ZIMBABWE MEDIA AUDIENCE SURVEY 2023

MISA ZIMBABWE

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Acronyms

BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CD	Compact Disc
CITE	Centre for Innovation and Technology
CNN	Cable News Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
EPR	Employment to Population Ratio
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Frequency Modulation
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GZU	Great Zimbabwe University
HD	High Definition
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDI	In-depth - Interviews
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAZ	Institute for Public Affairs in Zimbabwe
IRI	International Republican Institute
KAF	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDM	Misinformation, Disinformation, Malinformation
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MNC	Mobile Network Companies
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRTV	Nkululeko Rusunungoko Television

POTRAZ	Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
PPPS	Probability Proportionate to Population Size
RA	Research Assistant
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAPES	Southern Africa Political Economy Series
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
TV	Television
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
USF	Universal Service Fund
VOA	Voice of America
VOP	Voice of the People
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity
ZAMPS	Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBCTV	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television
ZTN	Zimpapers Television Network

1. Introduction

THE Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe conducted a media audience survey to help various stakeholders have a nuanced appreciation of media audiences and consumption habits in Zimbabwe.

This report highlights points of intersection between Zimbabwe's reconfigured political economy and emerging patterns of media needs, consumption and use in recent times.

While changes in media audiences and consumption habits have been significantly altered by the reconfigured political economy, the onset and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic also added to these changes, exacerbating rather than initiating the changes.

The study illustrates how a reconfigured political economy, which has brought widespread informalisation of the economy and resulted in seismic changes visible in the changing patterns of social differentiation and the emergence of new social bases and actors, has, in turn, given birth to new media audiences, use patterns and consumption habits.

These new actors are dominated by small businesses and individual operators, a shift from formal and large businesses, which were visibly dominant pre-2000.

The new economy is anchored within the informal sector and is driven by vendors, cross-border traders, tuckshop owners, mechanics, artisans and a host number of services.

This has led to a new media ecosystem that could not support the conventional mass media that dominated the industry pre-2000.

Coupled with the changes in technology, especially the rise of the mobile telephone use and internet connectivity, it led to new media consumption habits and patterns anchored in digital media platforms such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *X*, *LinkedIn*, *Instagram*, *YouTube* and websites, among many others.

The study adopted an exploratory and mixed methods approach for the media audience survey to facilitate the triangulation of data sources.

The exploratory component was included to ensure independence and allow respondents to articulate responses outside pre-determined frameworks.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to analyse variation by setting, gender and age, among other variables.

The collection of qualitative and quantitative data made it possible to triangulate data and generate adequate information for evidence-based decision-making and recommendations.

Complementary qualitative and quantitative data analysis increased the reliability and validity of conclusions and recommendations.

Below is a summation of the data collection process. Interpretive views of media users are crucial to describing context and defining a new trajectory that can be espoused by media scholars, practitioners, advertisers and even policymakers who are interested in promoting a vibrant media that can support and sustain equitable and inclusive development.

In framing this study, an assumption was made that whatever the status of the media in Zimbabwe emanates from the operating environment, i.e, political, economic and social — or, more generally, its political economy.

The restructuring of the media landscape in Zimbabwe now necessarily depends on the forms of media users and uses and the kind of media that are central to the fomenting of the reconfigured political economy.

The political economy approach helped to answer the structural questions, hence, underlying antecedents that shape the current media structures and consumption habits in Zimbabwe.

> *COUPLED with the changes in technology, especially the rise of the mobile telephone and internet, it led to new media consumption habits and patterns anchored in digital media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X, Linked-In, Instagram, YouTube and websites, among many others.*

2. Media Audience Survey Objectives

THE media audience survey sought to assist different stakeholders in having a clearer understanding of the new media structures and audiences in Zimbabwe, and subsequently help them create content of interest, build better relationships with their audiences and explore new opportunities to generate and diversify their revenue. Specifically, the survey sought to:

- Categorise the current media sources and structures in Zimbabwe.
- Analyse dominant media themes (both content-related and marketing-related).
- Analyse the audience demographics (e.g. area of residence, age and education level, among other factors).
- Examine the audience's media preferences and needs.
- Locate where the media audiences are, both online and offline.
- Explore the audiences' level of media and information literacy in Zimbabwe.
- Identify consumption habits (i.e. how, when, how much, and why people consume the content).
- Investigate data about issues/topics not covered by the media (gaps in coverage).
- Examine the trust in the identified media sources and structures among audiences in Zimbabwe.

3. Methodology of the study

3.1 Conceptual approach: Media in a reconfigured political economy and the impact of COVID-19

FROM the late 1990s and through the 2000s, Zimbabwe has experienced a severe "reconfiguration of its political economy" and, subsequently, its state-society relations [1].

The reconfiguration of this political economy can be traced to the fast track land reform programme (FTLRP), beginning in the year 2000.

It heightened a de-industrialisation process that began after adopting the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme in the 1990s.

This led to a shift in the economy's structure: From a largely formal, agriculture-based economy to a largely informal one.

The new economic structure has been characterised by widespread informality, precarity and deepening urban poverty.

This saw the dislocation of old media structures and their replacement by new ones modelled around the newly emergent political economy.

New media structures emerged and subsequently shaped the types of information that citizens seek and how they seek, which underwrite media needs and consumption habits.

The industrial worker was replaced by the sole trader, vendor, cross-border trader, self-employed mechanic or carpenter, etc.

The informal economy has become the main source of livelihood, but, at the same time, inadvertently created new media needs and consumption habits.

For example, where the formal industrial worker of old relied heavily on the formal print newspaper and naturally deferred to the main state broadcaster as their sources of news, the vendor of today now relies on a new and wide array of information sources — from internet-based online newspapers accessed via mobile phone, to extra-terrestrial (free-to-air) satellite television to user-generated content shared via the *WhatsApp* messaging application.

The effect of the reconfigured political economy has resulted in the emergence of new geographic typologies, which, by and large, define the dominant modes of livelihoods and their inhabitants.

The rural area has seen the emergence of four distinct typologies — communal, resettlement, growth points and business centres, and commercial farming or mining areas.

The urban areas have seen the prominence of four distinct sub-areas — low-density, medium-density, high-density, and peri-urban (including urban slum) areas.

For instance, in the post-2000 resettlement/FTLRP areas, mostly politically regimented, "word of mouth" from state functionaries and local leaders has become the main source of information on access to livelihood and social services issues.

Also, entertainment and other social news can be accessed at local business centres on public television, usually in "bars" or via a thin layer of "rural elites" with access to either a smartphone or a television accessing satellite television.

Changing livelihood spaces and patterns, in conformity to new geographic typologies, have meant that the audiences, too, have radically changed.

These new social groups have assumed different relations with the state, with a changed form of state-society relations.

The contemporary nature of the state and its confluence with these emerging social groups have also tilted the media consumption habits of these new media audiences.

Thus, how communities source information and consume it has also changed.

The media content that matters has also changed depending on the audience involved.

For example, during an earlier study by MISA in 2020, many rural traders who rely on buying and selling noted that the first thing they look for every morning is the rate of the local currency to the United States dollar — this allows them to peg the prices of their different wares for the day.

This information is sourced from *WhatsApp* groups that are solely dedicated to this purpose.

Most critical is that all these emergent social groups or societal structures have information needs and media consumption habits that suit their immediate livelihood needs.

Therefore, as Zimbabwe's famed industrial base expanded, so did the attendant media structures, needs and consumption habits.

The global pandemic, COVID-19 in 2020 added a layer of intrigue to the changes noted above, its prominence within Zimbabwe's media landscape exacerbated changes already in motion.

Much of the changes seen in the media landscape have primarily been drawn from the reconfigured political economy rather than the emergence of the pandemic and its effects.

For the greater part, COVID-19 came at a time when the media had already seen seismic changes in media consumption habits, most notable being the shift in the importance of the print and broadcasting media, which has slowly but surely been replaced by the new online media space, riding on internet-based information and telecommunication (ICT) structures.

This has seen many media players either shifting or integrating the internet into their business models to aid the dissemination of information and news.

Admittedly, the abrupt and top-down, largely state-led reactions to the pandemic ensured that players in the media fraternity had to fast-track some changes to how they operated.

In most instances, the changes were externally rather than internally generated.

For example, **Business Times** stopped publishing the physical version of their newspaper.

Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) introduced online publications, which have affected hard copy sales of the newspaper.

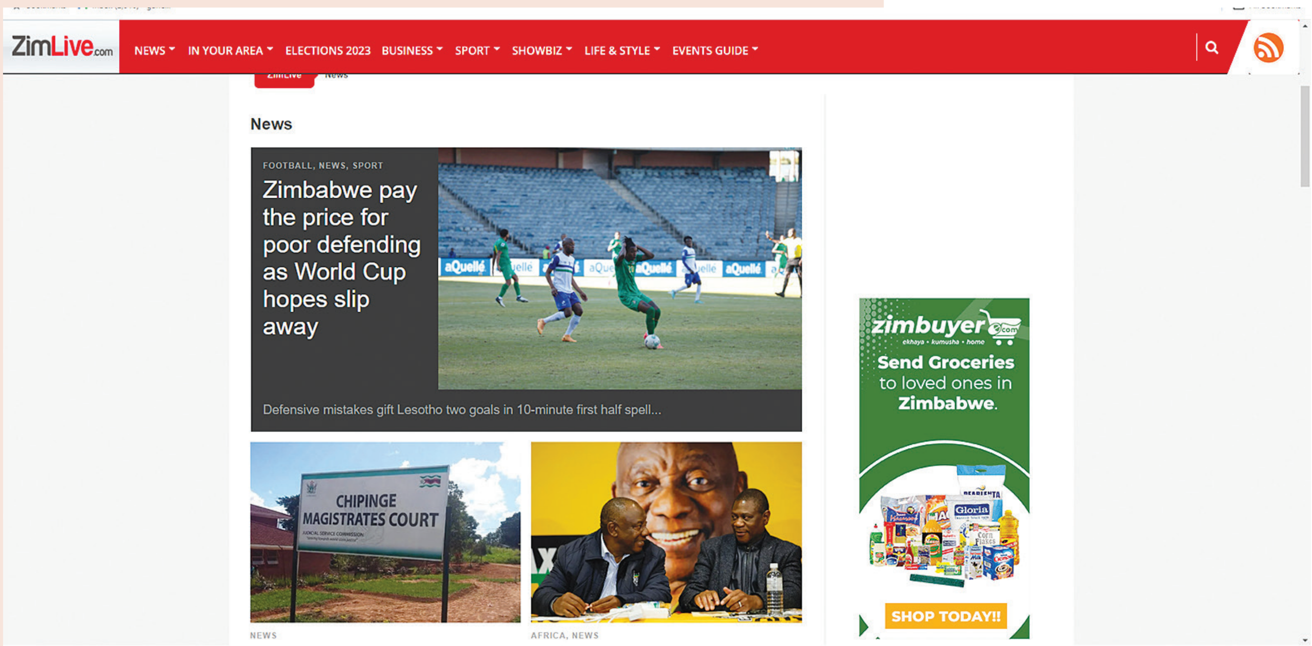
The **Daily News** introduced a paywall for accessing its online newspaper.

The period saw the emergence and growth of wholly online news platforms such as the **NewsHawks** and **ZimLive**.

A composite analysis of the differential effects of the changes in the political economy and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is suggestive that the latter did not initiate the changes in the media landscape, but rather hastened both the effects and the adaptation by various media stakeholders.

The changes noted in the political economy show that the economy was already the hardest hit by these changes, resulting in a myriad of changes in how citizens access information and the types of information they prioritise.

Linked to this were the changes in how media operators have responded to the compounding effect of challenges to the economy; where the responses to the economy had previously been slow and gradual, COVID-19 provided the push for abrupt shifts in how they operate.



3.2 Study Areas and Participants

DATA was collected from all 10 provinces in Zimbabwe, targeting ordinary citizens and key informants, including media stakeholders and opinion leaders.

Research assistants (RAs) were recruited from each research area to assist with data collection.

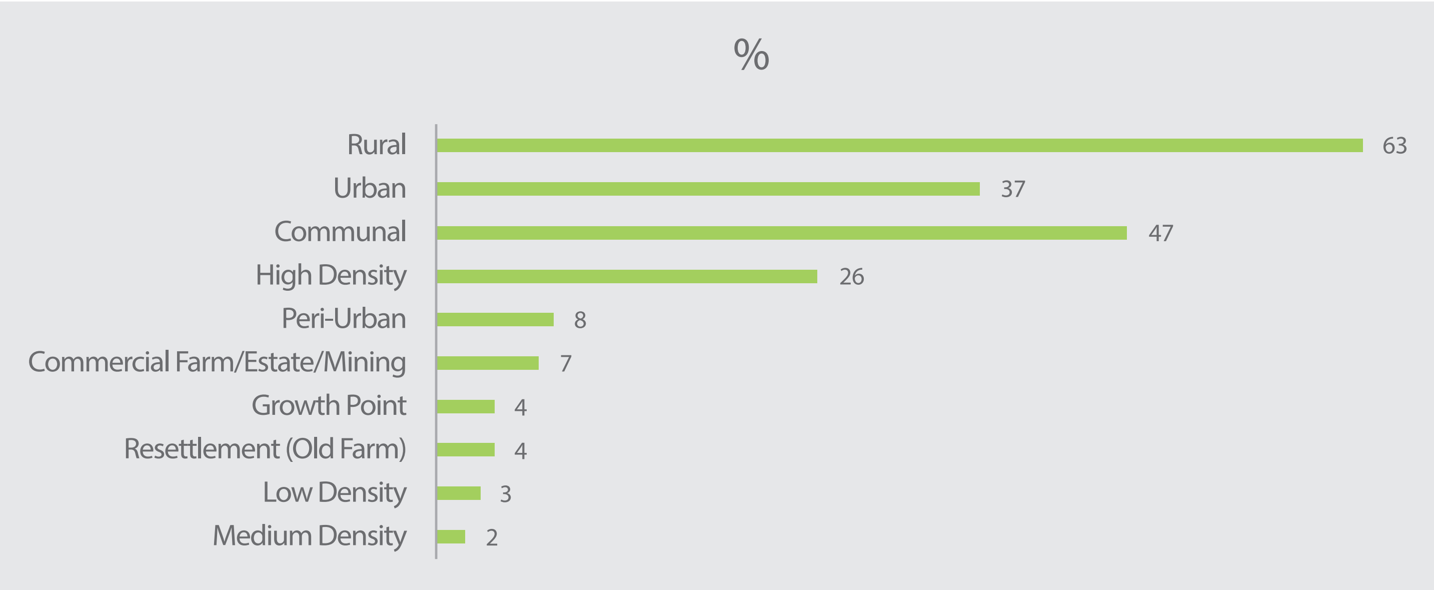
The research infused geographic stratification based on the eight typologies to ensure a reach to a wider cross-section of social groups as informed by Zimbabwe's reconfigured political economy [2].

These were drawn from the 10 administrative provinces of Zimbabwe.

Within the provinces, the following eight typologies were considered, noting how the realities of inhabitants are very much a function of their immediate or local environment and conditions:

- Communal areas
- Resettlement areas
- Commercial farm areas
- Growth points
- Peri-urban areas
- High-density areas
- Medium density areas
- Low-density areas [3]

Figure 1: Distribution of interviews by geographic typology [4]



A total of 47% were from communal areas, 26% from high-density areas, 8% from peri-urban areas, 7% from commercial farms/estates/mining areas, and 4% from growth points.

Respondents from medium-density and low-density areas constituted 2% and 3% of the sample, whereas 4% were from resettlement areas.

Of these, 53% were women, 47% were men, 63% were from rural areas, and 37% were urbanites.

4. Findings from the Study

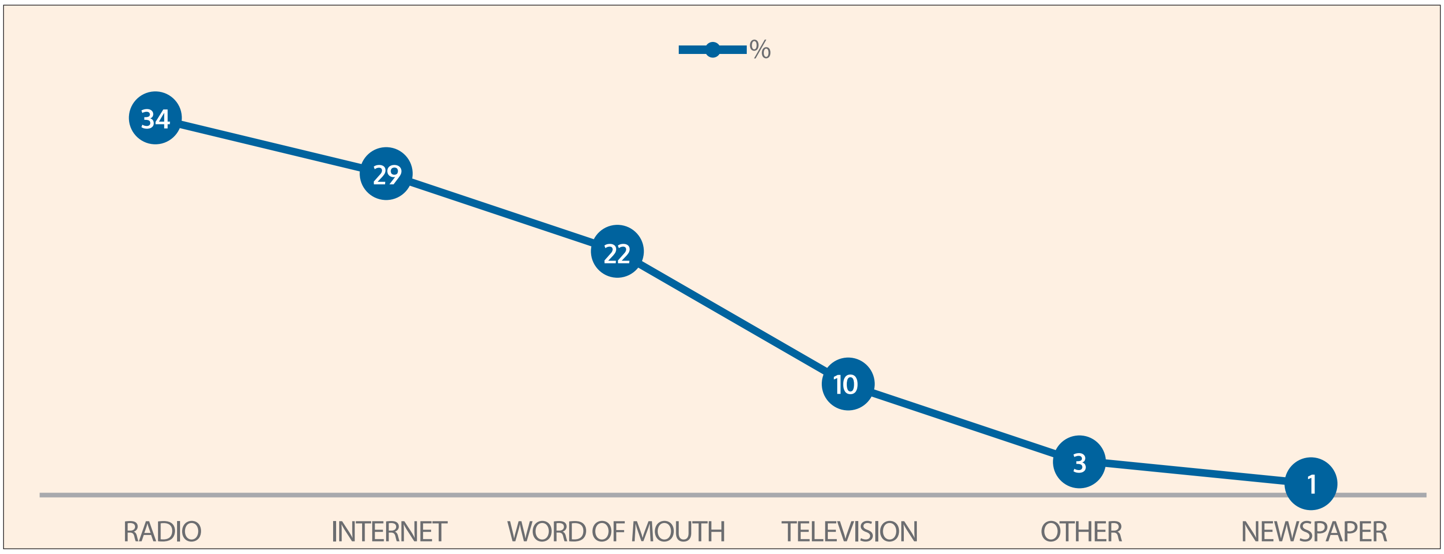
4.1 Current media structures — accessing media in Zimbabwe

BASED on the survey, the top five mediums for accessing information are distinguishable on the Zimbabwean media landscape and discussed in this report.

These are radio (34%); internet (29%); word of mouth (22%); television (10%); newspaper (1%); and other (3%).

The figure below gives an overall depiction of the commonly used media sources obtained from the survey.

Figure 2: Commonly used media sources [5]



(a) Radio

OUTSIDE community radio stations, there are 16 local radio stations, 10 of which are provincial and six that transmit nationwide.

The public broadcaster ZBC, controlled by the government, runs four national and two regional radio stations.

The national stations are **Power FM**, **Radio Zimbabwe**, **Classic 263**, and **National FM**.

The regional stations are **Khulumani FM** in the Matabeleland region and **95.8 Central** radio in Gweru.

Radio access by province

THE survey indicates that Manicaland province tops everyday radio listening at 24% and followed by Midlands 14%, Harare 13%, Masvingo 11%, Mashonaland West 10%, Mashonaland East 9%, Mashonaland Central 7%, Bulawayo 6%, Matabeleland South 4% and Matabeleland North 3%.

There is a notable low number of every day radio listeners in Mashonaland Central, Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.

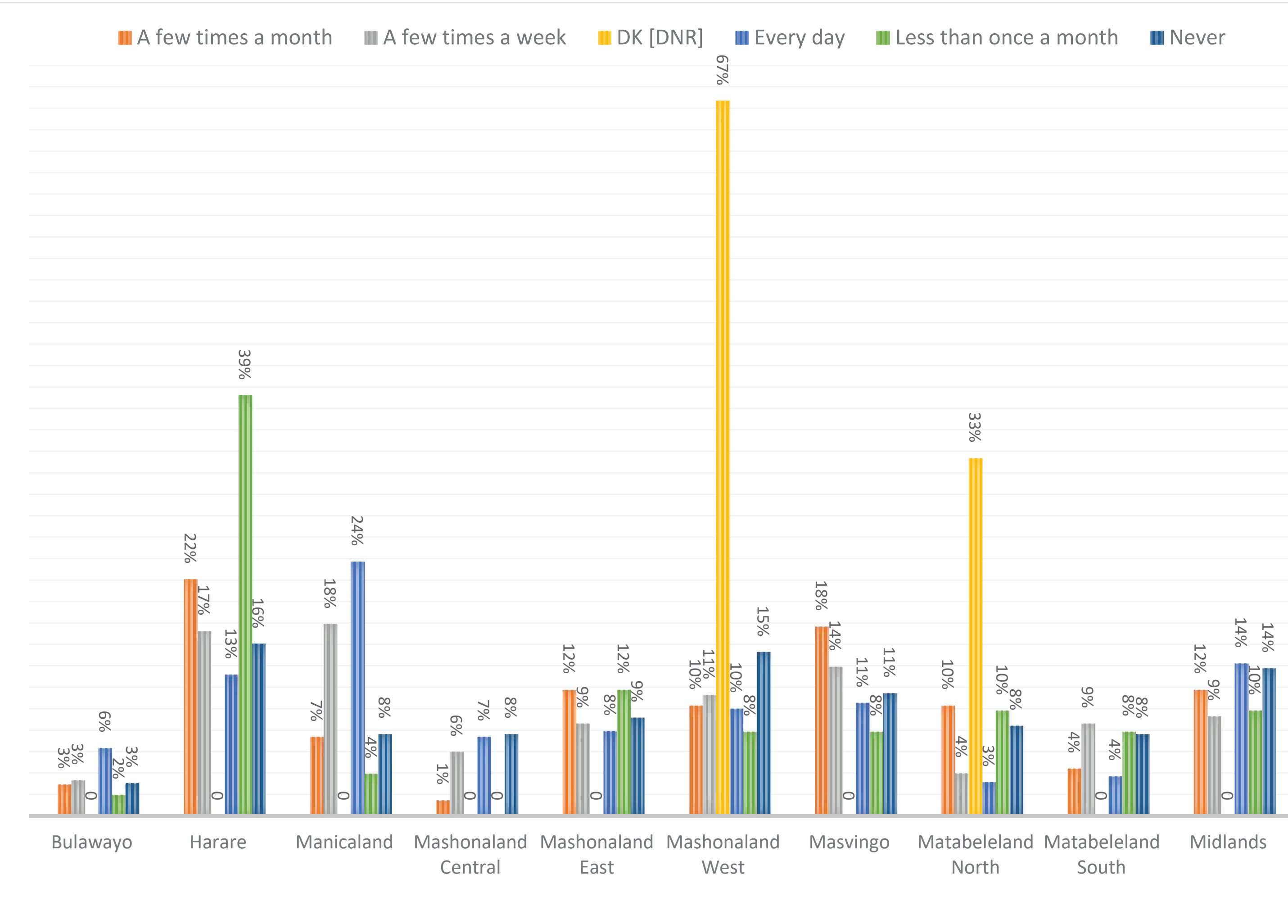
While the reasons for the varying radio listenership could not be immediately ascertained during the research, some of the general reasons for not listening to radio included reception, availability of gadgets and power sources, especially in the rural environs.

For the urban areas, it is possible that the presence of other media sources, such as the internet, act as an alternative source of media content sought after by the audiences.

THERE is a notable low number of every day radio listeners in Mashonaland Central, Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.

Figure 3: Radio access by province

Question: Which of the following do you use the most in your life?



Radio access by gender

A TOTAL of 33% males access radio daily compared to 31% females; while 26% males and 24% females indicated that they access the radio a few times a week.

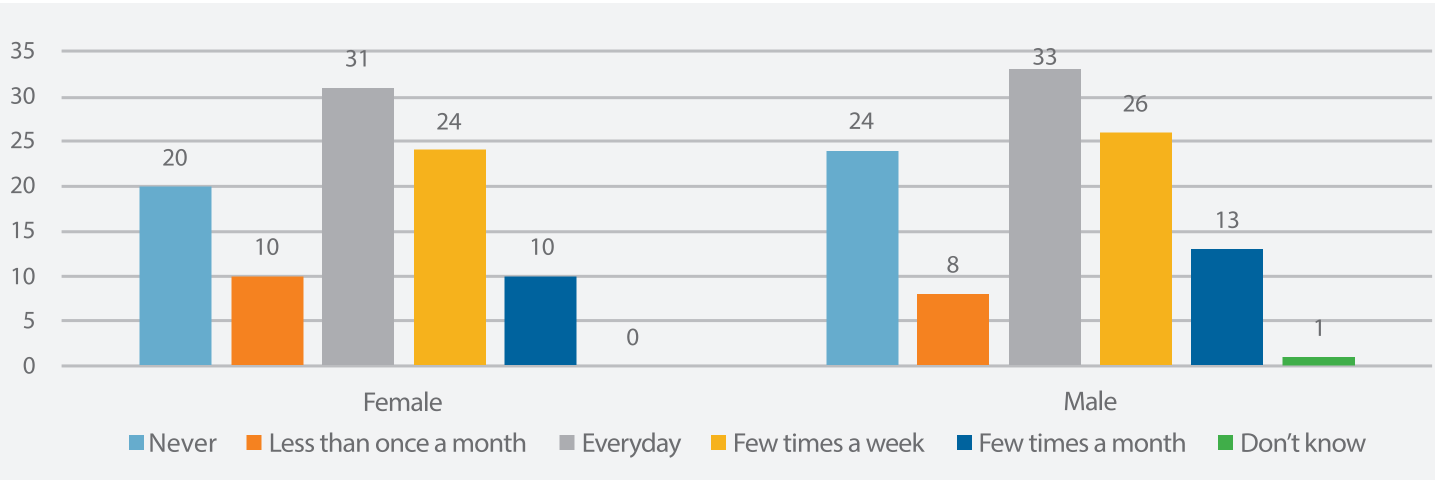
On the other hand, 20% females and 24% males do not access the radio at all as illustrated in figure 4 below.

However, a general observation on listenership is suggestive of **Radio Zimbabwe** having a higher listenership in the rural areas and also a considerable footprint in the urban areas as well.

A number of talk shows were identified as being popular with the rural folk especially on agriculture which is the mainstay for a significant majority as well as other social talk shows such as the popular **Tilda Show** [6] which has a sizeable listenership in both rural and urban areas.

In the urban areas, **Star FM** seems to have the largest footprint and is popular with younger listeners, driven mainly by the music content and discussion topics of contemporary pop culture talk shows such as the popular "Hot Topic" also known as "Hotsotso".

Figure 4: Radio access by gender

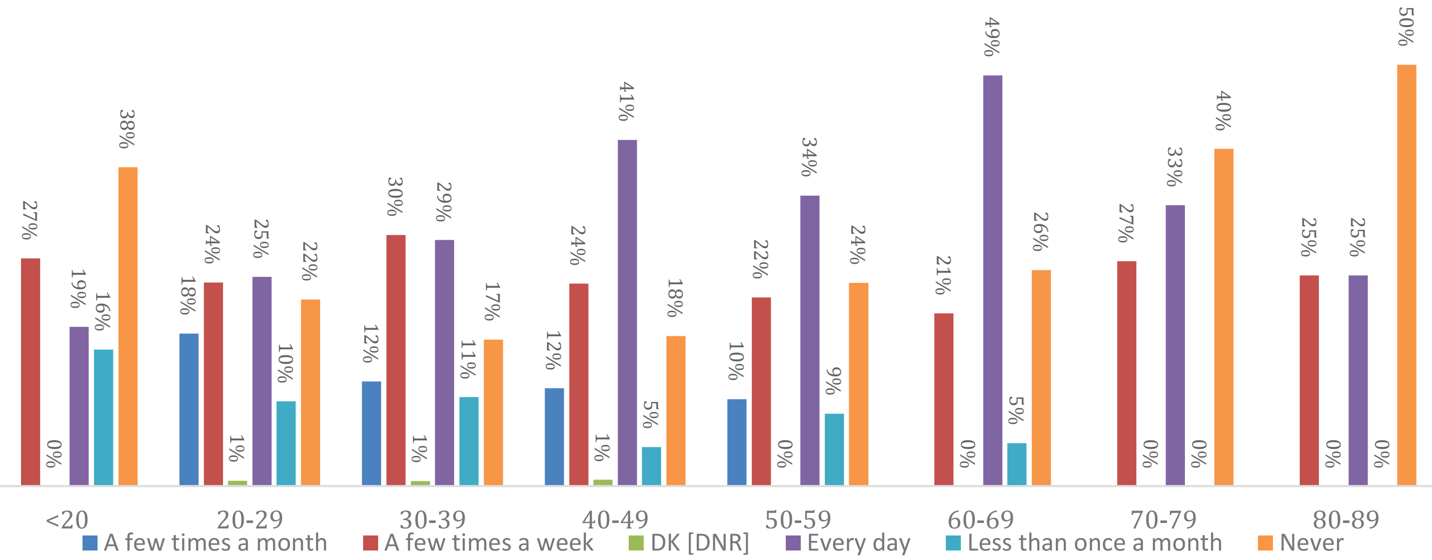


Radio access by age

THE survey data shows that radio access is high among the 30-39 age group at 83%, followed by 40-49 at 82%, 20-29 at 78%, 50-59 at 76%, and 60-69 at 74%.

On the other hand, radio access is low among the below-20-year-olds and the 60-69 and 70-79 age groups at 38%, 40%, and 50%, respectively, who do not have access to the radio.

Figure 5: Radio access



Results from this study show that radio is the most accessed and relied upon news source for most citizens, with 56% of the surveyed adult population reporting that they listen to it "a few times a week/every day".

This confirms previous studies by Afrobarometer (2022) [7] which noted that radio has long been Africa's most widely used mass media.

A previous study by MISA Zimbabwe and KAF in 2020 showed that radio is still the primary medium of communication accessed by most media consumers in Zimbabwe.

According to the Afrobarometer study, 68% of respondents say they use it at least a few times a week, including 45% who listen daily [8].

According to Afrobarometer (2023), radio remains Zimbabwe's top media news source at 65%, while social media has passed television to claim second at 41%, television at 28%, the internet at 25%, and print newspapers at 8% [9].

Local language broadcasts also draw radio listeners [10], which are available in Shona, isiNdebele, and 12 other official but regional languages on Zimbabwe's national radio, as well as a number of community stations.

Despite social media's contemporary competition in terms of news access, radio has retained its comparative advantage in this regard.

According to the **Voice of America** (2023),[11] although social media threatens radio's dominance among young, urban and educated residents in Zimbabwe, radio is still the most popular news source.

Digital media usage is expanding quickly, offering both new potential and challenges.

As internet usage increases across Africa, radio listening habits are shifting.

Afrobarometer (2023) reports that during the previous 10 years, the percentage of people who acquire news at least "a few times a week" through social media, the internet, or both has nearly doubled, rising from 24% to 43% [12].

However, digital media should be viewed as a partner that improves and broadens the reach of radio material to more people rather than as a threat to the existence of radio uses in Zimbabwe.

This is due to the decline in mobile phone prices, which may expand access to FM radio stations.

The growing accessibility of mobile phones has made it possible for radio and digital mobile technologies, particularly mobile phones, to continue to converge.

Afrobarometer asserts that "the mobile phone is the future of radio in Africa" [13].

Community radios

IN recent years, the government of Zimbabwe, through the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), has issued broadcasting licences to 14 community radio initiatives in eight provinces that are predominantly rural.

While there has been a notable increase in the presence of community radio stations after the opening up of space through the government's licensing of 14 radio stations, their role on the media landscape has remained quite limited in so far as reach is concerned.

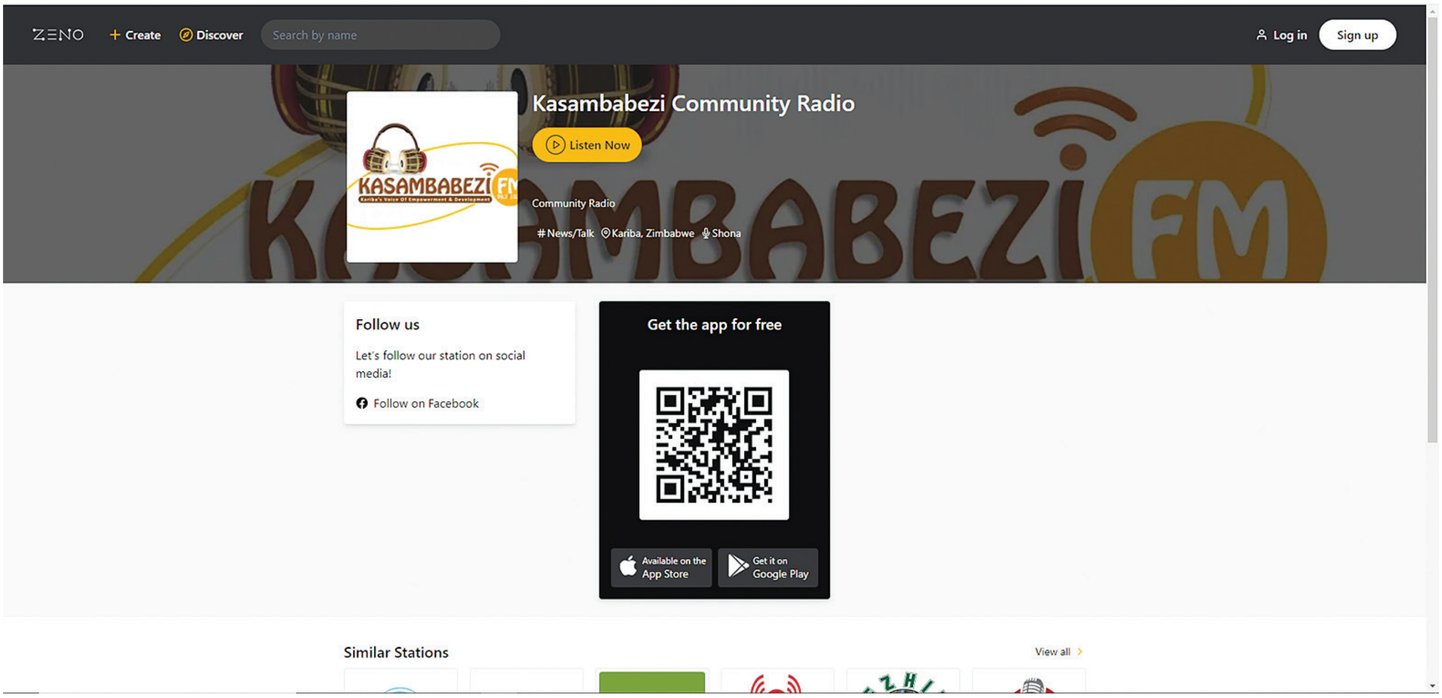
This limitation results from many factors, most notably the lack of broadcasting equipment and related facilities.

Additionally and by their nature, community radio stations usually have a geographically-bound focus, working either to localise national or global content to specific communities, or conversely projecting local community issues to a wider national or global audience.

Most have had to rely on streaming their broadcasts on *Facebook* and *YouTube*.

Most of them have also remained limited in terms of content.

Some of them, like **VeMuganga** (in Chipinge) and **Kasambabezi** (in Kariba), are the brainchild of local CBOs who are themselves also dogged by challenges of requisite funding, including capital funding to establish and operate properly.



Community radio access by province

SURVEY data indicates that usage of community radio stations in Zimbabwe is not that common, as evidenced by 60% of the surveyed population who said they do not use them that often.

The major reasons can be traced back to their structural limitations, especially in lacking the broadcasting capacity to be easily accessible via frequency modulation (FM) as other popular radio stations.

Most of those who use the community radio stations (24%) indicated that they do so to get an appreciation of what is happening in their localities.

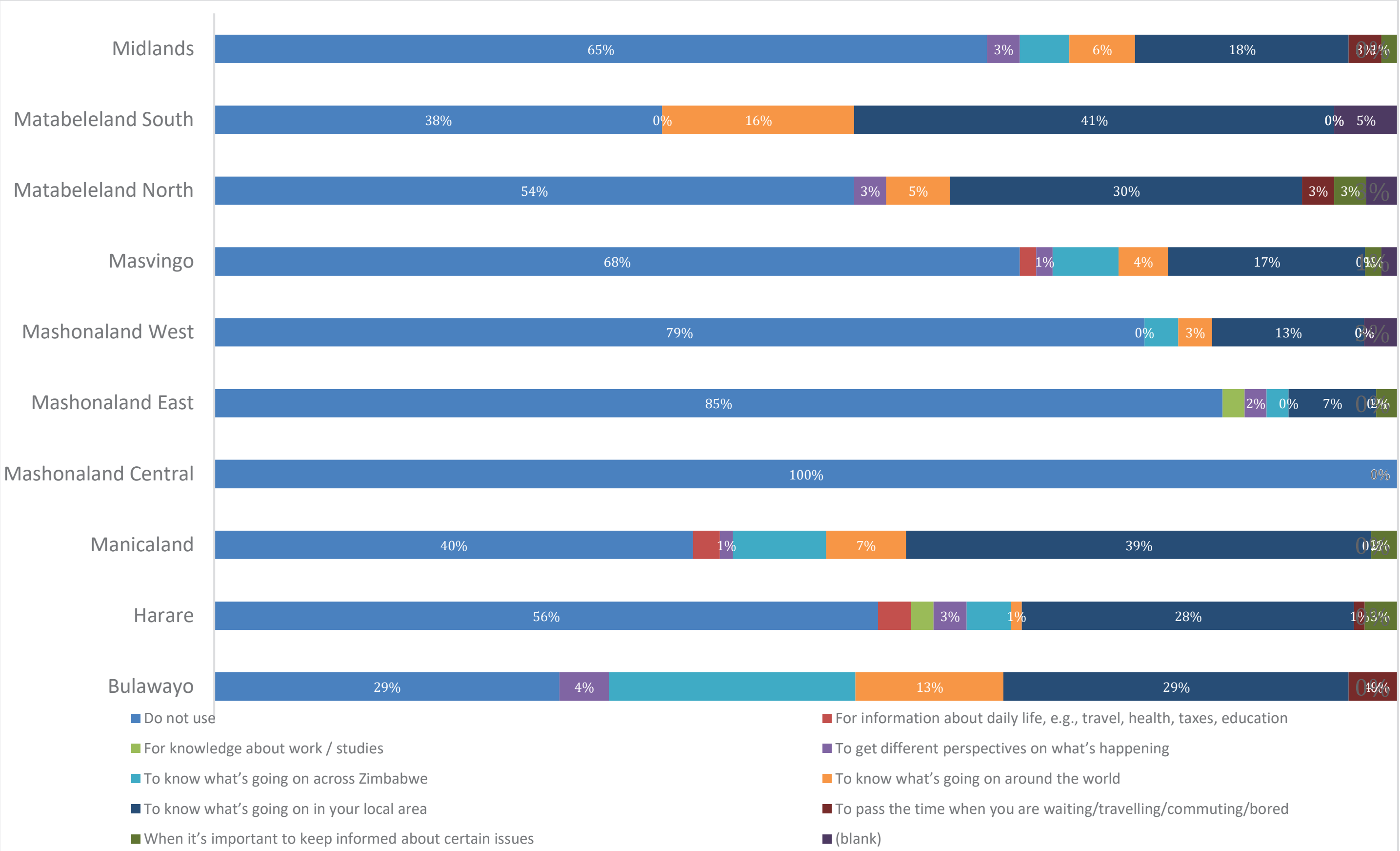
Mashonaland Central stands out uniquely as no respondent claimed access to community radio stations.

This is followed up by Mashonaland West, where 78% of respondents claim no access to community radios.

The survey data also indicates noticeably high numbers in Masvingo, Midlands, Harare, and Matabeleland North, where 68%, 65%, 56% and 54% of the respondents claim to have no access to community radios, respectively.

Only Bulawayo (29%), Matabeleland South (38%) and Manicaland (41%) have fewer respondents who claimed to have no access to community radios.

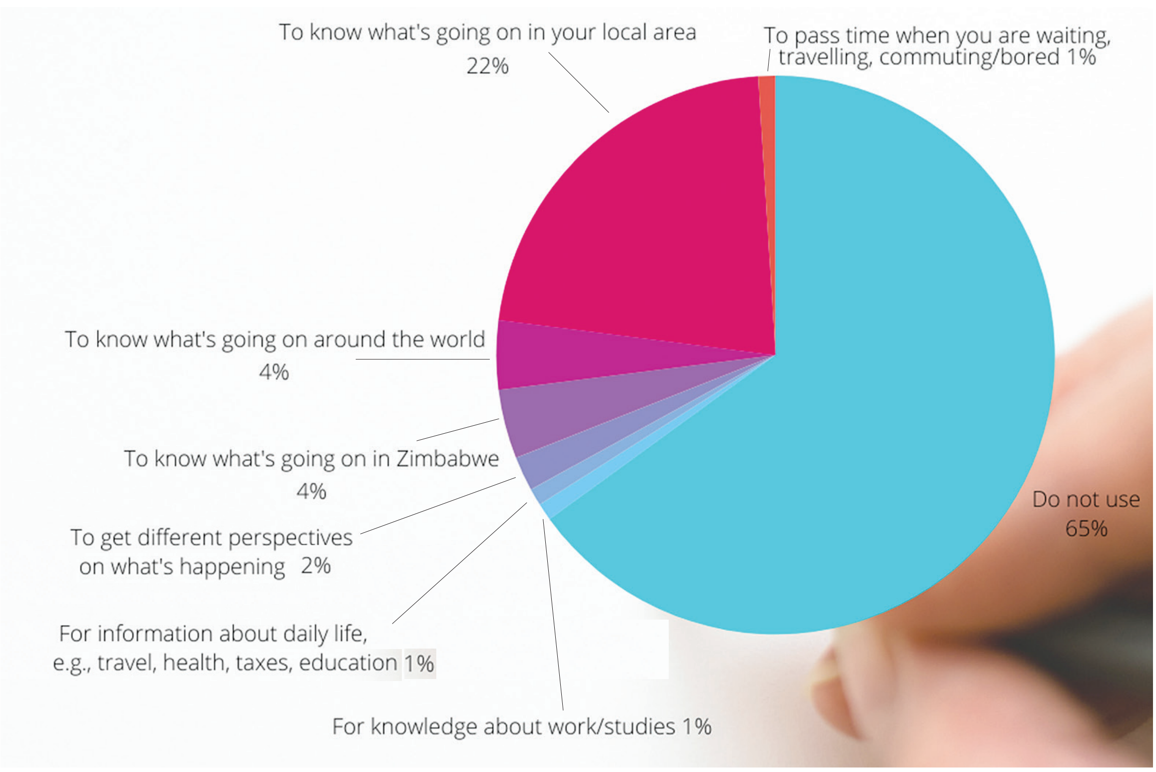
Figure 6: Community radio access by province



Community radio access by gender

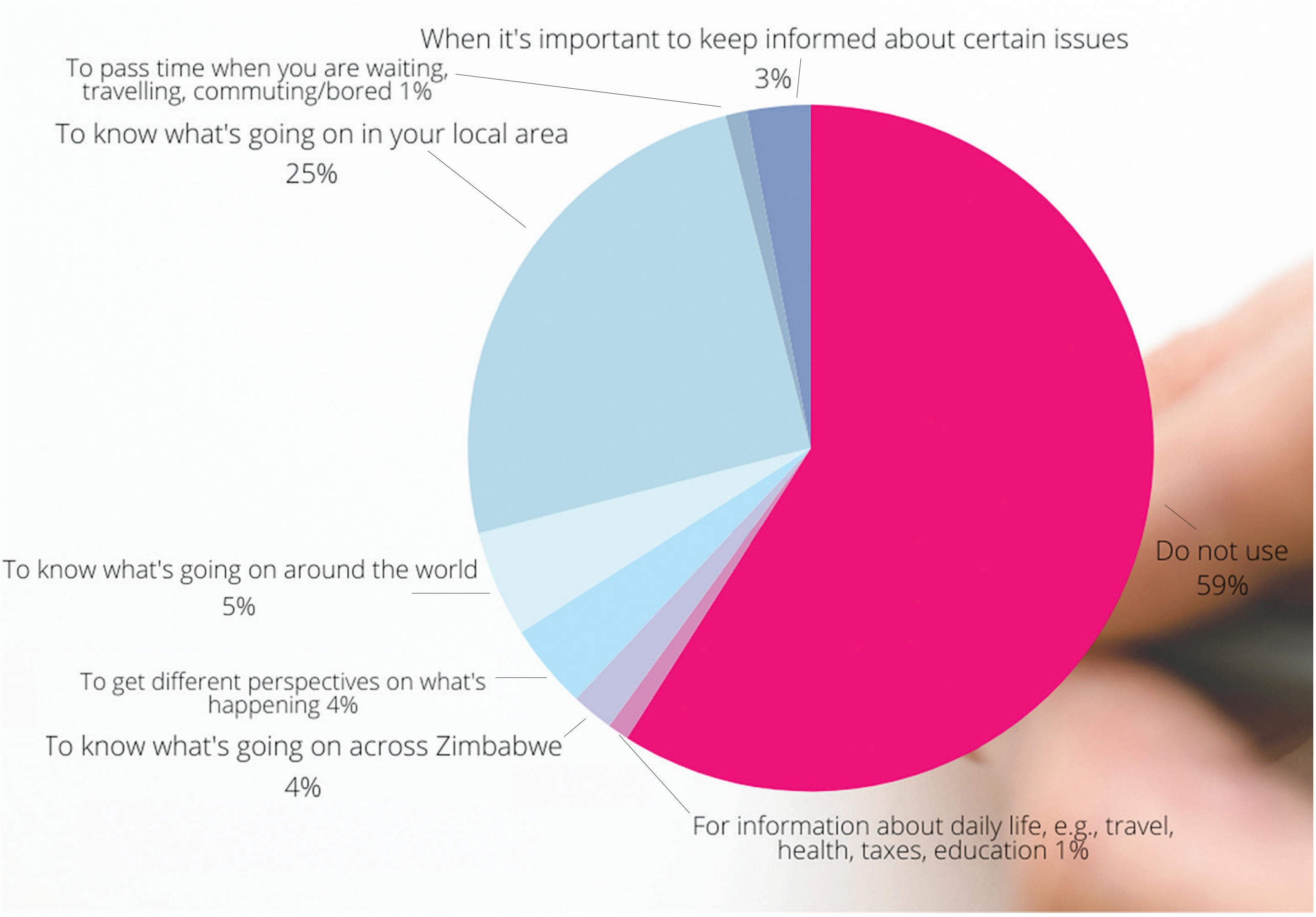
SURVEY data indicates that more males (41%) access community radios as compared to females (36%).

Figure 7: Female respondents on community radio access



Female (21%) and male (24%) access community radios for the purposes of knowing what happens in their local communities.

Figure 8: Male respondents on community radio access



(b) Television

SINCE the introduction of TV services in the country in 1960, the government owns and controls only one local free-to-air television channel.

In November 2020, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) granted free-to-air, national commercial TV broadcasting licences to six private companies after shortlisting 14 applicants, breaking the national broadcaster's 60-year-old TV monopoly.

The regulator gave the six successful applicants to 18 months to begin broadcasting.

TV stations that were awarded licences are the Bulawayo-based FairTalk Communications' **KeYona TV**, Zimpapers Limited's **ZTN (Zimpapers Television Network)** (now known as **ZTN Prime**), Rusununguko Media's **NRTV (Nkululeko Rusununguko Television)**, Jester Media's **3K TV** (now known as **3Ktv**), Acacia Media Group's **Kumba TV** and Channel Dzimbahwe's **Channel D**.

However, none of these six new stations are broadcasting on free-to-air at the moment.

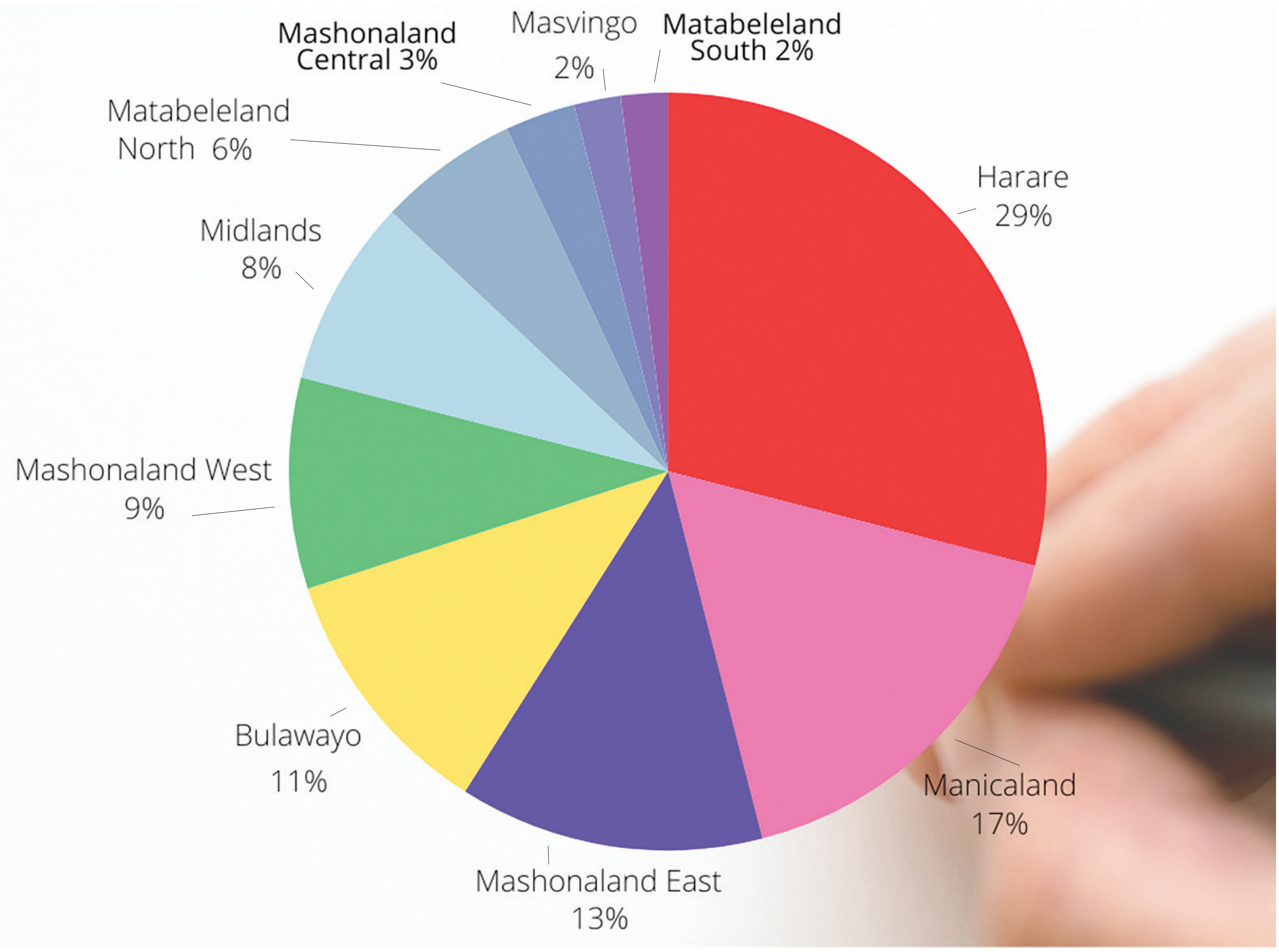
They are relying on satellite platforms. Of the 48 transmitters in the countries, only 18 have digitised.

Therefore, those with smart televisions in the areas with digitised transmitters, such as Harare, can access the other five stations.

They also rely on streaming on internet-based social media sites such as *Facebook*, *YouTube* and others on satellite platforms such as **DSTV** and **AZAM TV**.

Despite having one functional free-to-air commercial broadcasting television station, access to television remains significantly low in all the 10 provinces, with all below a third of the surveyed respondents.

Figure 9: TV access every day

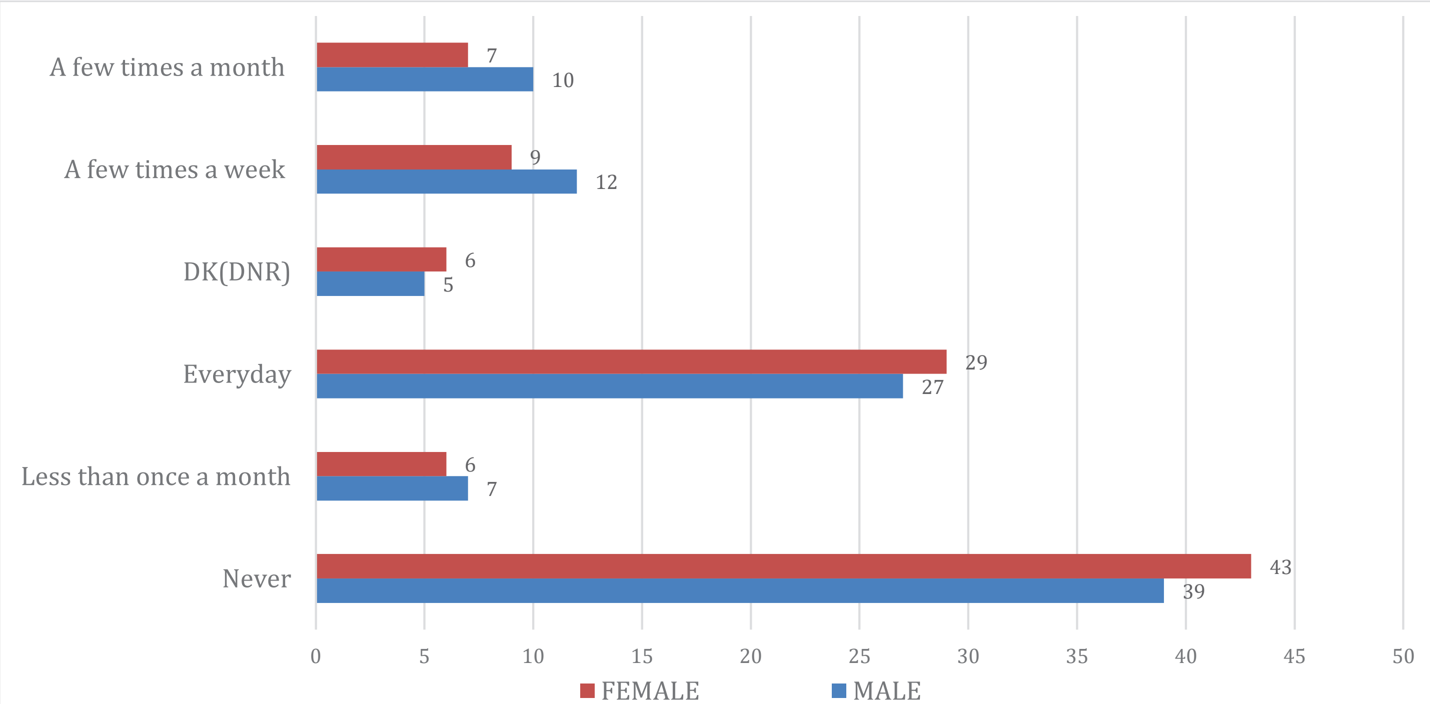


Survey data indicates that Harare has the highest daily access to television at 29%.

This is followed by Manicaland (17%), Mashonaland East (13%), Bulawayo (11%), Mashonaland West (9%), Midlands (8%) and Matabeleland North (6%).

Mashonaland Central (3%), Masvingo, and Matabeleland South (2%) have least everyday access to television.

Figure 10: TV access by gender



Survey data indicates that 56% of men have overall access to television compared to 51% of women.

On the other hand, women have more daily access to television at 29% compared to 27% of men.

Also, a significant point to note is that a high proportion of both men and women have no access to television, at 39% and 43%, respectively.

A 2020 survey by MISA Zimbabwe [16] noted how poor reception, intermittent or non-existent power and low levels of disposable income conspire to ensure that television has an urban bias regarding access.

According to the Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 367 of 16 June 2020, “TV [set] ownership is relatively rare in rural areas: Only one in four rural households (24%) have televisions [sets], compared to two-thirds (68%) who have radios” [17].

However, pockets or enclaves of the privileged rural elite have access to television; these include current and former civil servants (teachers, police officers, nurses, and veterinary and agricultural extension officers), employees of public enterprises, the diaspora and local business people.

The diaspora also influences this rural elite as part of the remittance economy or “family aid” [18].

Rural families immersed in these economies can access television, solar batteries and satellite sets.

Access to extra-territorial broadcasting in borderline communities also allows for the consumption of foreign media content.

Artisanal mining communities also have access to television sets dominated by young males.

In addition, it was also noted that young males and youth access television at local rural business centres mainly for sport and entertainment.

It is within that process that other important news or information is intermittently consumed in an unsystematic fashion.

> *POCKETS or enclaves of the privileged rural elite have access to television; these include current and former civil servants (teachers, police officers, nurses, and veterinary and agricultural extension officers), employees of public enterprises, the diaspora and local business people.*

(c) Print media

SURVEY data suggests that the use of newspapers in hard copy is minimal, as shown by 68% who said they do not use public newspapers as their sources of news and 12%, respectively, said they use public newspapers to get an appreciation of what is happening in Zimbabwe and across the globe.

A tiny proportion, 2%, reported doing so to get information about daily life.

In contrast, a similar proportion indicated that they do so to obtain information related to work or studies.

Private newspapers as sources of information do not play a pivotal role in the life of Zimbabweans, with 72% reporting that they do not use this medium.

The major underlying reason is the acutely low circulation of print newspapers, especially outside the main metropolitan cities.

It is in the main cities that the few printed copies are bought and read.

Extrapolating from the key economic issue of cost, it is mainly in the low density/high-income areas that these are purchased and read.

Of those who indicated that they use private newspapers, 12% claimed that they use them to receive information on what is happening worldwide.

The survey shows that 6% claimed that they use that as a means to get information about what is happening in the country, while three per cent said this would be motivated by the need to get different perspectives on what is happening.

Magazines are the least used source of information, as shown by 77% of the surveyed population responding that they don't use them.

Again, local production of print magazines has decreased drastically, with famed magazines such as **Parade** and **Moto** going out of circulation long back.

Only 5% of the surveyed respondents reported that they use magazines to obtain information about daily life (for example, travel, health, taxes and education), and 6% said they resort to magazines to know what is happening worldwide.

In contrast, a similar proportion said they use magazines to pass the time when waiting / travelling/ commuting, or bored.

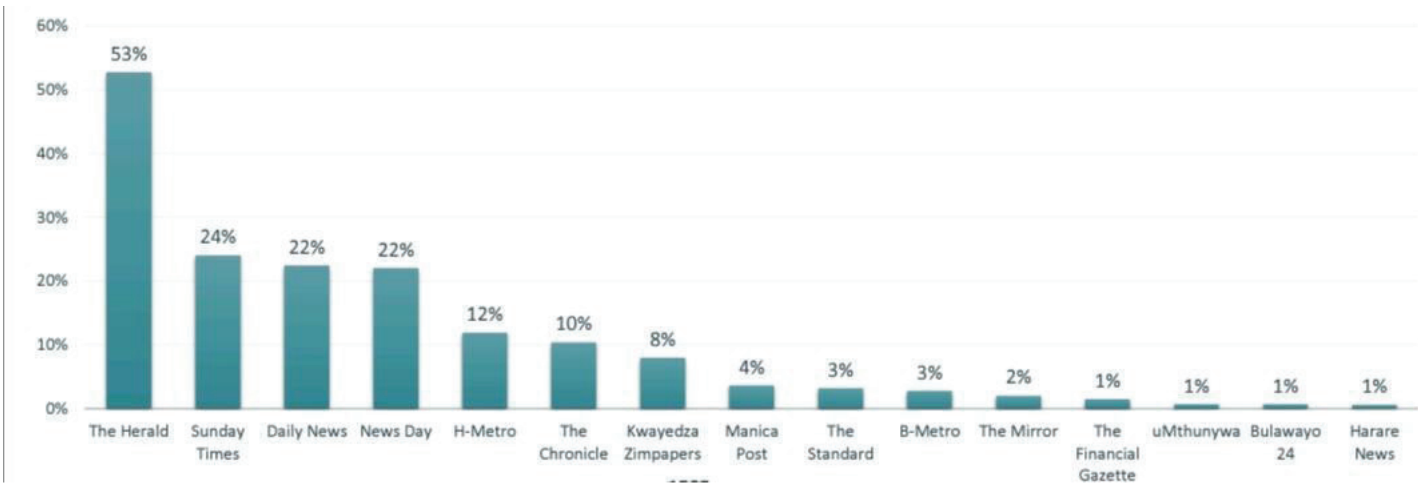
These survey results were corroborated through both group discussions and informant interviews, which pointed to the downward trend in readership of print newspapers and other sources such as magazines.

It is worth noting, however, that the fall in readership of the print version has not necessarily translated into a shift from the concept of the newspaper or other formats of print media such as magazines, which have increasingly seen a "re-birth" or resurgence in online forms with Zimbabweans accessing news headlines on *WhatsApp* groups and with the likes of **263 Chat** sharing news headlines daily to subscribers via *WhatsApp*.

Print media practitioners have thus become creative by creating shortened digital versions shared on *WhatsApp* groups in response to the new realities in the media landscape.

However, the reach of these shortened digital versions remains a grey area that needs to be pursued in further studies.

Figure 11:



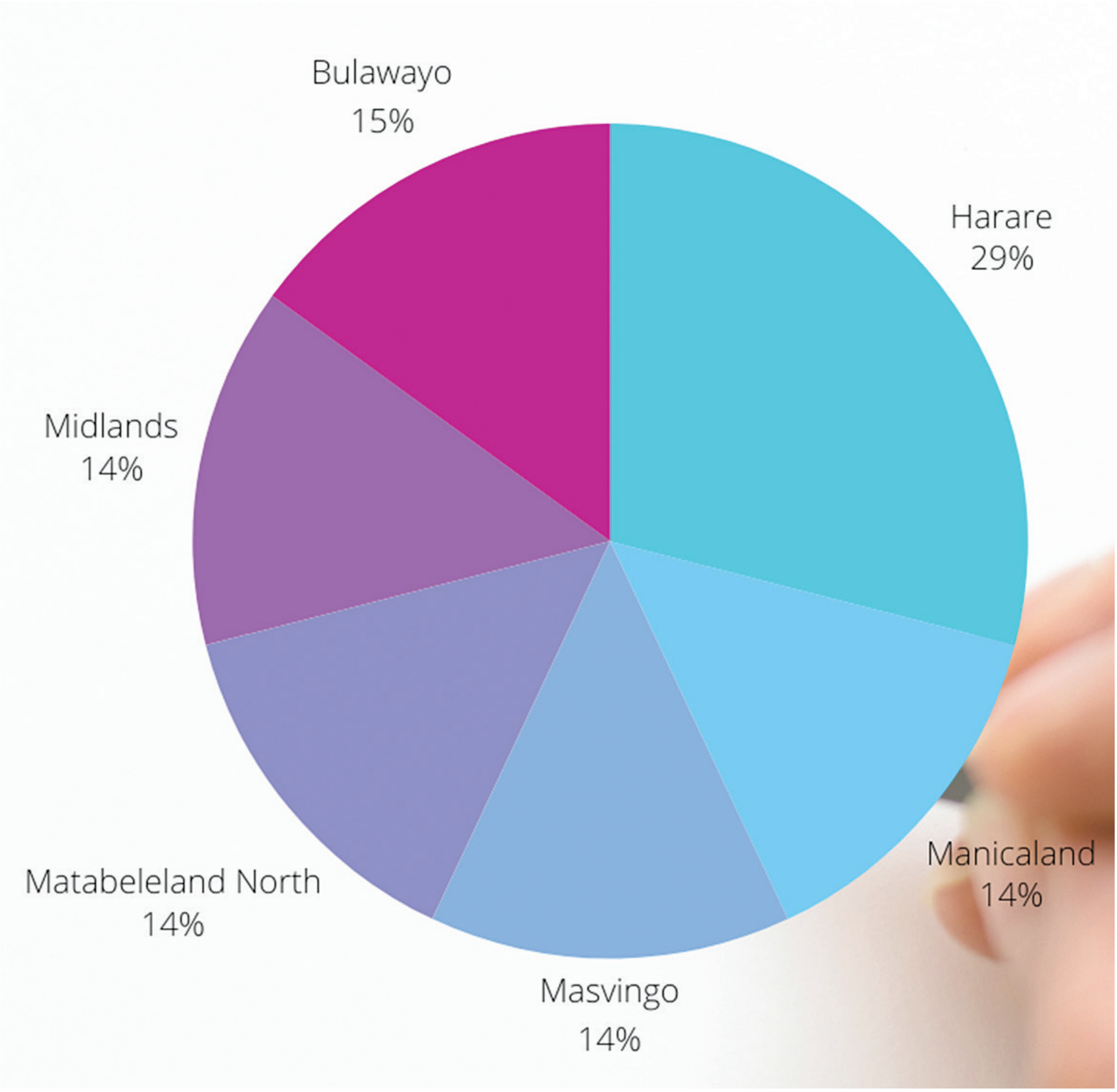
Source: GeoPoll 2019

In the second half of 2022, the Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS) [19] reported that 23% of the adult population read daily newspapers and 13% read weeklies.

The Herald maintained its pole position as the most-read daily newspaper with a 52% share.

Newspaper access by province

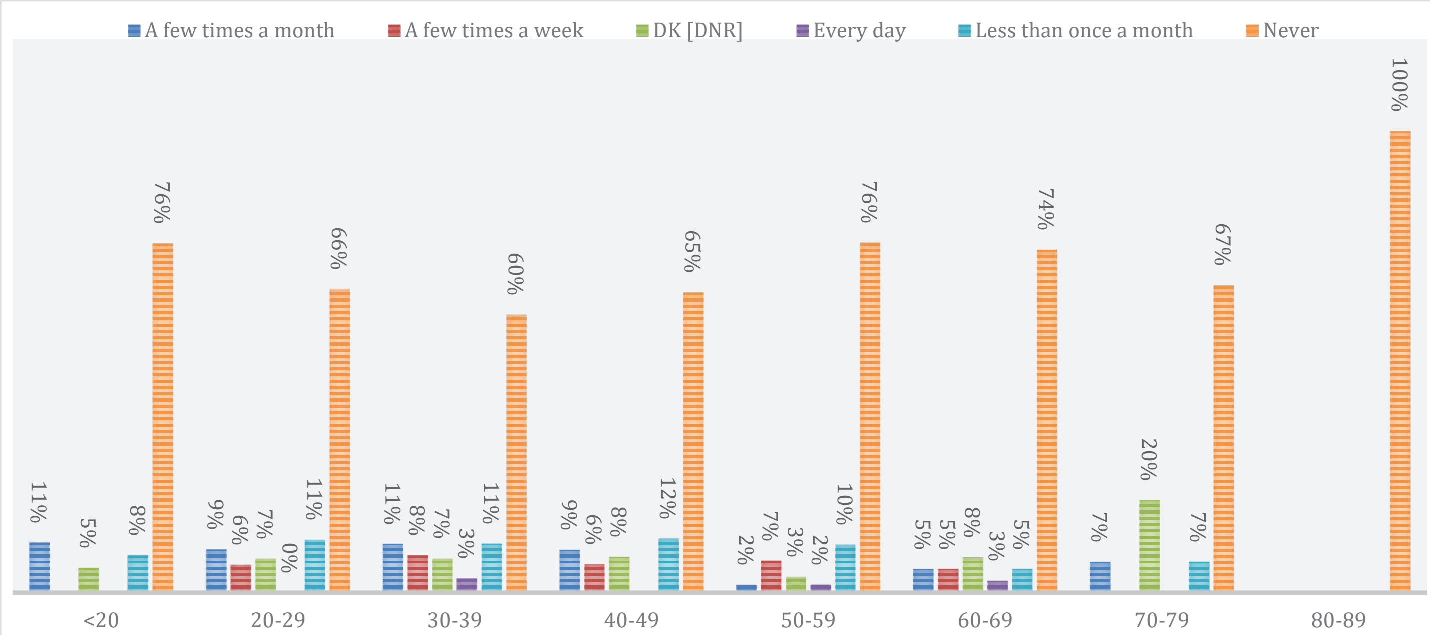
Figure 12: Print newspaper access — everyday



Survey data indicate that Harare has the highest newspaper access at 29%, followed by Bulawayo at 15% and Manicaland, Masvingo, Matabeleland North, and Midlands at 14%.

Newspaper access by age

Figure 13: Print newspaper access by age



SURVEY data indicates that the below 30 age groups do not have access to newspapers every day, while the above 30 age groups do access newspapers; the figures are very low, with the 30-39 age group reporting 3% access, followed by 50-59 at 2 % and 60-69 at 3%.

The 40-49 and 70-79 reported no every day access but limited access of 7%. The 80-89 age group reported no access at all.

More recent data gleaned from an analysis of popular news websites via similarweb.com shows that readership trends have mostly stayed the same online.

Currently, **The Herald** still rules the roost in Zimbabwe.

New entrants such as the Centre for Innovation and Technology (**CITEZW**), a civic organisation-cum-media house, have made great strides in penetrating the media landscape, as shown in Figure 5 below. So, too, has the online news site **ZimLive**.

While the prominence of online news sources was initially aided by the opening up of mobile-based internet access during the Government of National Unity era from 2009 to 2013, the more recent COVID-19 pandemic worked to hasten the migration by mainstream newspaper publishers from the physical copy to online or web-based newspapers.

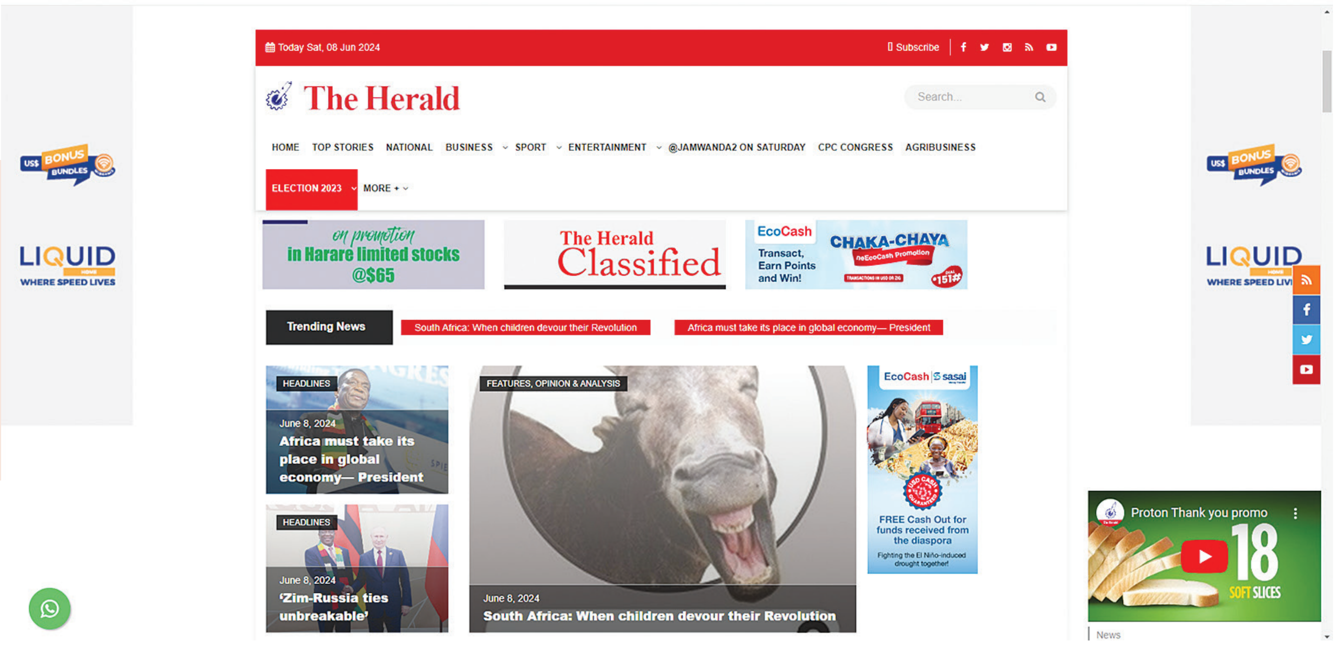


Figure 14: Total visits and engagement of top news websites in Zimbabwe: Aug-Oct 2023

Total visits
Aug 2023 - Oct 2023 · Worldwide

Domain	
cite.org.zw	16,353
herald.co.zw	565,427
chronicle.co.zw	180,397
zimlive.com	61,891
newsday.co.zw	217,161

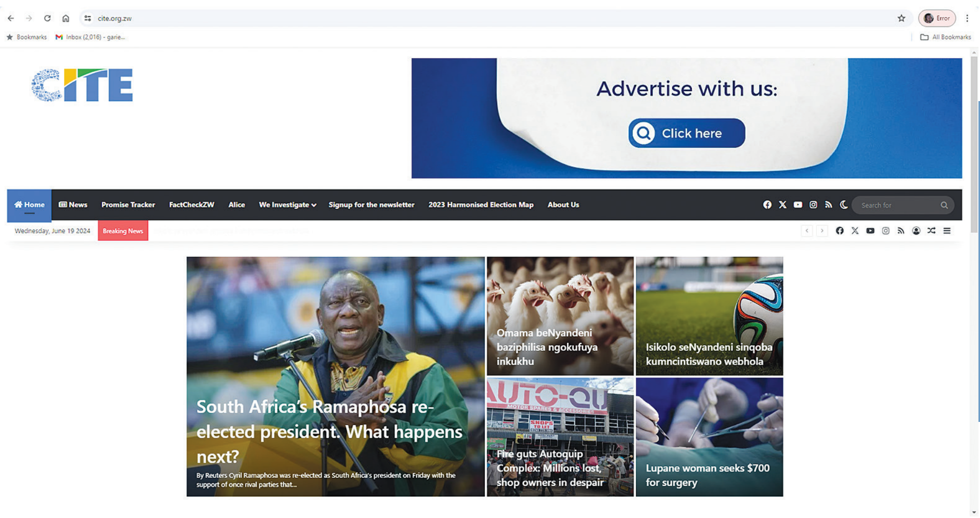
Device distribution
Aug 2023 - Oct 2023 · Worldwide

Domain	Desktop	Mobile
cite.org.zw	10.8%	89.2%
herald.co.zw	21.7%	78.3%
chronicle.co.zw	15.4%	84.6%
zimlive.com	9.1%	90.9%
newsday.co.zw	12.9%	87.1%

Engagement

Metric	cite.org.zw	herald.co.zw	chronicle.co.zw	zimlive.com	newsday.co.zw
Monthly visits	5,451	**188,476**	60,132	20,630	72,387
Monthly unique visitors	< 5,000	**59,859**	23,972	8,078	25,868
Visits / Unique visitors	1.43	**3.15**	2.51	2.55	2.80
Visit duration	00:03:26	00:04:02	00:03:40	00:03:24	**00:04:04**
Pages per visit	**2.25**	1.87	1.88	2.11	2.02
Bounce rate	66.24%	55.43%	57.82%	59.13%	**52.04%**
Page Views	12,291	**352,630**	112,865	43,451	146,575

Source: GeoPoll 2019



(d) New media

NEW media refers to forms of communication and entertainment that have emerged or evolved with the advancement of digital technologies.

These include various digital platforms like the internet, social media, mobile devices, streaming services, virtual reality, and interactive multimedia.

New media are characterised by their interactivity, accessibility, and often their ability to facilitate user-generated content and participation.

They have transformed how information is produced, distributed, and consumed, leading to shifts in communication patterns, audience engagement, and media consumption habits.

Also known as alternative media, there have emerged due to the rise in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which distinctly ride on the internet and are mostly accessed via mobile devices.

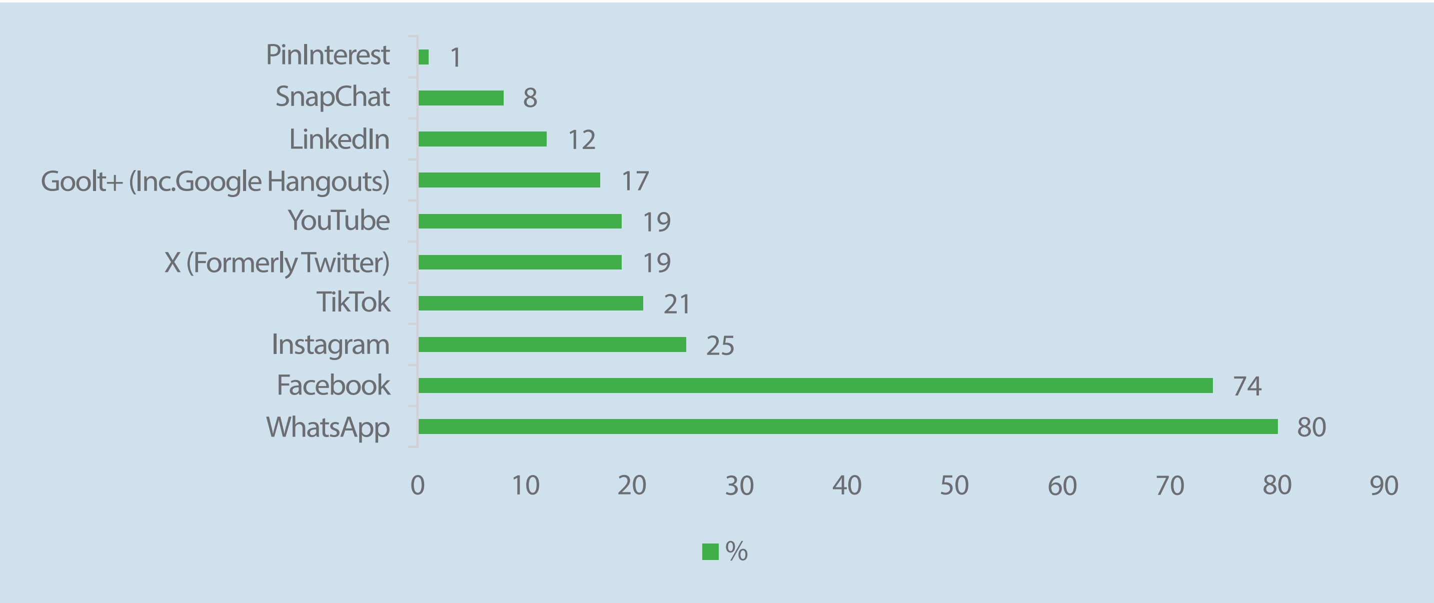
According to the survey, most Zimbabwean citizens have a profile or account on one or more different social media sites or applications.

The majority have accounts on *WhatsApp* (80%) and *Facebook* (74%).

Other fairly common media sites include *Instagram* (25%), *TikTok* (21%), *X* (formerly *Twitter*) (19%) and *YouTube* (19%).

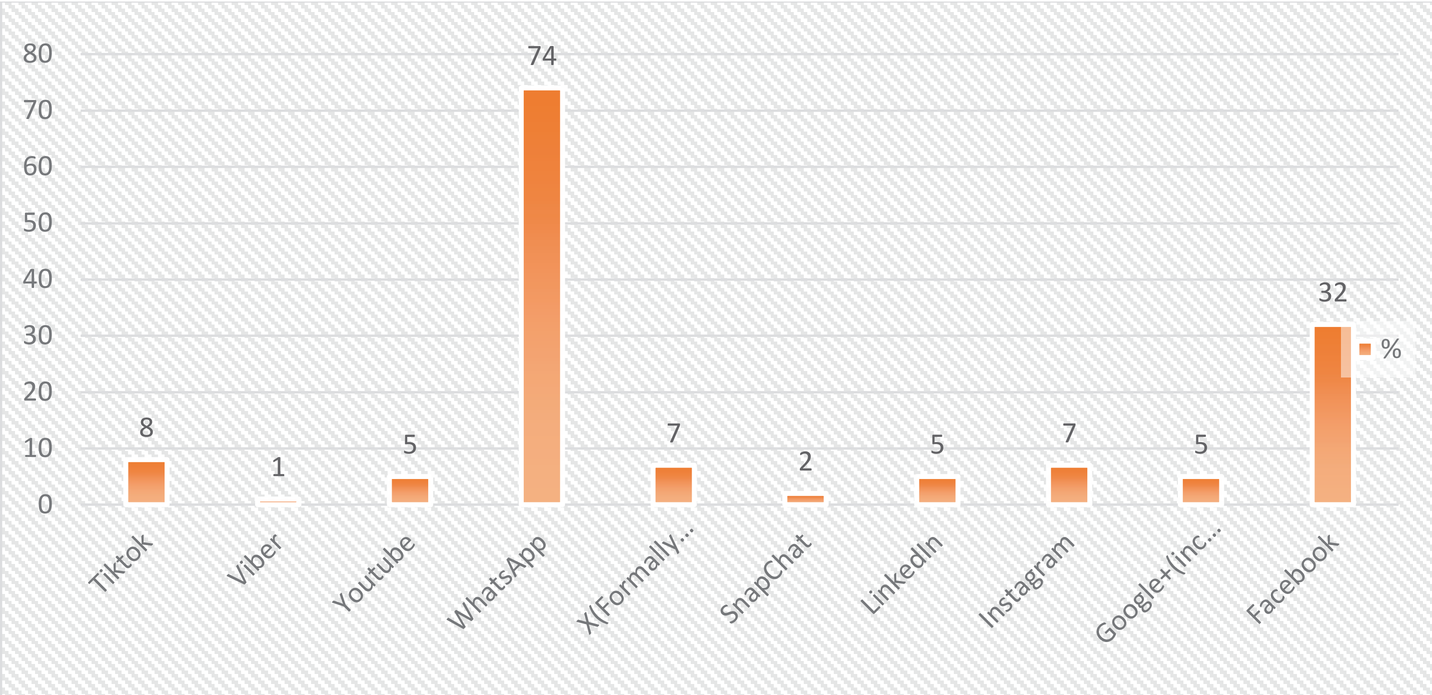
> *NEW media are characterised by their interactivity, accessibility, and often their ability to facilitate user-generated content and participation. They have transformed how information is produced, distributed, and consumed, leading to shifts in communication patterns, audience engagement, and media consumption habits.*

Figure 15: Sites or apps Zimbabweans have a profile or account on [20]



Source: Fieldwork Survey

Figure 16: Mostly commonly used social media as a percentage [21]

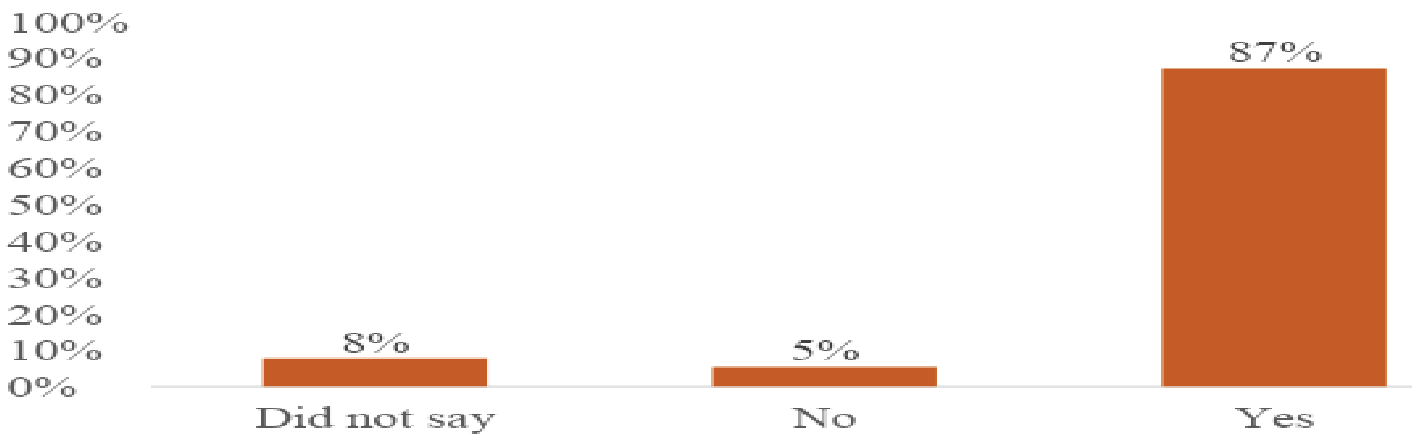


For this survey, the new media were considered as falling within the broad basket of what is referred to as "social media" which comprises the following five main media platforms: *WhatsApp*; *Facebook*; *X* (formerly *Twitter*); *Instagram*; and *TikTok*.

An overwhelming majority of internet users have one or more of these social media accounts.

Thus, 87% of them use an account to connect with others through activities such as posting and reading messages, using "chat" functions within games, sharing photos or videos, reading or posting comments, or choosing to "follow" or "friend" other people.

Figure 17: Social media account possession (N=285)



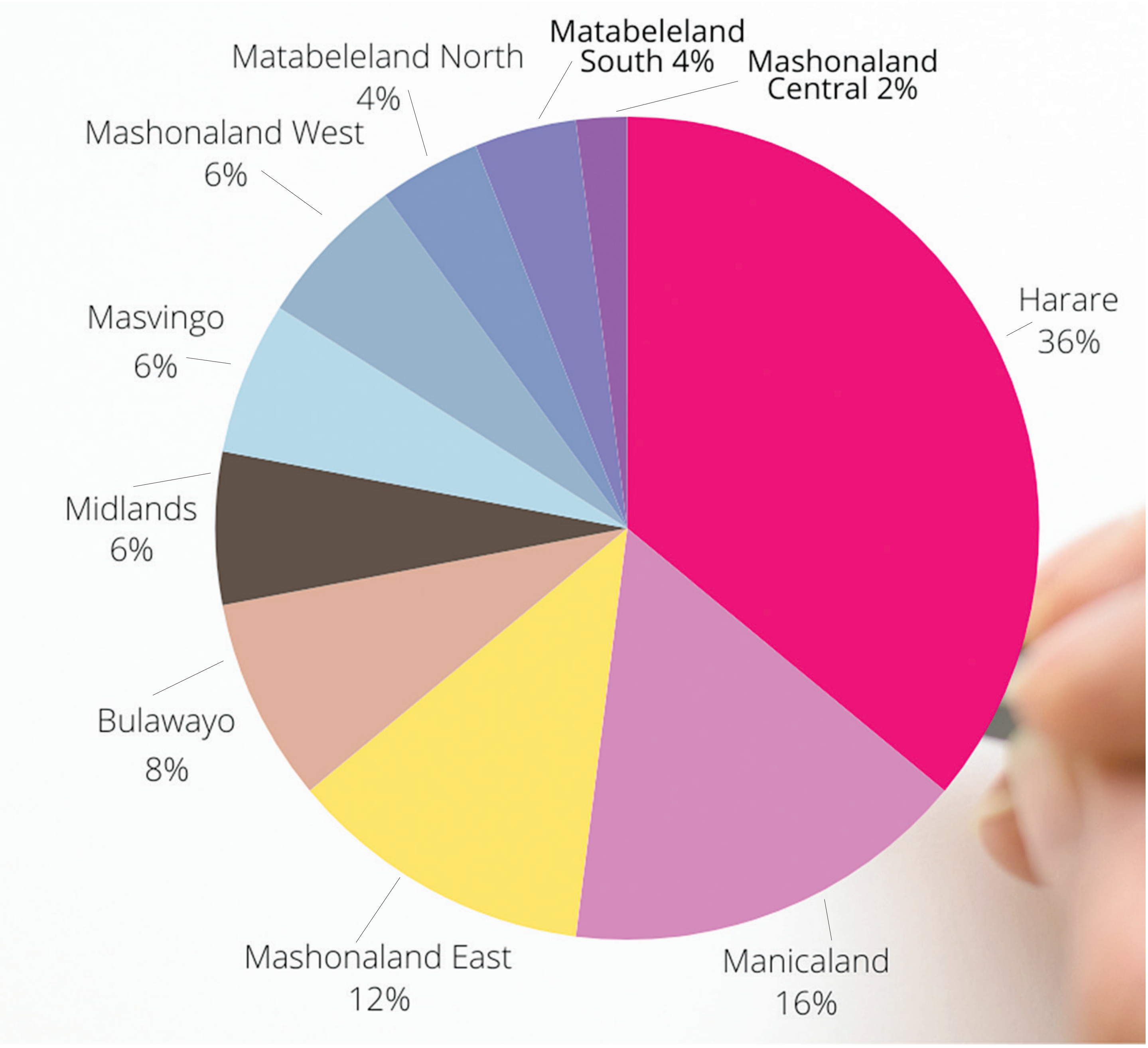
Source: Fieldwork Survey

From the survey findings, social media emerged as the second most common medium citizens use to obtain information.

Survey data indicates that 28% said they use it to know what is going on across the globe, 9% to get information across Zimbabwe, 8% to know what is happening in their localities, and 8% said they use it in cases when they want to be kept informed about certain issues.

Access to social media by province

Figure 18: Social media access — everyday



Survey data shows that Harare has the highest social media access at 36% , followed by Manicaland at 16%; Mashonaland East at 12%; Bulawayo at 8%; Midlands, Masvingo and Mashonaland West 6%; Matabeleland North and South at 4%; and Mashonaland Central 2%.

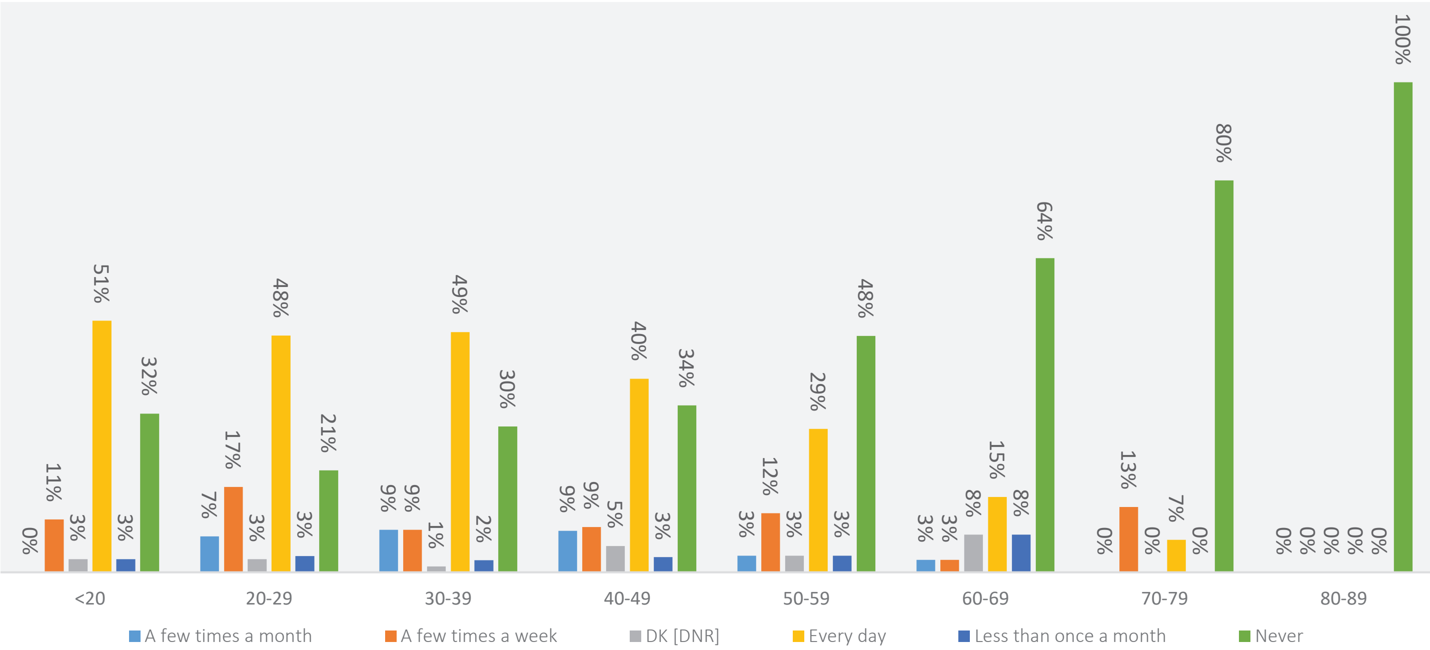
Social media access by age

Survey data indicates that the younger the age group, the more likely they are to be on social media.

The below-20 age group tops social media access at 51%, followed by 20-29 at 48%, 30-39 at 49%, and 40-49 at 40%.

From the 50-59 age group, social media access starts declining sharply, with the 80-89 age group indicating no access at all.

Figure 19: Social media access by age



d(i) WhatsApp

SURVEY data indicates that 80% of the respondents have a *WhatsApp* account/profile, pointing to widespread social media usage.

Other researchers have said, "*WhatsApp* is the internet for Zimbabweans" [22].

This corroborates qualitative insights, showing that *WhatsApp* is the most used social media platform by a majority of citizens.

This corroborates another study by the International Republican Institute (IRI 2023) [23], which noted that *WhatsApp* has become essential for community-level information sharing and communication in Zimbabwe, with 44% of all mobile internet users in Zimbabwe using it.

Politics and personal issues are just two main themes discussed through this social networking site.

WhatsApp has become extremely popular, especially in remote locations with limited internet access.

It uses less data, making it a cheap choice for sharing and reading news.

Notably, all three mobile network providers in Zimbabwe provide data bundles (cheaper promotions) tailored specifically for *WhatsApp*, thus promoting its widespread use.

Its widespread adoption is largely attributed to its versatile group features and convenient call options.

WhatsApp groups have become virtual hubs for social interaction, business networking, and community organising, allowing individuals to easily connect with peers, colleagues, and customers, acting as a "one-stop shop" for news, entertainment, and socialising.

The platform's seamless integration with other social media platforms further amplifies its reach and utility, making it a central hub for various activities.

For instance, individuals selling products on *Instagram*, *Facebook* and *Twitter* often leverage *WhatsApp* as a primary channel for customer engagement and transactions, creating a symbiotic relationship between the different platforms.

This interconnectedness underscores *WhatsApp*'s pivotal role in Zimbabwean society, serving as a cornerstone of digital communication and commerce.

Businesses also use *WhatsApp* to market and sell their products, and informal traders (AKA runners) have set up *WhatsApp* groups to market and sell their products.

Thus, *WhatsApp* has become an important business platform. In addition, during COVID-19, some schools formed *WhatsApp* groups to share educational material and information.

Church sermons and services moved to *WhatsApp* during COVID-19. Some have maintained these groups to date.

These *WhatsApp* groups straddle across many borders and have local, regional and global dimensions.

The proliferation of *WhatsApp* groups also promotes a sense of community, segmenting users and allowing for more nuanced media targeting by various actors.

d(ii) Facebook

ACCORDING to Data Reportal, Zimbabwe had about 1.2 million *Facebook* users in early 2023 [24].

With this number of users, Facebook is ranked second in social media popularity ratings.

Though the platform is sought after for news updates, personalised communication and commentary, the Meta-owned platform [25] has been flagged for disinformation, especially during the 2023 pre-election environment [26].

With the issue of misinformation and fake news being topical, Meta's analysis tools show that between 2022 and 2023, *Facebook*'s overall reach, including its advertising potential in Zimbabwe remained unaltered.

According to DataReportal (2023), between October 2022 and January 2023, there were 200,000 fewer people in Zimbabwe whom marketers could target with *Facebook* advertising, a 13.3% decline [27].

This decline can be explained by how *WhatsApp*, a cheaper medium, has increasingly made inroads in the marketing and advertising space.

However, *Facebook* only allows users 13 years and older to use its site, so it is important to note that 12.2% of Zimbabwe's "eligible" population will use *Facebook* in 2023.

For added context, in January 2023, *Facebook*'s advertising reach in Zimbabwe was equal to 22.7% of the nation's internet users (across all age groups).

d(iii) Instagram

IN 2023, it was anticipated that *Instagram*'s advertising reach in Zimbabwe was at 381,700 users in early 2023, or 2.3% of the country's population [28].

The majority of platform users are more interested in social issues than political information, even though political players use the platform to distribute campaign materials and statements.

However, *Instagram* only allows users aged 13 and above to access its site, so it is important to know that 3.6% of Zimbabwe's "eligible" population will use *Instagram* in 2023.

It is also important to note that at the beginning of 2023, *Instagram*'s advertising reach in Zimbabwe was equal to 6.7% of all local internet users (regardless of age).

Early in 2023, Zimbabwe's *Instagram* ad audience comprised 59.1% men and 40.9% women.

d(iv) X, formerly Twitter

DESPITE the prevalence of false information and deception, *X*, formerly *Twitter*, has become a significant forum for national concerns in Zimbabwe.

Recognising *X*'s power to influence public opinion, political parties, civil society organisations, and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission have all shown a predilection for using it.

For Zimbabweans, *X* has developed into a crucial political gathering place, fostering a thriving network of political commentators and providing an important space for discussions on politics that are difficult to convene physically owing to the limitations in civic and democratic space.

X is used for critical debate, allowing citizens to publicly share their opinions about the nation's affairs despite the repercussions of criticising the ruling party [29].

Additionally, posts on the platform use less data as they tend to be short, making them a more cost-effective choice than radio and television programmes that rely heavily on images or video [30].

Since the recent changes in *X*'s ownership, one of the stakeholders interviewed for this research stressed that recognising and blocking inauthentic actors on *X* has become more difficult.

Early in 2023, according to the company's own data, there were 75.6% men and 24.4%women within Zimbabwe's *X* audience [31].

It is important to note, however, that *X* infers the gender of its users by examining signs like the names users submit in their profiles and their overall activity on the platform.

d(v) TikTok

TIKTOK is well-liked among young people in Zimbabwe, especially the 18-24 and 25-35 age groups, accounting for 53.6% and 45.5% users, respectively [32].

Instead of political dialogue, the platform is mostly used for social interaction.

Therefore, a more in-depth study would need to be done to ascertain the real matrices involved regarding social media usage and access, especially for the nascent social media sites such as *TikTok* and *Instagram*.

(e) Oral/word of mouth

THE use of word of mouth is also a very important medium of communication and access to information among the surveyed Zimbabweans.

From the current study, 22% of respondents said they rely on word of mouth as their primary source of information.

Most of the surveyed citizens use it when they want to know what is going on in their local areas.

Of these, 10% said they use this when they want to know what is taking place in Zimbabwe, while a similar proportion said this is done to pass the time when travelling/commuting/bored, and 8% resort to get an appreciation of different perspectives.

Furthermore, 6% use word of mouth, when they want to be kept informed about certain issues, and the desire to know what is happening around the world, is also shared by 6% of the surveyed population.

According to a 2020 research [33] on access to media in Zimbabwe's rural areas, while corroborating the reliance on traditional media, highlighted how traditional forms of accessing and sharing information play an integral role in many rural communities and how they are largely integrated with the modern mainstream and new media.

The few rural inhabitants with access to the mainstream media play an important, but lopsided intermediary role as they pass on information received within their communities.

Rural communities have also deferred to disseminating information through communal meetings organised through the traditional leadership structure of chiefs and headmen and other community development initiatives.

It is essential for aid agencies to engage the traditional leadership in local communication initiatives for their work to succeed.

Similarly, teachers and head teachers are significant in disseminating information in rural communities.

This role has, however, exposed them to targeting for victimisation by political parties during times of heightened political tension [34].

In most rural communities, word of mouth is the anchor of rural information flow and is highly integrated with other information systems to form an information ecosystem that feeds on and off each other.

It cuts across all facets of the information needs of rural communities, addressing political, economic and social needs.

It is generally slower and prone to distortions as key interests intermediate to advance personal goals.

The Afrobarometer Dispatch No.367 makes similar observations on the importance of traditional media in the exchange of information in society: "But other people surpasses all media channels as a regular news source, cited by 64% of respondents" [35].

> *IT is essential for aid agencies to engage the traditional leadership in local communication initiatives for their work to succeed.*

4.2 Dominant media themes and consumption habits

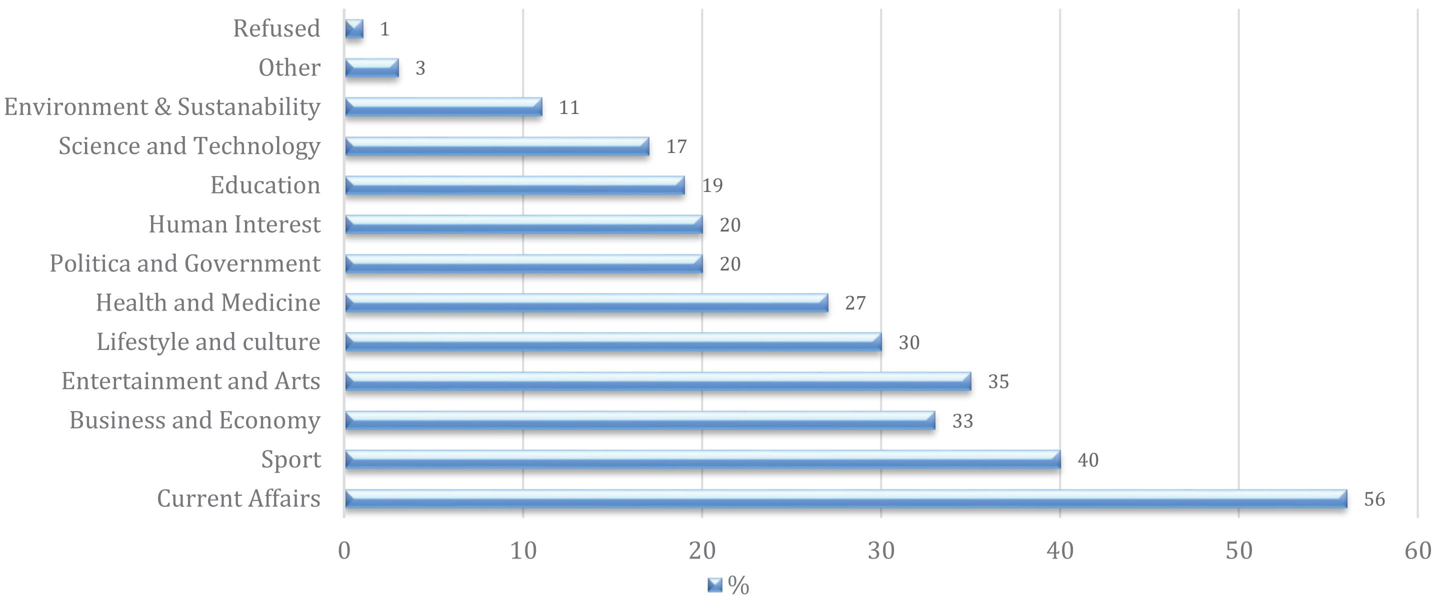
ASKED about some of their specific interests, 56% reported they were interested in current affairs news.

Of these, 40% reported being interested in sports. In comparison, 37% reported that they were passionate about business and the economy, while 35% said they were interested in issues around entertainment and arts.

Meanwhile, 30% expressed their interest in lifestyle and culture, while 27% stated their interest in health and medicine and a similar proportion said the same about human interest issues.

In addition, 19% expressed their interest in education and 11% expressed their interest in environment and sustainability issues. This is reflected in the table below.

Figure : Citizens' media interests [36]



Rationale for pursuing news

THE surveyed adults offered different reasons for following the news.

The research indicated that 59% follow news to know what is happening around the globe, particularly in Zimbabwe.

Survey data indicate that 59% of the respondents said they consume news to appreciate what is happening worldwide, while 56% do so to learn what will happen in Zimbabwe.

The survey showed that 25% do so to appreciate what will happen in their local areas, while 23% want to know what will occur in their respective provinces.

Among the respondents were some citizens who reported that they consume news to get information about daily life, for example, travel, health, taxes, education), a view held by 20% of those surveyed.

A significant proportion of the surveyed population said they follow the news to get different perspectives on current affairs.

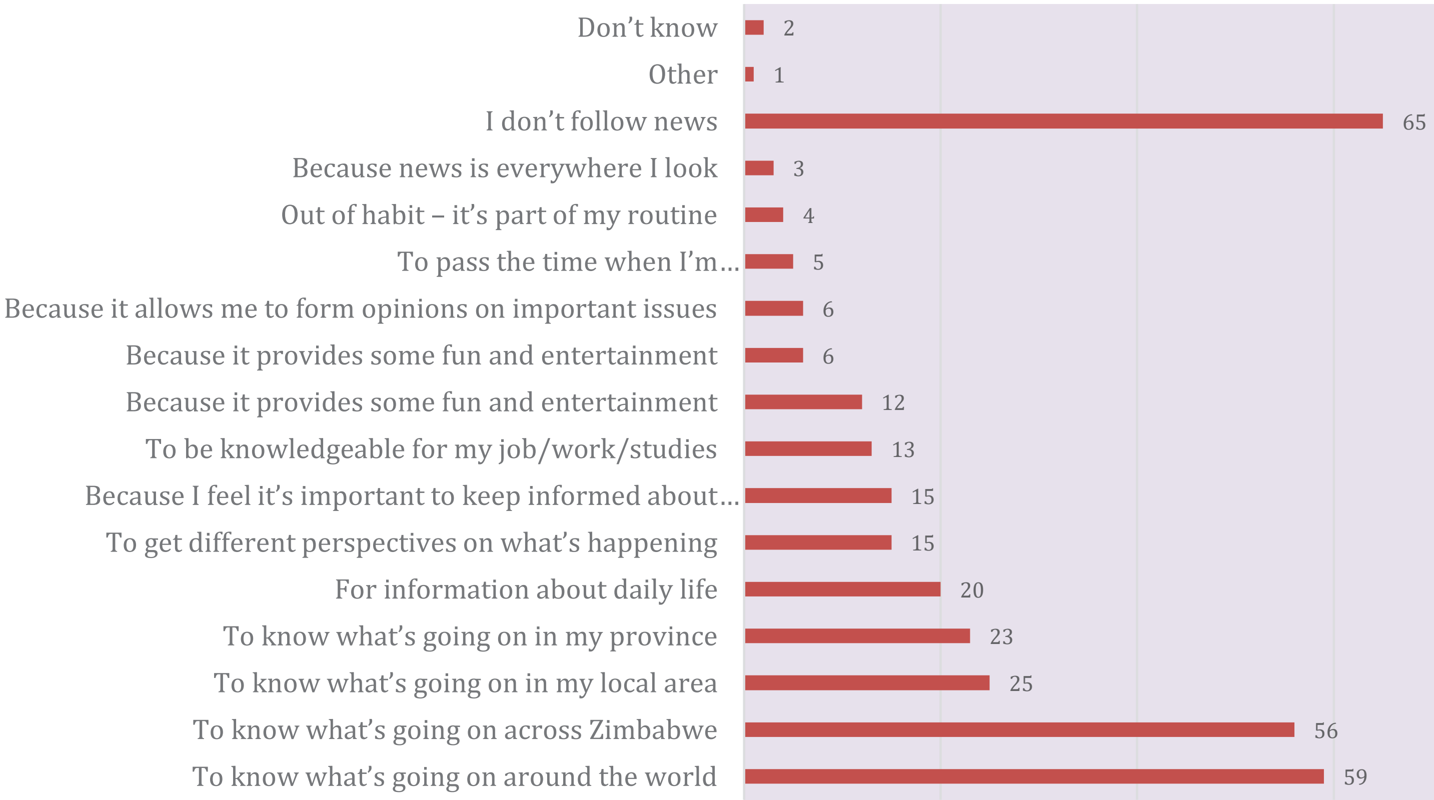
Yet a similar proportion do so to keep informed about certain issues.

In contrast, 13% do so to be knowledgeable about their jobs and studies, while 12% follow the news for fun and entertainment.

A total of 4% listen out of habit, whereas 5% listen as a pastime .

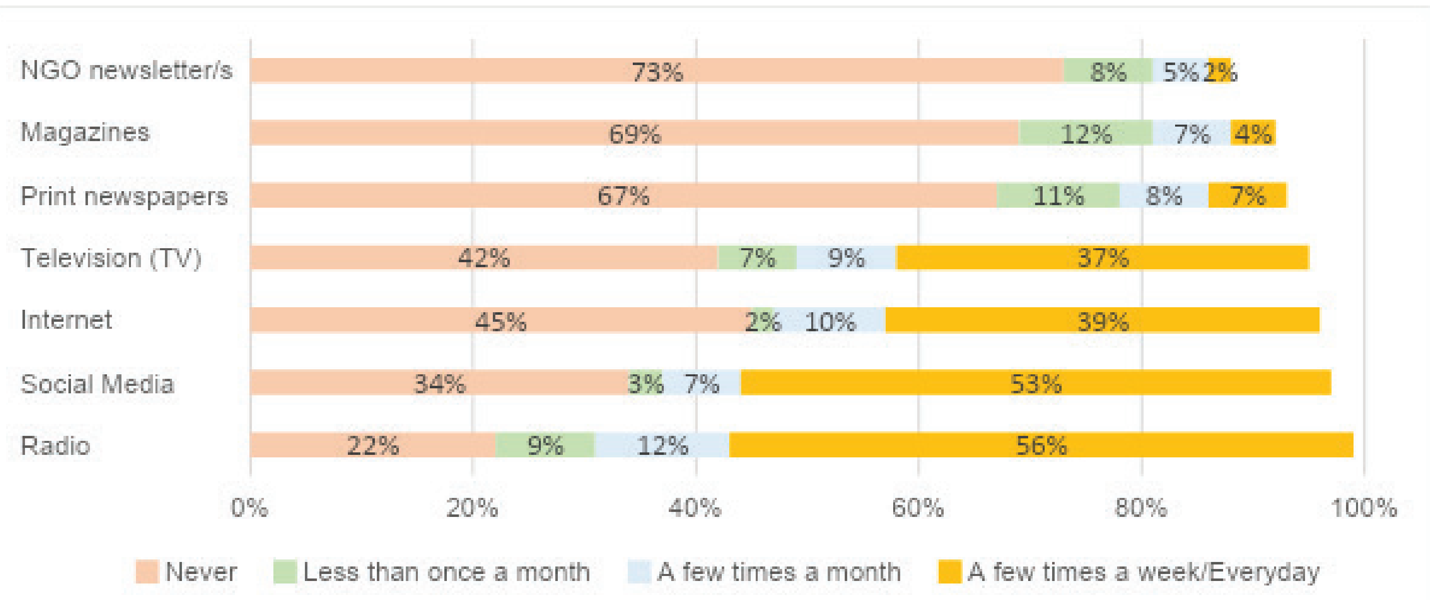
Those who view news as an important spring to form opinions on important issues constituted 6% of the surveyed population, while 3% believe doing so enables them to get news since "news is found everywhere one looks at", whereas 6% indicated that they do not follow the news.

Table 4: Rationale for pursuing news [37]



Source: Fieldwork Survey

Figure 20: Sources of news [38]



Source: Fieldwork Survey

4.3 Locating the media audiences – online and offline access to media

AT the start of 2023, Global Digital Insights reported that in Zimbabwe, 5.74 million Zimbabweans were internet users.

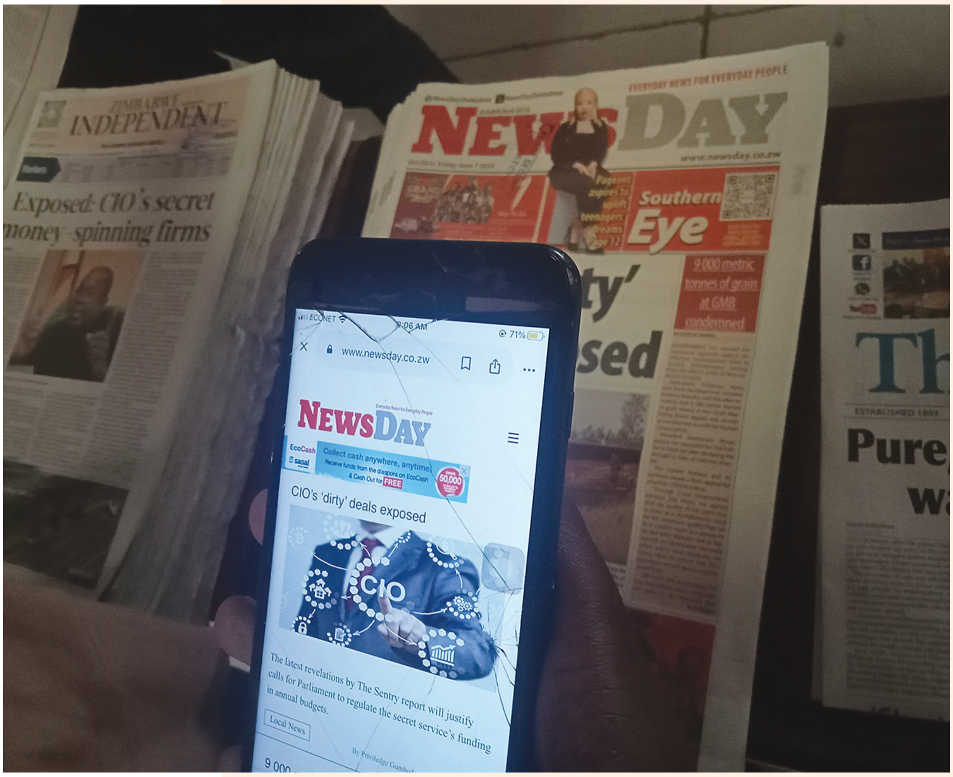
At the same time, internet penetration was 34.8% [39].

Moreover, 14.08 million cellular mobile connections were active, influencing the social media environment in Zimbabwe in 2023.

If this figure is anything to go by, 85.4% of Zimbabwe's population has mobile devices to access communication material.

However, these figures tend to over-simplify the mobile penetration rate and internet penetration.

From a mere observation, not everyone owns a smart phone and, therefore, have access to the internet.



Furthermore, these figures also do not consider the observation that some individuals may possess more than one mobile device and access the internet via all the devices in their possession.

While the available data speaks generally of the national level and is dominated by urban typology, the numbers above demonstrate a large potential for development in internet usage via mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

While mobile penetration has indeed increased, expanding into many rural areas, connectivity and network challenges persist to limit the usage of the new media available through mobile phones and the internet.

Despite the huge disparities in access to ICTs and media in general, it is clear that new information and communication technologies have impacted Zimbabwe's media landscape.

The way media organisations and institutions operate is changing in many ways thanks to the internet, which is also altering the technological character of the media sectors and creating new opportunities for access, content, formats, and interactivity.

Online access to media platforms

DATA Reportal [40] (2023) shows that in 2023, there were 1.5 million social media users in Zimbabwe, representing 9.1% of Zimbabweans.

While this is generalised for the urban landscape, the rural landscape has its nuances, also depending on the specific typology in question.

A 2020 survey by MISA Zimbabwe and KAF, focusing on rural areas, noted that most marginalised rural communities enjoy the various services and opportunities brought by the internet and mobile phones differently, mainly for the following reasons:

- Poor network coverage and connectivity — some areas access only Edge and 2G network, which is poor and intermittent and internet incompatible.

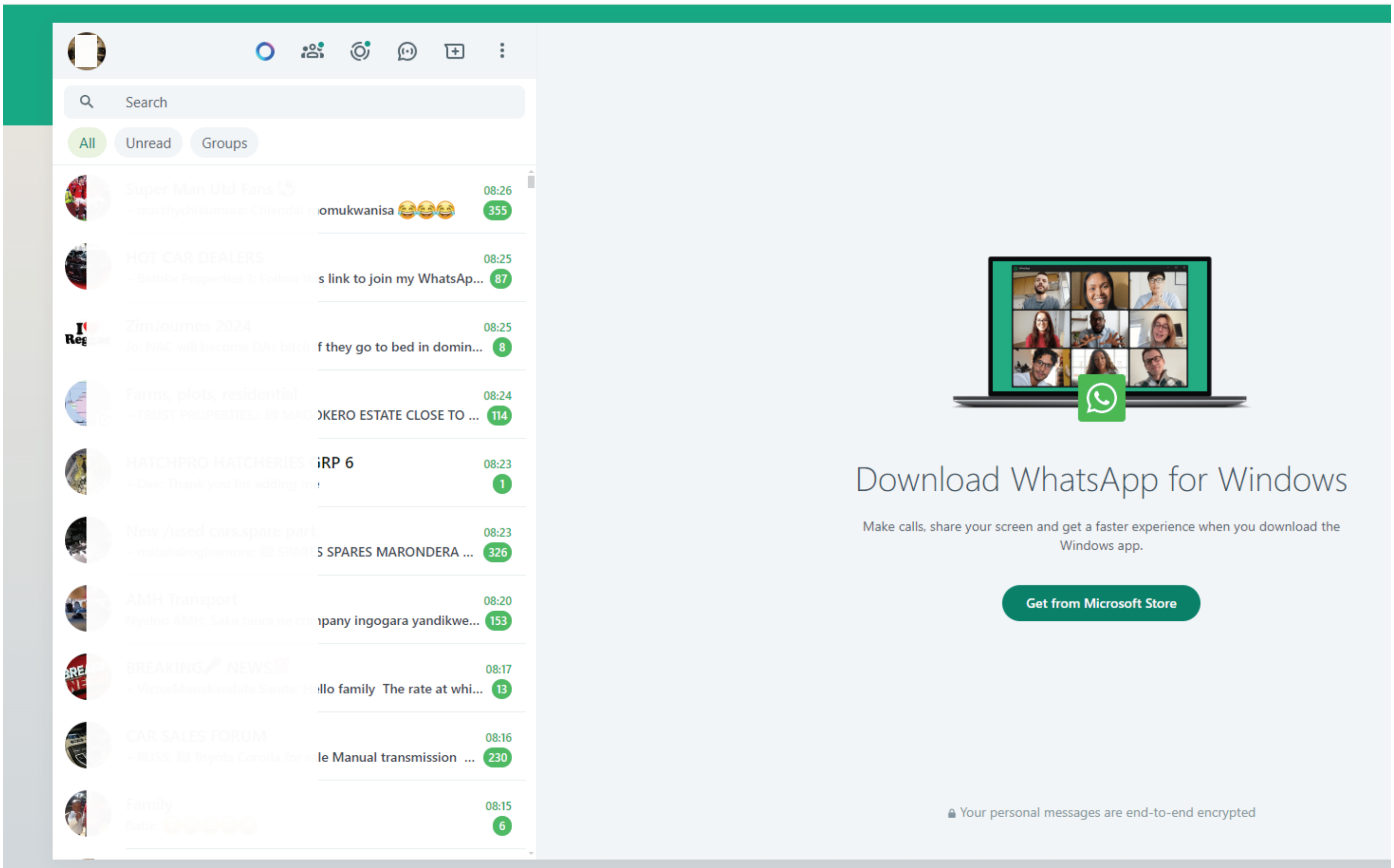
- Cost of airtime and data which limits/determines what citizens can access online.

- Available gadgets — Basic phone (Mbudzi) versus smartphone technology determines the services accessed; this is also tied to access to power and battery longevity.

- Gendered aspect of access to gadgets — more access for men than women.

- Age is an aspect of access to/use of forms (*Facebook* and *WhatsApp* are dominated by the young; voice/SMS is mainly used by the elderly, but also the young, riding on cheap promotional bundles).

- Bundles (promotional services) offered by mobile network operators — cost of data limits universal and neutral access; MNOs promotions that allow access only to specific sites or applications;



Offline media access

THE unequal access to the digital media space prevalent in rural areas, compared to the urban areas, has resulted in a general reliance on and deference to offline media sources, especially word of mouth.

This has also partly resulted from poor network and broadcasting coverage, as it has also been about digital media literacy.

While general literacy remains high in Zimbabwe, especially in offline media spaces, media and information literacy in the digital space is low.

However, this apparent gap is covered through the enmeshing of the different online media platforms with the offline, where a layer of “elite” citizens, especially in the rural areas, bridge the information gaps within their communities.

4.4 A closer analysis of audience profile and their media preferences and needs

WHILE the new and alternative media has added to the continuum of communicative spaces through which public opinion is increasingly debated, these have retained a largely urban bias.

The rise in prominence and use of various social media platforms like *Facebook*, *X* and *WhatsApp* have resulted in differentiated uptake among citizens, primarily based on geography, class, and communications infrastructure.

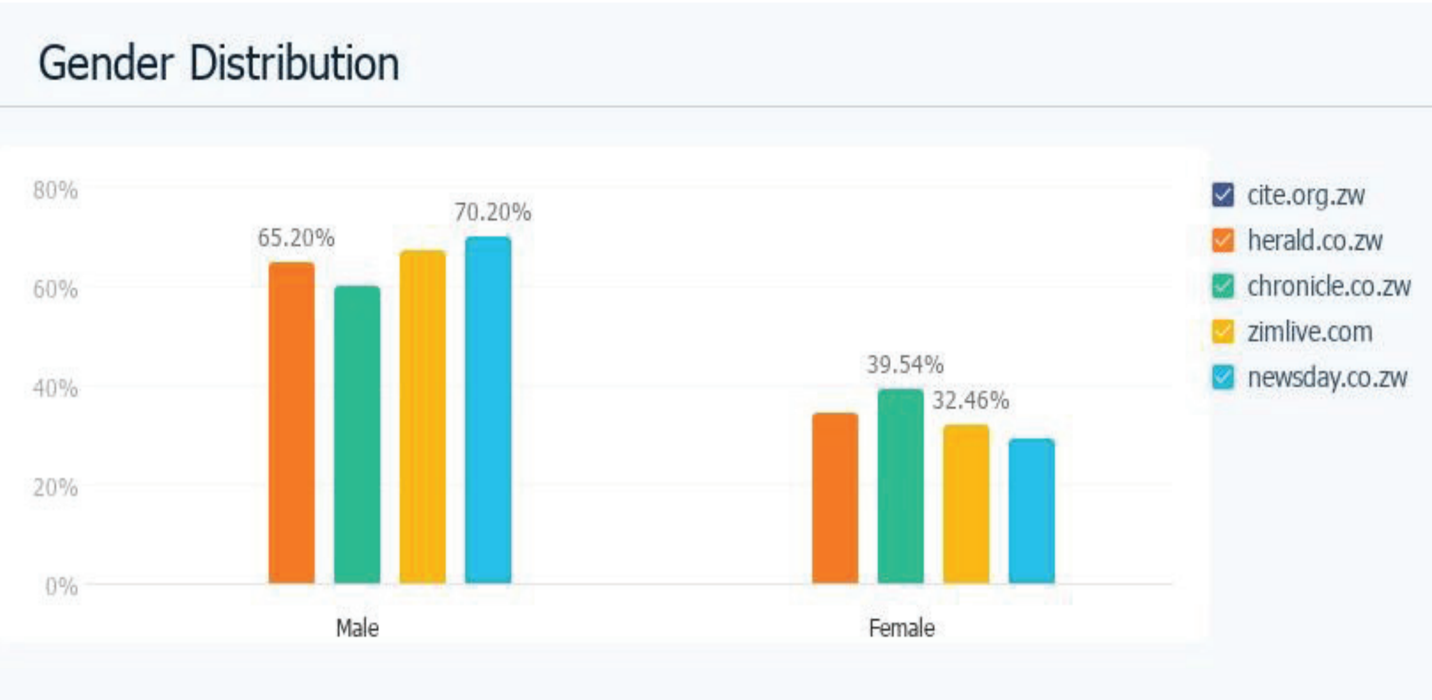
Young people account for the biggest percentage of social media use as a news source compared to adults.

It has been noted that social media use tends to increase with increased education and social status, probably because of the capacity to use and purchase a device and data.

The analysis shows that 43.4% of Zimbabwe's social media users were female, while 56.6% were male (Datareportal 2023).

As depicted in the figure below, more men than women access online news from the top five news websites in Zimbabwe.

Figure 21: Sources of news [41]



Source: similarweb.com

Results indicate that adult males listen to the radio more frequently than women and young people.

The reliance on radio as a news source was noted and found to be most common among respondents in rural areas and among groups with secondary education and less, including those with just primary and no education.

Given that 58.8% of those who listen to the radio have low literacy levels and find it "easy" or "very easy" to access, as well as the fact that they do so on a daily and weekly basis, the lack of a reading literacy requirement for radio may be what draws the majority of listeners.

Only 15% of respondents said they have challenges listening to the radio for news, which may be due to poor transmission and frequencies [42].

4.5 Issues of concern — impediments to accessing media

4.5.1 Structural issues

A NUMBER of structural issues were noted as impeding citizens' ability to access the different forms of media.

These span a broad range, including cost, network and reception coverage, political considerations, and regimentation of access to information, which are most prevalent in rural communities.

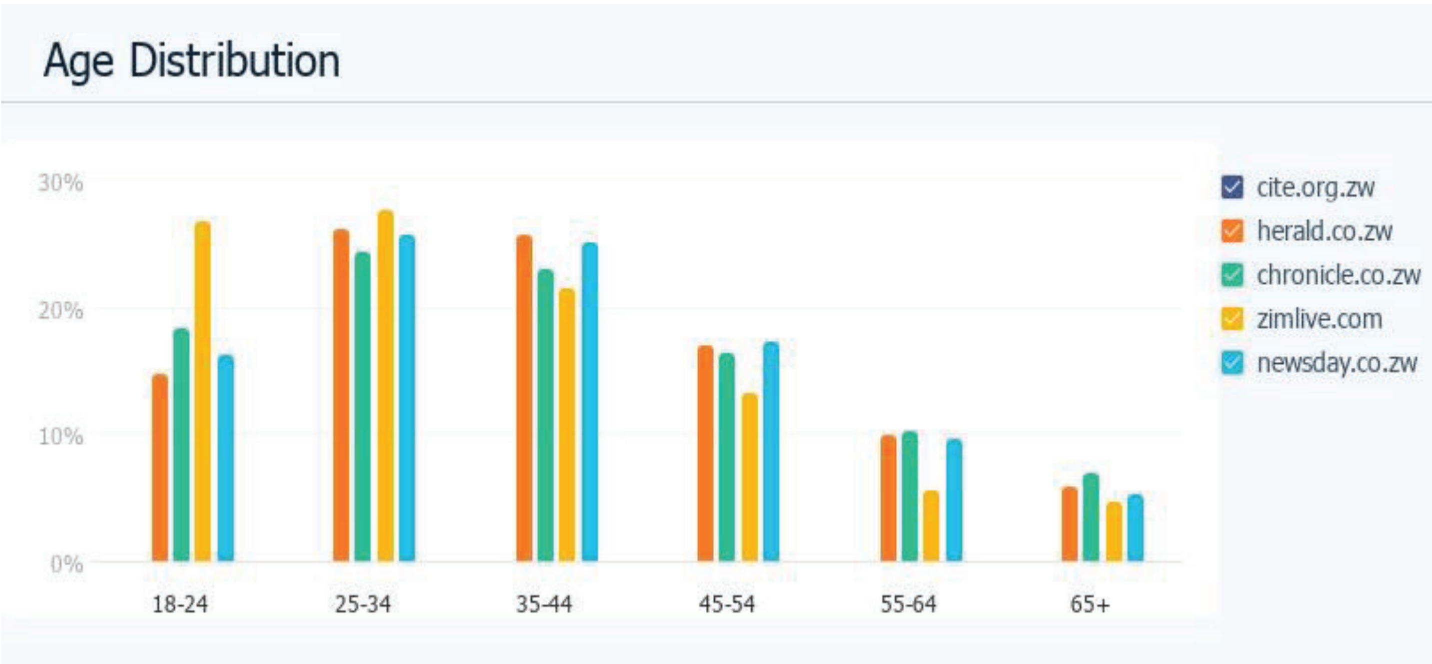
Although people gave various reasons for not going online, the major reason was a lack of resources.

For example, 33% said they did not have the money to do so, while 23% cited a lack of the right equipment.

However, parallel data obtained from similarweb.com suggests that it is mostly those within the working age groups that access online news content from an analysis of the top five news websites in Zimbabwe — this is generally the ages between 25 and 44.

This is depicted below.

Figure 22: Age distribution of citizens accessing the top five news websites



4.5.2 Access to public information

Access to information and freedom of expression are also impeded, especially when dealing with public entities like government ministries, parastatals, rural district councils, and local government offices (provincial and district development coordinators).

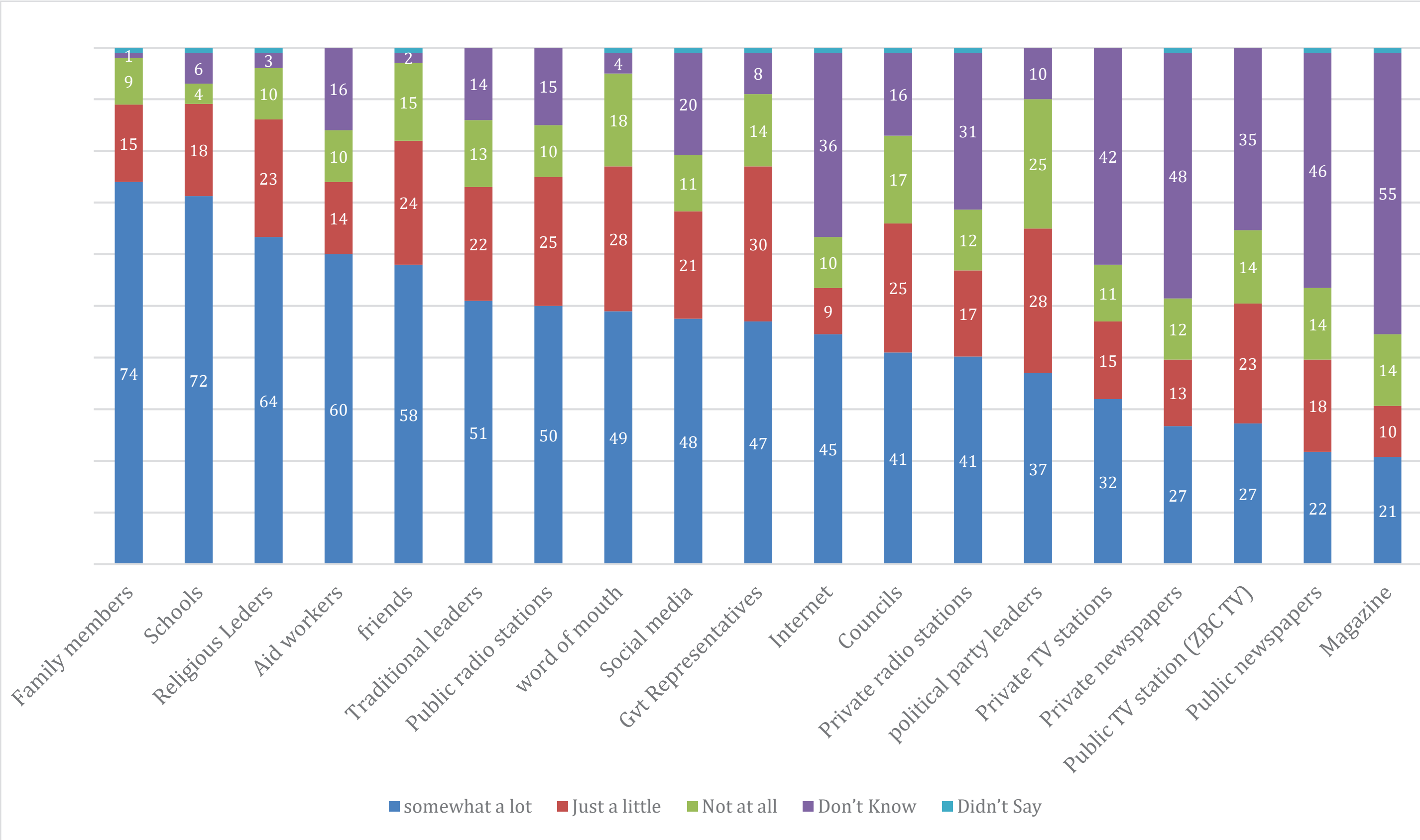
These entities are not forthcoming in releasing information for public consumption, but adopt a selective access approach.

4.5.3 Trust in the media sources

The top five most trusted sources of information are family members (74%), schools (72%), religious leaders (64%), aid workers (60%), and friends (58%).

The least trusted sources of information include magazines (21%), public newspapers (22%) and public TV stations (27%).

Table 8: Trust in sources of information [42]



Source: Fieldwork survey

The new media has often been flagged for the need for defined regulatory frameworks regarding how information is circulated.

There are no proper avenues for fact-checking as offered within the mainstream media, which has resulted in it being used to spread misinformation, disinformation and mal-information (MDM).

This has tended to render it prone to abuse by various social actors especially politicians who also take advantage of its wide reach and ease of access by large sections of the population.

5. Recommendations

IN light of the observations of the emergence of new media structures and audiences, plus attendant consumption patterns and habits, the following recommendations are preferred to both inform and shape policy and programmatic action.

Media actors (including civil society organisations and development partners)

- Policy advocacy on the Universal Service Fund (USF) to expand telecommunications infrastructure to underserved areas and improve network quality (reducing the digital divide) — the USF stands as a potential game-changer in opening up opportunities presented by the burgeoning digital media landscape.

- Design capacity-building programmes on digital literacy, rights, and ethics for media practitioners and citizen journalists and increase support for media diversity and plurality in rural areas.

- Media organisations must develop programmes advocating for increased access to information held by public bodies.

This may include awareness campaigns to both rights holders and duty bearers on the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the importance of access to information for developmental needs.

- Media organisations need to consider developing programmes to review laws and regulations guiding the operations of community radio stations on content generation and creation.

This would mean advocating for laws and regulations that promote the broadening and liberalisation of content to be broadcast by community radios and providing capacity assistance for them, especially in terms of having the requisite resources to be competitive in the media landscape.

Government

- The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services must consider instituting an audit of the USF to enhance transparency and accountability of the usage of the funds so far to improve its usage.

- The government must consider relaxing laws or regulations on content generation and the creation of community radio stations in Zimbabwe and enabling the entry of foreign investors in the sector.

- The greatest challenge which the government needs to address is ensuring a more stable and predictable economic environment as a basis for a "solid business case" for other players in the media landscape, especially corporate players; this can help to spur innovation and better adaptation to the ever-changing global media landscape within which the country locates and designs the local media landscape.

Business/corporate media actors

- There is a need to adopt a stakeholder-wide approach to help them have an improved understanding of these changes in the media landscape and facilitate the co-creation of strategies to understand the emergent media audiences and their media and information needs.

Media support organisations such as MISA stand a good chance of leading this aspect and ensuring a synergy of efforts across actors in the media fraternity to come up with workable strategies towards improving the capacity of media actors to meet the media needs of the new audiences, notably in providing the much-needed thought-leadership.

- Corporate media actors and all other media actors need to review their content generation and creation strategies and tailor them to be relevant and responsive to the lived realities or daily needs of the various media consumers.

Academic/research institutions

- Academic institutions are called upon to review and update their curriculum and training to accommodate the new media structures and actors and to develop tailor-made training.

- There is need to expand and build upon further research with bigger data sets to investigate the links between the reconfigured political economy and media.

6. Conclusion

THIS paper has argued how the long-term effects of Zimbabwe's reconfigured political economy, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, have wrought changes in Zimbabwe's media landscape.

This has resulted in a shift in old media structures, needs and consumption habits, a concomitant emergence of new media structures, and new audiences with different media needs and consumption habits.

There is no more going back to conventional media or old media structures dominated by print (newspapers and magazines), radio and television.

The new media terrain is now dominated by online media, whose scope and purview have expanded to include user-generated content, riding on new internet-based communication applications for sharing information.

> *THERE is no more going back to conventional media or old media structures dominated by print (newspapers and magazines), radio and television.*

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[4] Question: Which of the following best describes the EA?

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[14] Unsuccessful applicants include AB Communications’ Flex TV, Alpha Media Holdings’ HStv, Blackbury Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd’s Blackbury TV, Conduit Investments (Pvt) Ltd’s Conduit TV Station, Just in Time TV (Pvt) Ltd’s JIT TV, Medianet Productions (Pvt) Ltd’s Sunrise TV and Meditation Investments (Pvt)’s Zim News Channel.

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[18] Bodomo, A. (2013). African diaspora remittances are better than foreign aid funds. World Economics, 14(4), 21-29.

[19] The Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey (ZAMPS) is a survey commissioned by the media, advertising, marketing and public relations industries who want to know more about what people watch, read and listen and which products they buy.

[20] Question: Which sites or apps do you have a profile or account on that you STILL use?

[Read out options. Allow for multiple responses. IF NECESSARY - You said you had a profile or account on a social media site or app. This would be a page or profile that you created and which you still use]

[21] Question: Which social media do you use the most?

[22] Abbott et al., (2020) Media in Zimbabwe

[23] IRI. (2023). Zimbabwe 2023 Elections: A Risk Assessment of the Online Information Space. https://www.iri.org/resources/zimbabwe-2023-elections-a-risk-assessment-of-the-online-information-space/

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[36] Question: Which of the following are you interested in? [Read out options. Allow for multiple Responses]

[37] Question: People might have different reasons for following news, what are your reasons?

[38] Question: How often do you get news from the following sources?

[39] Datareportal (2023). Digital 2023: Zimbabwe. Available at: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-zimbabwe#:~:text=There%20were%205.74%20million%20internet%20users%20in%20Zimbabwe%20in%20January,percent)%20between%202022%20and%202023.

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[42] Question: How much do you trust each of the following sources of information?

For a detailed discussion, please see the following:

[1] For a detailed discussion please see the following: [1] Raftopoulos, B. (2014). Zimbabwean politics in the post-2013 election period. Africa Spectrum, 49(2), 91-103;

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[3] Sachikonye, L., & Raftopoulos, B. (2018). Building from the Rubble: The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe Since 2000. Weaver Press;

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