. *Future Internet* 2021, 13, 80 [Online]
- Wilson, R.A. and Land, M.K. (2020). Hate Speech on Social Media: Content Moderation in Context. *Conn. L. Rev.*, 52, 1029.
- Wilson, J. (1996). *Understanding Journalism: A Guide to Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Wimmer, R.D. and Dominick, J.R. (2014). *Mass Media Research – An Introduction* (10th ed.); Delhi: Wadsworth.
- Zinhumwe, T. (2023). Stoking the Flames of Conflict in Zimbabwe's Electoral Terrain: Detecting and Reporting Hate Speech in Online Media. In: Mavengano, E., & Chirongoma, S. (eds.) *Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe, Volume I: The 2023 Election and Beyond* (149-170). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.