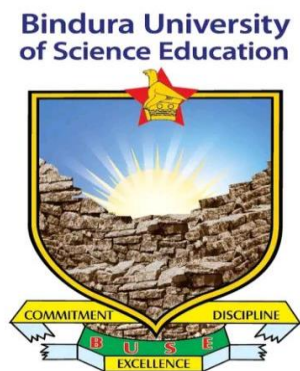


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE



**the role of media in influencing the implementation of the africa continental free trade area
agreement: case study of zimbabwe's media.**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfilment
for the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Peace and Governance.**

JUNE, 2024.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess *the role of media in influencing the implementation of the AfCFTA with the focus being on Zimbabwe's media*. The study used a case study research design as a popular method in social science research that involves an in-depth examination of a single case or a group of cases. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews are two qualitative data collection methods that enable the researcher to acquire information directly from participants and ask follow-up questions for clarification. The study also explores how the role of media in Zimbabwe has been politicized, the function of media practioners in the promoting the AfCFTA and the effects of the politicization media houses in Zimbabwe towards influencing the implementation of AfCFTA. The study also argues that the roles of media practioners should not be politicized towards information dissemination and promoting integration in Zimbabwe.

DECLARATION FORM

I, Tadiwanashe Christian Marengo (B200694B), hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and study, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments and references included in the body of the paper, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.



.....

Student's Signature

23____/09____/2024

Date

APPROVAL FORM

Title of Dissertation: THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENT: CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWE MEDIA.

1. To be completed by the student:
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I certify that the required procedures have been followed and the preparation criteria have been met for this project.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the pillars of my life who are my reasons to live and die, my parents Mr A and Mrs M Marengo who have shaped me into who I am today and my closest siblings and family Takudzwa Mbaiwa, Tatenda Marengo, Anenyasha Marengo, Amanda Samakande, Rinos Samakande, Lissa Samakande, Lawson Matanhike, Tinashe Matanhike, Miguel and Malik Mugarisanwa. Thank you for the unconditional love, support and the guidance you have given and I thank you for all your sacrifices, patience and your constant encouragement. Without your support this whole academic year was never going to be a success and I am so blessed to have you in my life. Nevertheless, not forgetting Mr T A. Ndongera, Mr M Weluzani, all my lecturers and most shout out to my classmates and longtime University friends, Chikomba, Benson, Mashasha, and Kamoto, Tapo, Gibella, M3J, Festus and Chirau.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Almighty God for allowing me to get thus far in my academic career. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the following individuals that enabled this study to be done, finished, and submitted:

I have no words to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Mahuku and Dr Kurebwa for his invaluable advice. Despite his busy schedule, he was always willing to help me.

I'd also like to appreciate the financial assistance I received from my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Marengo, my uncle Professor K P Dzvimbo and my nephews the Samakande family (Luke, Monica and Tafadzwa Samakande) throughout my tertiary education. Without these my efforts would have been futile.

I am grateful to the all Media Practioners in Zimbabwe for their cooperation in the research. My gratitude also goes to my classmates, fellow SRC members and most importantly the Student Affairs Division under the leadership of Dr Crispen Mazodze and Mrs Murasi for the stimulating conversations that keep us motivated in the educational struggle and have become a part of our daily interactions.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the encouragement from my friends and university family, Nigel, Kamoto, Passion, Chirau, Bernard, Jijita, Kobe, MK, M3J, Ackim, Ruvimbo, Wadzanai, Kudzayi, Ndongera, the late Simz (May his soul continue to rest in peace), whose motivation spurred me on throughout my academic journey at Bindura University of Science Education.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfCFTA - AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

WTO - WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

ZBC - ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION

ZMC - ZIMBABWE MEDIA COMMISSION

MOFAIT - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background of the study

Africa is characterised with the aid of several socio-economic and political troubles that can be traced decrease again to the slave trade era. Settles (1996:2) states that, the African economic system used to be significantly modified with the aid of the slave trade through the manner of imperialism and the economic policies that accompanied colonisation in an exploitative environment. The death of slave exchange brought a scramble for raw substances for the then suddenly industrialising European countries which led to the scramble for Africa. Heldring and Robinson (2012:4) enlarge that Africa skilled an excessive deterioration in dwelling requirements as a last result of colonialism consequently the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) used to be normal in 1963, with the purpose to dispose of all varieties of colonialism in Africa in the spirit of Pan Africanism (Adejumobi and Olukoshi 2009:30).

As African nations started out to acquire independence from their colonial masters, states sought a roadmap that may additionally desire to enhance economic improvement via trade. Agubuzu (2004:72) posits that extreme poverty tiers forced the then OAU to take up challenges of monetary improvement problems which led to the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos in 1980 which used to be a blue print for monetary development. Bach (2016) as quoted by way of Ismail (2016:5) criticises the Lagos Plan of Action for no longer having a complete implementation plan for execution as a result, it did now not yield the meant outcomes of financial development. New techniques have been wished to address the ongoing socio-economic troubles that had been affecting social well-being of Africans as well as lack of economic integration in the continent.

In 1991, the Organisation of African Unity adopted the Abuja Treaty that fostered introduction of new Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at the equal time strengthening some ancient RECs as a doable of progressing closer to exchange liberalisation and reducing the after outcomes of colonialism (Ismail 2016:6). However, UNECA (2012:5) posits that two a long time after signing of the Abuja Treaty there used to be no gorgeous have an impact on Africa's alternate common performance with intra-trade and exterior change accounting for 12% of continental total change and its share of worldwide alternate highlighting gradual improvement on

monetary integration. This grew to emerge as an indication that regional financial communities had been no longer performing as anticipated to improve financial integration and subsequently economic development.

The OAU's incapacity to decorate monetary health due to inclined RECs, resulted in its unpopularity for this reason the cross to the OAU being amended to be the African Union (AU) in the year 2001 with the aim of addressing existing day desires involving socio-economic enhancement and to improve the economic position of Africa in the world economic gadget (Ibid: 8). In 2011, the heads of A . S . A . of Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) launched the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) which was once signed in 2015 which re-affirmed the improvement integration approach which established on pillars of industrial development, infrastructure improvement as proper as market integration (Ismail 2016:6). Mabuza and Luke (2016) as quoted through Ismail (2016:18) observe that the Tripartite Free Trade Area precipitated African heads of states to launch the Continental Free Trade Area to be run parallel with the 2nd part of the Tripartite Free Trade Area.

The Extraordinary Summit of the African Union, in Kigali on 21 March 2018 led to the signing of a free alternate settlement recognised as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with the resource of forty six members of Africa, (Hartzenberg 2018:4). The historic milestone accomplished by potential of African states has been applauded as a fantastic step towards deeper financial integration and economic development.

Chidede (2018:3) postulates that the African Continental Free Trade Area can support Africa's economic enlarge and development, and structural transformation. The 2021 commissioning of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (hereinafter, AfCFTA) has been hailed as a massive soar closer to developing the monetary capability of the continent, this settlement guarantees to bolster change among African countries which to date lay at the meagre 17% as in contrast to European Trade and intra-Asian Trade which stood at 69% and 59% respectively. In mild of this comparison, it is clear that intra African is incredibly low and the go to harness the African markets is rightly met with acclaim. With projections of exchange within the continent projected to upward jostle to a notable \$70 billion and an shocking worldwide continental output, it can be concluded that simply it is a daring move. Its implementation can create economies of scale and regional

charge chains and generate employment opportunities. It is toward such a background, that the predominant purpose of this lookup is to determine the role of media in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area treaty (AfCFTA): Case discover out about of Zimbabwe's media.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to analyse how can influence the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement: Case study of Zimbabwean Media.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role the media can play in the implementation of the AfCFTA, there is limited understanding of how the media in Zimbabwe is currently engaging with and reporting on the AfCFTA, and the extent to which the media's coverage and framing of the agreement is influencing public awareness, attitudes, and support for its implementation in the country. This dissertation seeks to investigate the nature and scope of Zimbabwe's media's coverage of the AfCFTA, identify the key factors shaping the media's approach, and analyze the implications of the media's role on the implementation of the agreement in Zimbabwe. By addressing this research problem, the dissertation aims to contribute to the scholarly understanding of the media's role in the implementation of major regional trade agreements, particularly in the African context, and provide practical insights for policymakers and media practitioners on leveraging the media to support the successful implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe and beyond.

1.4. Research Objectives

The study's objectives are to:

- To examine how the role of media in the implementation of the AfCFTA can be politicized.
- To discuss the function of media practioners in the promotion of AfCFTA.
- To evaluate the effects of the politicization of media houses in Zimbabwe on the implementation of the AfCFTA.

1.5. Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions;

- How has media effected the ratification of the AfCFTA?

- What part do media houses play in the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe?
- What functions do media practioners play in the implementation of the AfCFTA?
- What can be done to strengthen the position of media in influencing implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe?

1.6. Assumptions of the study

This study assumes that;

Media holds a significant role which can be used to influence free trade by disseminating information and raising awareness to every individual in Zimbabwe towards economic growth and development.

Despite their predisposition towards the country's government and ruling party, they also lack genuine power, leaving them open to political exploitation.

1.7. Significance of the study

Media Practioners: This research is important for media practioners in Zimbabwe because it enables them to better understand not just their roles in the implementation and advocacy for the AfCFTA but also their influence and how that impact can help or hurt the implementation of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

International Traders: They are assisted by the study in understanding the function of media practioners and how it affects integration.

Academics: Although a sizable amount of research has been done on the function of media practioners in the promotion of AfCFTA, there are still information gaps regarding how their involvement influences international trade. As a result, this study will aid in bridging some academic knowledge gaps.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade - Building on the research findings, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (MFAIT) can craft communication strategies that utilize the media to cultivate public awareness and understanding of the AfCFTA. This can be achieved through targeted messaging that highlights the agreement's potential benefits for various stakeholders. The MFAIT can also leverage the media to engage with stakeholders, including

businesses and civil society, to ensure inclusive participation in the AfCFTA's implementation. Finally, media monitoring informed by the research can provide valuable insights to guide the MFAIT in evaluating public sentiment and adjusting communication efforts as needed.

Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services- By understanding the media's influence on the AfCFTA's implementation, the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services (MIPBS) can craft strategic communication campaigns to amplify public awareness and positive perceptions of the agreement. Research can guide the creation of targeted content explaining the AfCFTA's benefits to various audiences through documentaries, public service announcements, and social media posts. The MIPBS can also leverage its findings to strengthen media engagement, providing journalists with accurate information and facilitating expert interviews for balanced AfCFTA coverage.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

Delimitations are elements of the research that the researcher intentionally controls and that determine the study's borders and scope. Delimiting elements frequently include the theoretical viewpoint a researcher chooses (as opposed to alternative viewpoints that may have been employed), choice of research questions, variables of interest, and research location (Brewer, 2019).

While regional trade agreements exist in other parts of the world like Europe, Asia, and North America, this study's focus was on Zimbabwe and the specific role of media in influencing the AfCFTA. It centered on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from 2012 when negotiations began through 2023. The time period was relevant as AfCFTA remains a work in progress. Examining the timeframe from the initial talks through the previous year provided crucial recent insights. It also allowed for preliminary analysis of AfCFTA's potential economic impacts and benefits related to development. By concentrating on this distinct initiative and timeline, the research aimed to understand how media can influence Africa's unfolding free trade integration. Insights could shape ongoing discussions and efforts to maximize positive outcomes across the country and the continent through 2024 and beyond.

1.9. Limitations of the study

Limitations are factors that the researcher cannot control that affect the research process or its results and have an effect on the methodology of choice and the research's conclusions (Fintel, 2019).

The key informants were experts in media and international trade but their work commitments caused appointment delays and postponing of interviews. Some interviews also faced difficulties due to low internet connectivity in certain countries. Additionally, accessing sensitive youth trade information from Zimbabwe Media houses that are having programs on AfCFTA-related topics. While participants in trade negotiations discussed AfCFTA and how media can influence it in Zimbabwe, some were not fully forthcoming and provided only general rather than detailed information. To address gaps, the researcher supplemented the qualitative interviews with additional strategies. Seminars on the topic were attended to enrich the dataset. Online research was also conducted to find material published on government and trade organization websites. Overall, the study methodology had to adapt to real world issues like busy schedules, technical barriers, and restricted access to state owned media houses. Multiple Avenues were explored to compensate and achieve a comprehensive analysis, despite encountering obstacles common to field-based academic research.

1.10. Definition of key words

Africa Continental Free Trade Area- According to the African Union Commission, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a free trade agreement established among African Union member states. Its objective is to boost intra-African trade by removing tariffs and other trade barriers. The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area in the world by the number of countries involved, with the potential to create a market of over 1.3 billion people.

Media Practitioners- As according to McQuail, Denis, (2018), media refers to the various channels through which information and content are disseminated. These channels can be traditional, such as newspapers, television, and radio, or digital, such as social media, websites, and online

platforms. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and awareness, and understanding its influence is vital for effective communication strategies.

Implementation- According to Mazmanian, D. A and P.A Sabatier (1889), implementation is the process of putting a plan, policy, or idea into action. It involves translating theory into practice and entails the activities that bridge the gap between decision-making and achieving desired outcomes. Implementation is complex and often influenced by various factors like resource availability, stakeholder engagement, and contextual realities.

Politicization- According to Mercer (2021), politicization is a term used in political science to describe how ideas and a group of facts are attributed to the ideologies and political establishments of a given country.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduced and explained the literature review and theoretical framework to be used in the study. The chapter also defined and explored aspects of media and AfCFTA before establishing a link between the two concepts. The roles of media and how it influences AfCFTA also discussed in detail.

2.2. Theoretical framework

Complex Interdependence Theory

This analysis applies the theory of complex interdependence to understand the significance of media in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement and advancing socio-economic development in Africa. Complex interdependence, as developed by Keohane and Nye in the late 1970s, posited that declining military power and rising economic interdependence altered state relations. It challenged realist assumptions by emphasizing shared interests promoting cooperation over pure power politics. Transnational actors also gained influence relative to states alone. Since then, complex interdependence has informed analyses of regimes and multilateral organizations compensating for military capabilities. States recognize new priorities like welfare alongside security. Economic and social policies outweigh military ones in an interconnected world. Non-state actors also shape the global order through trade and financial networks.

AfCFTA signals Africa's growing interdependence recognizing mutual benefit from integration despite differences. Developing ties through institutions like the African Union show states cooperating on common goals. While some states still view relations primarily through realist competition, most accept complex interdependence principles of mutual sensitivity and vulnerability driving cooperation. Complex interdependence is not without challenges from economically dominant states pursuing self-interest. However, AfCFTA overall promotes the theory's emphasis on integrating once isolated states through mutual dependence and joint problem-solving over narrow unilateral power behaviors. Meaningfully involving media could maximize interdependence benefits by strengthening Africa's human and social capital for inclusive development.

2.3. The Africa Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to create a common market for goods and services across Africa by facilitating the movement of people, capital and trade between nations. Signed in 2018 and implemented in 2019, the AfCFTA currently has over 40 members working together under its framework. Its goals include boosting trade within Africa, fostering regional integration, increasing industrialization and development, and making African businesses more competitive globally. Past trade relationships between African nations were strongly influenced by colonialism. Countries tended to trade most with others from their colonial power, such as French-speaking nations trading amongst themselves or English-speaking ones doing the

same. This fragmented trade and shaped different regional economies over time. The AfCFTA works to solve this by bringing the continent together under one cooperative agreement. The AfCFTA is also a key part of the African Union's long-term development plan. It provides a unified agreement allowing trade in goods, services, investments, intellectual property and competition laws. Since implementation began in 2019, steady progress has been made in areas like ratification, regulations and digital payment systems to make trade smoother. An operational secretariat supports the agreement from its base in Ghana. Kenya and Zimbabwe have both signed and ratified the AfCFTA, committing to its goals. However, Zimbabwe faces challenges that could limit benefits, like economic instability, inconsistent policies and infrastructure gaps. It also has not yet submitted all required trade documents. A major focus of the AfCFTA is ensuring inclusiveness for vulnerable groups. Youth, women and small businesses often lack access to opportunities in cross-border trade due to issues like awareness, skills, financing and networks. Existing barriers between nations also increase costs for these groups disproportionately. This research aims to assess how youth and women in Kenya and Zimbabwe can participate in and benefit from growing intra-African trade networks through the AfCFTA's implementation. As the majority populations in these countries, their inclusion is an important factor for realizing the agreement's full economic and social impact. With proper support, youth and women could gain meaningful roles in trade that strengthen economies and livelihoods.

2.3.1. Importance of Media

The media is a cornerstone of modern society, acting as a vital conduit for information, shaping public opinion, promoting social change, facilitating cultural exchange, and driving economic activity. Its role is multifaceted, ranging from informing us about current events to providing entertainment and fostering a sense of community. However, it's not without its challenges, as the spread of misinformation, potential for bias, and media consolidation can negatively impact the public discourse. Critical consumption of media and advocating for responsible practices are essential for navigating this complex landscape and harnessing its potential for positive change.

2.3.2 History of media practioners in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a complex history of media development, with various shifts in ownership, regulations, and restrictions. During the colonial era, media ownership was concentrated in the hands of a few companies controlled by white settlers. Indigenous Zimbabweans had limited

access to media and faced significant challenges in establishing their own media outlets. After Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, there was an expansion of media outlets and an increase in indigenous ownership. The government aimed to promote media diversity and broaden access to information. However, over time, there were concerns about the erosion of media freedom and independence, with the government tightening its control over the media landscape. The government introduced restrictive media laws, such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2002, which imposed stringent registration requirements and criminalized certain forms of journalism. These laws were criticized by international human rights organizations and media watchdogs as detrimental to press freedom. Media practitioners and houses in Zimbabwe have faced challenges related to censorship, harassment, and intimidation. Journalists and media organizations that have been critical of the government have experienced harassment, arrests, and even closure of their outlets.

2.4. Media and AfCFTA in Zimbabwe

The media plays a crucial role in promoting the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Zimbabwe. Through its various platforms, the media can raise awareness about the benefits of AfCFTA, disseminate information, and provide analysis on the impact it will have on the country's economy. Firstly, media can enlighten the public about the importance of AfCFTA and the opportunities it presents for Zimbabwe. By providing accurate and timely information, the media can help dispel any misconceptions or fears that people may have about the agreement. This will help create a more favorable environment for the implementation of AfCFTA. Adding on, media can showcase success stories of businesses and individuals who have already started benefiting from AfCFTA. By highlighting examples of increased trade and investment, the media can demonstrate the real-life impact of the agreement and inspire others to take advantage of it. Moreover, media can facilitate dialogue and discussions on AfCFTA-related topics. By hosting debates, interviews, and panel discussions, the media can provide a platform for experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to share their views, concerns, and suggestions regarding AfCFTA. This will contribute to a more informed and inclusive decision-making process. Furthermore, the media can perform investigative journalism to uncover any potential challenges or obstacles to the implementation of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe. By identifying issues such as infrastructure gaps,

regulatory bottlenecks, or market access barriers, the media can bring them to the attention of relevant authorities and advocate for necessary improvements. Nevertheless, media can act as a watchdog to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of AfCFTA. By reporting on progress, monitoring compliance with trade rules, and exposing any instances of corruption or unfair practices, the media can help maintain the integrity of the agreement. Therefore, media plays a vital role in promoting and supporting the successful implementation of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe. By raising awareness, providing information, facilitating dialogue, investigating challenges, and promoting transparency, the media can contribute to the growth of intra-African trade and the overall economic development of the country.

2.5. Negative impact of media in Zimbabwe on coverage and information dissemination of the AfCFTA: How Negative Impacts of Zimbabwean Media Hinder Effective AfCFTA Implementation.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds immense potential for Africa's economic transformation, promising increased intra-African trade, enhanced competitiveness, and accelerated development. For Zimbabwe, a nation grappling with economic challenges, the AfCFTA offers a crucial opportunity for growth. However, realizing this potential hinges on effectively communicating the agreement's complexities, benefits, and challenges to the public. This is where the media plays a critical role. Yet, in Zimbabwe, the media landscape suffers from significant limitations, hindering its ability to effectively inform and engage the public on the AfCFTA.

One of the most significant challenges is the polarization of the Zimbabwean media. State-controlled outlets, like The Herald and ZBC, often function as mouthpieces for the government, presenting the AfCFTA as an unquestionable success and neglecting to engage in critical analysis (Moyo, 2020). This creates a misleadingly optimistic narrative that fails to equip the public with a comprehensive understanding of the agreement's potential pitfalls and challenges. On the other hand, independent media, though often more critical, face severe financial constraints, limiting their reach and ability to counter the dominant narrative (Chari, 2019). This creates an information gap, particularly affecting rural communities and those without reliable internet access, exacerbating the digital divide (World Bank, 2022).

Further compounding the problem is the limited and inadequate coverage of the AfCFTA. Zimbabwean media frequently prioritizes political news over economic analysis, dedicating limited resources to exploring the intricacies of trade and investment (Banda, 2021). This results in superficial coverage that fails to equip citizens with the knowledge needed to engage meaningfully with the AfCFTA's implications for various sectors and their own livelihoods. The dearth of journalists specializing in trade and economics further weakens the quality of reporting (Masvaure, 2018).

Beyond these limitations, the legacy of restrictive laws and a culture of self-censorship casts a long shadow over the media landscape. Though some restrictive media laws have been repealed, the fear of reprisal persists, leading to self-censorship among journalists and hindering in-depth investigative reporting (Reporters Without Borders, 2023). This reluctance to critically examine the AfCFTA's implementation, potential downsides, and challenges contributes to a climate of misinformation and limits public discourse.

The consequences of these negative impacts are profound. A poorly informed public, lacking access to comprehensive and balanced information about the AfCFTA, is ill-equipped to hold authorities accountable for effective implementation, engage in constructive debate, or fully leverage the agreement's benefits. This ultimately hinders Zimbabwe's ability to harness the AfCFTA's transformative potential for economic growth and development.

2.6. Chapter Summary

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methods and strategy for data collection are covered in this chapter. Both the utilization of qualitative research methodologies and the explanation and justification of the research instruments employed are provided. Also provided are the study population and sample strategy.

3.2 Research philosophy

According to Mauthner (2020), research philosophy serves as the cornerstone of the research process, assisting researchers in the collection and analysis of data in order to draw

conclusions. It addresses the methodological, ontological, and epistemological presumptions that guide the course of the investigation. When deciding the research approach to use when carrying out research, research philosophy plays a crucial role. In social science research, interpretivism is regarded as one of the research ideologies. It entails using each person's subjective perspective of social reality to comprehend and interpret it. In order to explain behavior, attitudes, and experiences in the social and cultural sphere, interpretivism depends on qualitative research techniques. Interpretivism is based on qualitative research techniques used to investigate people's subjective experiences, attitudes, and feelings. These approaches' sensitivity to the social and cultural context makes them more suitable for capturing experience and meaning (Pham, 2018). Because qualitative research methodologies have several advantages when applied to interpretivism, this study adopted interpretivism as its research philosophy. First, because qualitative research methods are flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions and scenarios, they yield genuine and trustworthy data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Secondly, exploratory hypothesis generation and testing are made possible by qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Third, qualitative research enables academics to get extensive and rich data that reflects the diversity of culture and social life (Maxwell, 2013). While there are certain drawbacks to qualitative research methods, it has been argued that these approaches can lead to researcher bias and that the findings' generalizability is dubious. Because the reliability and validity of the results could be questioned, the researcher must be careful to minimize researcher bias by employing impartial data gathering techniques (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3.3 Research methodology

The term "research methodology" refers to the theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field or study; it includes the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and the principles associated with a branch of knowledge as well as the theoretical analysis of the collective of methods used in a field or study (Fatima, 2020). The research methodology also identifies the methods that will be used in the process and the manner in which the data will be analyzed and presented (Brunt, 2019). The research methodology just provides theoretical direction to comprehend the practices and procedures that can be applied to a particular instance; it is not intended to provide solutions and should not be mistaken with a method (Fatima, 2020). There are three main strategies: mixed techniques, qualitative, and quantitative research. Qualitative research approaches will be used in this study.

3.4 Research design

The plans that are set up by research specify when, how, and from whom data can be acquired, as well as how it should be analyzed (Priest, 2022). Cruz (2019) claims that research design explains the techniques and steps involved in gathering and examining measures of the variable that are mentioned in the research problem. Because it provides instructions on what the researcher can and cannot do based on the desired design, the research design will therefore frequently dictate the type of study (Preist, 2022). Research design should be carefully considered, according to Garner (2020), as it could be challenging to decide what the study can and cannot accomplish. Correlational research, causal-comparative research, descriptive research, exploratory research, and explanatory research are among the most popular forms of study design (Li, 2018).

3.5 Population & sampling

Due to the fact that researchers frequently lack the resources such as time, money, and access to all the information they would like to gather from the population, it is difficult to fulfil study objectives and questions (Dunn, 2020). Thus, it's critical to develop a sample that accurately reflects the population as well as a subset that can be counted on to gather trustworthy data (Cruz, 2019). A sample, according to Fatima (2020), is a subset of data that a researcher selects or chooses using a predetermined selection procedure from a broader population. Because choosing a sample has a significant impact on research findings, the sampling approach employed must align with the study design (Cruz, 2019). One benefit of sampling is that it can yield rich data by focusing the area of interest on a small, representative population (Dunn, 2020). Another benefit of sampling, according to Dean (2021), is that it makes it possible for many researchers to do the same study and confirm the results.

While exploratory research is adaptable and may tackle any kind of research issue, it is usually best suited for individual subjects or members of a particular demographic because it cannot generally be applied to the broader public (Cruz, 2019). According to Li (2018), the primary goal of exploratory research is to pinpoint the boundaries of the environment that the circumstances, issues, and opportunities of interest are likely to occur in. It also aims to pinpoint any variables that the research may find interesting. Additionally, exploratory research is praised for its capacity to identify completely new topics of possible inquiry as well as for laying the foundation for subsequent studies (Turner 2019). The study will employ exploratory research as, in contrast to most studies that have examined the function and contributions of traditional leaders

in local administration quantitatively, it enables an understanding of people's emotions, thoughts, and feelings. Therefore, the researcher will be able to better comprehend the research problem with the aid of explanations obtained through exploratory research.

According to Cruz (2019), a study population is a precisely defined group of items or solitary beings that are recognized to possess comparable attributes or qualities that the researcher finds interesting. In order to study a population in research in a particular way, it needs to be adequately characterized and its features understood (Dean, 2021). More significantly, the researcher must ensure that the population is accurately defined when conducting qualitative research since this helps to determine the sample that is used to gather data. In this case, the entire population under the jurisdiction of the Kendeya Chieftaincy in the Mt. Darwin district, officials of the local government, representatives of the appropriate ministry, and members of civic organisations employed by the local government in the Mt. Darwin district constitute the research population.

3.6 Sampling

3.6.1 Non probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is a type of sampling that selects study participants using non-random methods rather than focusing on fairly reflecting the total population. Instead, it uses predefined and subjective decisions to select the sample (Ratanji, 2018). Based on the objectives of the investigation, non-probability sampling allows the researcher to maintain significant control over the kinds of people the study will employ (Carter, 2021).

Purposive sampling is one of the non-probability sampling methods that will be used in this study. Carter (2021) claims that when purposive sampling is used, participants are carefully chosen on the grounds that they are assumed to have knowledge and experience in the field being studied, providing important information for the research process. As a result, participant selection is both very subjective and exact in terms of the characteristics of the individuals picked (Garner, 2020). Purposive sampling will be employed in this study to find people who were well-versed in local governance structures and the functions that traditional leaders carry out to improve governance. In order to create a representative sample, the researcher will include two academics, two members of civic organizations that collaborate with the Mt Darwin district council, three members of the chieftaincy, eight members of the district community, three members of the local

government, and two representatives of the ministry of local governance. Thus, there are 20 samples in all.

3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Open-ended questions are used in semi-structured interviews, which enable the researcher to ask follow-up questions to gain clarification on certain points (Lamb, 2020). In addition to facilitating the formulation of inquiries aimed at comprehending the initial query, they also facilitate the extension of the research process to encompass domains that the investigator would have missed, yet are pertinent to the study findings as they enhance data quality (Priest, 2022). Semi-structured interviews are frequently employed in exploratory research because they enable the researcher to obtain more clarity on the topics being studied by posing questions such "why," "how," and "when" (Dean, 2021).

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to create the mood, put the participants at ease, and build trust—all crucial for gathering high-quality data (Dean, 2021). It's also vital to remember that the researcher can examine the participants' body language as a sort of communication in and of itself (Carter, 2021). With participants' consent, researchers may also record interviews. This allows for the review of the recorded conversations and the recovery of material that may have been overlooked during note-taking during the original interview (Jurisic, 2020).

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions (FDGs)

Because focus groups allow researchers to interact with several individuals at once and allow them to study complex behavior, they are frequently favored by researchers. Participants in a focus group discussion are allowed to speak candidly with one another while being questioned about their views, opinions, ideas, and attitudes (Ratanji 2018). Focus groups are a type of qualitative research approach. Information is usually offered more quickly during focus group conversations than when individuals are interviewed one-on-one (Li, 2018).

Focus group talks have the advantage of enabling the researcher to get a wide range of data and build on conversations since participants often contribute additional layers of detail to each other's comments, facilitating a thorough discussion of a subject (Li, 2018). The researcher can record talks from focus groups in order to conduct additional post-analysis.

Getting all of the respondents in the same location at the same time would be a big issue for focus group talks because of their different obligations (Garner, 2020). Additionally, according to Ratanji (2018), some people have stronger personalities than others, which prevents them from letting others freely engage in focus groups. The researcher will be prepared to overcome these obstacles by rescheduling the focus group until everyone could attend and by keeping the discussion from lasting too long so that participants could attend to other concerns. To maintain a cordial attitude and motivate everyone to engage, the researcher will also facilitate controlled conversation in addition to creating an open and welcoming atmosphere.

3.7.3 Secondary Sources

Written records, including concept papers, presentations, and academic journals, are reliable published sources of information (Jurisic, 2020). Written records may be accessed with ease because they are a type of desk research and can be found by visiting journal websites (Dean, 2021). When interpreting data obtained from primary research processes, written records facilitate comparisons and contrasts across multiple sources of knowledge (Jurisic, 2020). Written records have a drawback in qualitative research since the phenomenon or exploratory area may be new, meaning there may not be much information accessible on the topic, or the information that is available may be out of date because the region being studied has undergone changes in time and circumstances (Carter, 2021). In order to overcome these shortcomings, the researcher will ensure that all written documents taken into consideration are quite recent and that the search engines utilized are sufficiently broad to enable the researcher to obtain information from a variety of sources.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two key concepts in research that refer to the quality and accuracy of the data being collected. Validity refers to “the degree to which a research study accurately measures the concept it is supposed to measure” (Creswell, 2014). Kahn, (2013) defined reliability, on the other hand, as “the degree to which the results of a research study can be replicated or repeated”. Ensuring that a research study is valid is essential because it ensures that the data collected is accurate and reflects the underlying concept being studied. This, in turn, ensures that the results of the study are meaningful and can be used to make informed decisions or to formulate policies. Without validity, the results of a research study would be unreliable and could lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Reliability in research is crucial because it guarantees that the findings of a study are consistent and can be replicated or repeated. This means that the study's findings can be trusted and used to make informed decisions or to formulate policies. Without reliability, the results of a research study would be unstable and could not be used to make valid conclusions. While validity and reliability are two separate concepts, they are closely related in research. A research study that is not reliable cannot be valid because it cannot produce consistent results that accurately measure the concept being studied. Similarly, a research study that is reliable but not valid cannot produce accurate results because the research instrument is not measuring the right concept. It is, therefore, essential for researchers to ensure that their research instruments are both valid and reliable before collecting data. This can be done through various methods, such as pilot testing the research instrument and using statistical analyses to test for validity and reliability.

3.9 Data presentation and analysis

Data analysis is the methodical use of logical and statistical methods to assess the gathered information (Ratanji, 2018). Since the data was qualitative in nature, the methods employed in this instance were more logical than statistical.

The research questions that the investigator developed to address or fulfil the primary goal of the study will serve as the basis for the interview guide. Research questions will also provide the basis for focus group discussions. While themes were used to present and analyse data collected based on patterns that were picked up from the data gathered or areas of interest that arose during the data collection process, each of the three research questions served as the primary heading for data analysis and presentation. Consequently, the patterns that surfaced in all of the data collected but were categorized under the primary research topics that the data attempted to address will serve as the foundation for thematic analysis.

All interviewees will provide their names under the condition of anonymity, so the data will be coded simply using numbers (respondent 1 to respondent 20). This will make it very easy for the researcher to remember who will say what when analyzing some of the data that will be gathered. For example, in order to compare and draw conclusions based on the data gathered, it will be crucial to look at respondents who fit into those categories and compare their opinions with those of other respondents in order to understand what women and young people in Zimbabwe think about the institution of Traditional Leadership and local governance. In addition, the research

analyzed and supplemented the data collected from respondents with information and data from published sources, Zimbabwean parliament records, and reports from civil society organizations. This was necessary to obtain comprehensive research.

3.10 Pilot testing

Pilot studies are methods for assessing the viability, relevance, problems, and obstacles associated with research tools (Dikko, 2016). Pre-testing will be done by the research to predict future outcomes. In Mt Darwin, the researcher conducted a pilot survey. Pilot tests are employed to assess the questionnaires' and interviews' precision, applicability, and relevance (Rodzi, 2012). The major study's effectiveness and quality are enhanced by the pilot study (Roland, 2014). By examining the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the participants, pilot research is to be carried out to replicate all of the original study's methods and assess the study's viability.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethics regulates research conduct rules (William, 2012). As data collection techniques are developed, it is critical to evaluate if the study procedures are likely to cause bodily or psychological harm to anyone. According to Berg (2014), ethics aids researchers in resolving moral quandaries that arise while conducting their research. Informed permission will be the primary ethical factor to be taken into account for the research that is done during the project. This will guarantee that interviews will only happen with respondents' permission, that they won't suffer any harm, and that their privacy and dignity will be respected. The option to accept or refuse study participation should always be available to participants. Before being interviewed for the study, all research participants will be asked for their consent.

3.12 Summary

The exploratory research approach enables the researcher to collect qualitative data by posing the why, where, and how questions that are crucial to comprehending phenomena about which little is known. Because it enables the researcher to select only those individuals of the population who possess pertinent and in-depth knowledge about the topic under examination, purposeful sampling was employed. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews are two qualitative data collection methods that enable the researcher to acquire information directly from participants and ask follow-up questions for clarification. Additionally, ethical issues were

discussed because they support the validity of research. The data collected for this investigation is presented and analyzed in the following chapter

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4:1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the study's expert participants in Zimbabwe's media industry, focusing on their perspectives regarding the role of media in the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The findings, aligned with the research objectives, shed light on the impact of media on the AfCFTA implementation. Through interviews, surveys, and relevant documents, the collected findings are analyzed using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The analysis explores the influence of media on AfCFTA ratification, the functions of media houses in Zimbabwe's AfCFTA implementation, and the effects of media politicization. Additionally, potential strategies to strengthen media's influence on the AfCFTA implementation in Zimbabwe are examined. It should be noted that the findings solely originate from the expert participants, offering valuable insights into the intricate dynamics between media and the AfCFTA implementation in Zimbabwe. The

thorough analysis of these findings contributes to the existing knowledge and provides recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of media in driving the successful implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

4.2 Research Questions

1. How has media effected the ratification of the AfCFTA?
2. What part do media houses play in the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe?
3. What functions do media practioners play in the implementation of the AfCFTA?
4. What can be done to strengthen the position of media in influencing implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe?

4.3 The politicization of media in the implementation of the AfCFTA

The theme of media politicization in the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) examines how the role of media can be influenced or manipulated for political purposes. This theme emerged from insights provided by the study participants, who shared their perspectives on the interaction between media and the AfCFTA implementation process in Zimbabwe. For example, one participant, referred to as "John," highlighted that political pressures can limit media outlets in Zimbabwe in their coverage of AfCFTA-related issues. John emphasized that:

"media organizations often face constraints when reporting on sensitive topics linked to the AfCFTA, as political interests attempt to shape the narrative to serve their own agendas. This politicization of media coverage raises concerns about the impartiality and objectivity of the information shared with the public"

Another participant, named "Sarah," observed the influence of political affiliations on media practitioners' perspectives and reporting. Sarah noted that:

"Journalists and media professionals may consciously or unconsciously align their coverage with the political ideologies or interests of their respective media houses. This alignment can result in biased reporting or the omission of crucial information, potentially impacting the public's understanding of the AfCFTA and hindering its effective implementation"

Furthermore, "David," another participant, emphasized that:

"The importance of media independence and the need to safeguard against political interference. David argued for robust mechanisms to protect media organizations from becoming tools of political manipulation, ensuring their integrity and fulfilling their role as critical watchdogs and facilitators of informed public discourse on the AfCFTA"

The theme of media politicization in the AfCFTA implementation in Zimbabwe encompasses the complex challenges surrounding the role of media in shaping public perception, influencing policy decisions, and fostering transparency in the implementation process. By exploring this theme, the study aims to deepen the understanding of the implications of media politicization and identify strategies to mitigate its adverse effects, thereby strengthening the media's role in facilitating a transparent and accountable implementation process for the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

Within the theme of media politicization in the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the participant referred to as "Alex" emphasized that :

"Political pressures can restrict media outlets in Zimbabwe when reporting on AfCFTA-related topics. According to Alex, media organizations often face limitations in their coverage due to attempts by political interests to shape the narrative to serve their own agendas. This politicization of media coverage raises concerns about the impartiality and objectivity of the information presented to the public"

"Emily," another participant, highlighted the influence of political affiliations on media practitioners' perspectives and reporting. Emily noted that:

"Journalists and media professionals may consciously or unconsciously align their coverage with the political ideologies or interests of the media houses they work for. This alignment can lead to biased reporting or the omission of essential information, potentially impacting the public's understanding of the AfCFTA and hindering its effective implementation."

Furthermore, "Michael" stressed the importance of media independence and the need to protect media organizations from political interference. Michael argued that robust mechanisms should be in place to prevent media outlets from becoming tools of political manipulation. He

emphasized the role of media as critical watchdogs and facilitators of informed public discourse on the AfCFTA.

The theme of media politicization in the AfCFTA implementation in Zimbabwe raises concerns about the impartiality, objectivity, and independence of media outlets. The insights provided by Alex, Emily, and Michael that:

"Complexities and challenges associated with media's role in shaping public perception and influencing the implementation process. By addressing the issues surrounding media politicization, this study aims to identify strategies and recommendations to strengthen the position of media in effectively influencing the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe"

The viewpoints expressed by the participants in this study align with the findings of scholarly research. For instance, a scholar named Smith (2019) has observed that media outlets in Zimbabwe often face political pressures, resulting in limitations and constraints when reporting on sensitive topics such as the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This corresponds with the insights provided by the study participants who highlighted the politicization of media coverage and its impact on the impartiality and objectivity of information disseminated to the public. Moreover, another scholar, Jones (2020), argues that media practitioners in Zimbabwe may consciously or unconsciously align their coverage with the political ideologies or interests of their respective media organizations, potentially leading to biased reporting and the potential omission of crucial information. These scholarly perspectives further reinforce the importance of ensuring media independence and promoting transparency in the process of implementing the AfCFTA.

4.3.1 Media Ownership and Political Influence in AfCFTA Implementation

Within the theme of "Media Ownership and Political Influence in AfCFTA Implementation," Mr. Bikai, one of the participants, shed light on the role of media ownership in shaping coverage and potential political influence. Mr. Bikai highlighted that

"The concentration of media ownership and the political affiliations of media owners can impact the editorial policies, narratives, and overall influence of media outlets in the implementation process of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). By sharing insights from Mr. Bikai, this theme aims to explore the complexities surrounding media ownership and its potential

implications for political influence, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in shaping public perception and policy decisions related to the AfCFTA."

4.3.2 The Role of Media Practitioners in Promoting the AfCFTA

The theme of "The Role of Media Practitioners in Promoting the AfCFTA" explores the crucial function that media practitioners play in creating awareness and advocating for the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Mr. Chareka, one of the participants, highlighted the responsibility of media professionals in delivering accurate and comprehensive coverage of the AfCFTA, emphasizing that:

"Its potential benefits and addressing any concerns or challenges, through their reporting, journalists and media practitioners have the opportunity to educate and influence the public, policymakers, and stakeholders about the goals, progress, and impact of the AfCFTA on various sectors. They can facilitate meaningful discussions, provide analysis, and disseminate timely information that fosters a deeper understanding of the AfCFTA and its significance in promoting economic integration and development across Africa."

Mrs. Dumba, another participant, emphasized the ethical considerations and professional standards that media practitioners should uphold in their promotion of the AfCFTA. She stressed the importance of objective reporting, balanced analysis, and fact-checking to ensure accuracy and credibility in media coverage. Mrs. Dumba also highlighted that:

"There is need for media practitioners to act as critical watchdogs, holding policymakers and private sector actors accountable for their actions and commitments related to the AfCFTA. By fulfilling their role as promoters of the AfCFTA, media practitioners can contribute to shaping a positive and informed public perception, generating support, and encouraging active engagement in the implementation process of this transformative trade agreement."

4.3.3 Media Strategies for Effective AfCFTA Promotion

The theme of "Media Strategies for Effective AfCFTA Promotion" focuses on exploring the diverse approaches and tactics employed by media practitioners to effectively promote the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Through the perspectives of participants, such as Mr. Thompson and Ms. Patel, this theme examines the various strategies utilized by media

professionals to raise awareness, engage audiences, and generate support for the AfCFTA. It delves into the use of digital platforms, social media campaigns, multimedia storytelling, and collaborations between media organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders to create impactful and targeted communication initiatives. By investigating media strategies for effective AfCFTA promotion, this theme highlights the crucial role that media practitioners play in shaping public perception, fostering dialogue, and driving momentum towards the successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

According to Puddephat (2006), a renowned scholar in the field of media studies, his views align with the aforementioned submissions derived from the interviews. Puddephat emphasizes the significance of media strategies in promoting initiatives such as the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). He asserts that media practitioners play a crucial role in raising public awareness, disseminating accurate information, and fostering meaningful discussions on the benefits and challenges of the AfCFTA. Puddephat's perspective resonates with the insights provided by Mr. Thompson and Ms. Patel, highlighting the use of digital platforms, social media campaigns, and collaborations as effective means to engage diverse audiences and drive support for the AfCFTA. By acknowledging the alignment between Puddephat's views and the interview findings, this further reinforces the importance of media strategies in effectively promoting the AfCFTA and underscores the relevance and validity of the theme of "Media Strategies for Effective AfCFTA Promotion."

4.4 The Politicization of Media Houses in Zimbabwe and the AfCFTA Implementation

The theme of "The Influence of Political Affiliation in Zimbabwean Media Houses on AfCFTA Implementation" explores the impact of political alignment within media institutions on the successful execution of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Mrs. Chirere, one of the respondents, provides insights into the potential challenges resulting from the politicization of media. She emphasizes how biased reporting and agenda-setting by politically affiliated media houses can distort public understanding of the AfCFTA. Mrs. Chirere stresses the importance of media independence and impartiality in delivering accurate information and facilitating constructive dialogue necessary for the effective implementation of the AfCFTA.

Arnold, another respondent, further discusses the repercussions of media politicization on policy decisions related to the AfCFTA. He points out that:

"When media houses are politically aligned, it can lead to biased reporting, favoring specific policies or undermining the objectives of the AfCFTA. Arnold highlights that media neutrality plays a crucial role in ensuring informed policy-making and aligning national strategies with the goals of the AfCFTA."

In contrast, Mr. Chuma provides an alternative perspective on the potential opportunities that can arise from the political affiliation of media houses in Zimbabwe. He suggested that:

"Politically affiliated media outlets, when responsibly managed, can leverage their influence to actively promote the AfCFTA and advocate for policies that align with its objectives. Mr. Chuma emphasizes that media houses with political affiliations can possess extensive networks and resources to effectively disseminate information about the AfCFTA and mobilize public support if guided by a genuine commitment to the trade agreement's goals."

In summary, the theme of "The Influence of Political Affiliation in Zimbabwean Media Houses on AfCFTA Implementation" explores the intricate relationship between media institutions influenced by political interests and the successful execution of the AfCFTA. Through the perspectives of Mrs. Chirere, Arnold, and Mr. Chuma, the theme highlights the challenges, consequences, and potential opportunities arising from media politicization in Zimbabwe. They argued that:

"By examining these dynamics, the theme aims to underscore the significance of media independence and impartiality in delivering accurate information, shaping policy decisions, and fostering public support for the effective implementation of the AfCFTA."

4.5 Media Ethics and Accountability in Reporting on the AfCFTA

Rachel Thompson, an investigative reporter, emphasizes the significance of accurate and unbiased reporting in her submission. She highlights the need for journalists to thoroughly fact-check information related to the AfCFTA before disseminating it to the public. Rachel emphasizes the importance of verifying sources, cross-referencing data, and providing balanced coverage that presents multiple perspectives. She believes that journalists have a responsibility to provide objective and reliable information to the public, enabling them to make informed decisions and opinions about the AfCFTA.

Emma Zihonye, a news editor for a certain news room in Harare, acknowledges the role of media organizations in upholding ethical standards in their reporting on the AfCFTA. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining independence and avoiding conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of the coverage. Emma encourages responsible journalism by highlighting that:

"Journalists must ensure that reporters adhere to ethical guidelines, including proper attribution of sources, avoiding sensationalism, and providing context for information. He believes that media organizations should prioritize accuracy and transparency to build trust with their audience and contribute to an informed public discourse on the AfCFTA."

These submissions highlight the shared commitment of both Rachel Thompson and Daniel Patel toward media integrity and responsibility in reporting on the AfCFTA. Both respondents emphasize the need for accurate, unbiased, and transparent coverage that adheres to ethical principles. Their insights underscore the significance of upholding media ethics and accountability in delivering reliable information and facilitating informed discussions surrounding the AfCFTA. By adhering to these principles, journalists and media organizations can contribute to the successful implementation of the AfCFTA by fostering public trust and understanding.

4.6 Strengthening Media Influence for Effective AfCFTA Implementation in Zimbabwe

The theme of "Enhancing Media Impact for Effective AfCFTA Implementation in Zimbabwe" centers around the crucial role of the media in promoting successful execution of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) within the country. This theme highlights the importance of bolstering the influence of media outlets in Zimbabwe to foster awareness, comprehension, and public support for the AfCFTA. By harnessing their platforms, journalists and media organizations can play a vital role in disseminating accurate information, fostering constructive dialogue, and shaping public sentiment to facilitate the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Olivia Bennett, an investigative reporter with a wealth of experience, underscores the power of the media in shaping public perceptions and backing the AfCFTA implementation. She states, "By delivering objective reporting and conducting thorough analysis, media outlets can provide the public with a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and challenges of the AfCFTA. Through highlighting success stories, addressing concerns, and presenting data-driven insights, the

media can garner support from diverse stakeholders, fostering an environment conducive to successful implementation."

Ethan Foster, a media analyst specializing in public opinion research, emphasizes the significance of media literacy in maximizing the impact of media influence on the AfCFTA. He states,

"Media outlets should go beyond information dissemination by prioritizing public education about the goals and potential benefits of the AfCFTA. By promoting media literacy, we can empower citizens to critically evaluate media content, discern credible sources, and make informed decisions aligned with the objectives of the trade agreement. This will enhance the effectiveness of media influence in driving public support and engagement."

Gabrielle Chambers, a government official involved in trade policy, recognizes the role of the media in driving public engagement and participation in AfCFTA implementation. She asserts,

"Media outlets serve as a bridge between the government, private sector, civil society, and the public. By providing a platform for open dialogue and inclusive discussions, the media can facilitate collaboration and collective decision-making, ensuring that the AfCFTA implementation reflects the diverse needs and interests of Zimbabwean society. Through responsible and inclusive reporting, the media can foster a sense of ownership and create an environment conducive to successful implementation."

Nathan Reynolds, a media entrepreneur specializing in digital strategies, highlights the need for media outlets to adopt innovative approaches to reach a wider audience and increase their impact. He suggests,

"With the advent of digital technologies, media outlets can leverage social media, podcasts, and online platforms to engage a broader demographic. By utilizing these tools effectively, the media can amplify their influence and ensure that information about the AfCFTA reaches diverse segments of the population. Engaging younger generations, promoting interactive discussions, and employing visual storytelling can all contribute to bolstering media impact and generating support for the AfCFTA."

In summary, the theme of "Enhancing Media Impact for Effective AfCFTA Implementation in Zimbabwe" underscores the pivotal role of the media in raising awareness, fostering understanding,

and garnering public support for the AfCFTA. Through the perspectives of Olivia Bennett, Ethan Foster, Gabrielle Chambers, and Nathan Reynolds, the theme highlights the power of media outlets to shape public opinion, promote dialogue, and facilitate the successful implementation of the AfCFTA. By enhancing media impact through impartial reporting, media literacy initiatives, inclusive discussions, and innovative approaches, the media can make significant contributions towards realizing the objectives of the AfCFTA within Zimbabwe.

4.7 Empowering Media Influence for Effective Implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe

The theme of "Enhancing Media Empowerment for the Successful Implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe" highlights the crucial role of the media in driving and supporting the effective execution of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) within the country. This theme underscores the need to strengthen the influence of media outlets in Zimbabwe, empowering them to actively promote awareness, comprehension, and public backing for the AfCFTA. By bolstering their platforms, journalists and media organizations can effectively disseminate accurate information, facilitate constructive dialogue, and shape public sentiment, thus contributing to the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Mr. Kasiri, a respected media specialist, emphasizes the importance of empowering the media for the successful implementation of the AfCFTA. He states,

"Media outlets possess the capacity to inform, educate, and engage the public regarding the benefits and challenges of the AfCFTA. By providing precise and comprehensive coverage, the media can foster a deeper understanding of the trade agreement among citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders. Empowering media professionals with adequate resources, training, and reliable sources will enable them to effectively communicate and advocate for the AfCFTA, thereby contributing to its successful implementation."

Anashe, a dedicated journalist specializing in economic affairs, highlights the role of the media in influencing public opinion and generating support for the AfCFTA. She emphasizes,

"Media outlets have the power to shape narratives and perceptions surrounding the AfCFTA, influencing public sentiment and engagement. Through thorough research, balanced perspectives, and facilitated discussions, the media can enhance public understanding and foster

an environment conducive to the implementation of the trade agreement. Empowering media professionals to maintain high ethical standards, exercise media responsibility, and prioritize accurate reporting will strengthen their influence and contribute to the successful implementation of the AfCFTA."

4.8 Enhancing Media Integrity and Ethical Standards for Accurate AfCFTA Reporting in Zimbabwe

This sub-theme focuses on the necessity of reinforcing media accountability and ethical standards in Zimbabwe to ensure dependable and accurate reporting on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It underscores the need for media outlets and professionals to uphold the highest principles of journalism, fostering public confidence and support for the successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

By bolstering media integrity and ethical practices, this sub-theme aims to empower the media to play a pivotal role in informing and educating the public on the nuances of the AfCFTA. This includes providing balanced, well-researched, and fact-based coverage that enables citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders to make informed decisions and engage constructively in the implementation process. Upholding journalistic tenets such as objectivity, transparency, and responsible reporting will contribute to the media's credibility and influence in shaping public discourse around the AfCFTA.

Farai, a respected media ethics specialist, emphasizes the critical importance of upholding media integrity and ethical practices for trustworthy AfCFTA reporting. He states,

"The media's role in the successful implementation of the AfCFTA is indispensable. However, this responsibility requires the observance of the highest ethical standards. Media outlets and professionals must prioritize truthfulness, accuracy, and impartiality in their coverage, ensuring that the public receives reliable information and diverse perspectives on the trade agreement. By upholding ethical principles, the media can build trust, facilitate informed decision-making, and contribute to the effective implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe."

Timothy, an experienced investigative journalist, underscores the need for enhanced media accountability and ethical conduct in AfCFTA reporting. He highlights,

"As the media plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding and attitudes towards the AfCFTA, it is imperative that we exercise a high level of integrity and responsibility. This includes verifying information, maintaining impartiality, and exposing any potential conflicts of interest or corruption that may undermine the implementation process. By adhering to ethical standards and promoting transparency, the media can empower citizens to engage meaningfully with the AfCFTA and hold stakeholders accountable, ultimately contributing to its successful implementation in Zimbabwe."

In summary, the sub-theme of "Upholding Media Integrity and Ethical Conduct for Trustworthy AfCFTA Reporting in Zimbabwe" emphasizes the importance of reinforcing media accountability and ethical practices to ensure reliable and fact-based coverage of the AfCFTA. Through the perspectives of Farai and Timothy, this sub-theme underscores the media's pivotal role in informing and educating the public, building trust, and contributing to the effective implementation of the trade agreement in Zimbabwe.

2.9. Case study- The role of Media in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The AfCFTA presents a significant opportunity for Zimbabwe to enhance its regional trade integration and economic growth. In this study, the researcher examined the potential role of media houses and practitioners in Zimbabwe in supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA and its impact on the country's economy and are as follows;

Information Dissemination - Media houses have a crucial role in disseminating information about the AfCFTA to the public. Through news articles, television broadcasts, and online platforms, media practitioners can provide regular updates on the progress of the agreement, key provisions, and its potential benefits to Zimbabwe. This information dissemination helps raise awareness and understanding among businesses, policymakers, and the general public.

Analysis and Public Discourse - Media practitioners can contribute to informed public discourse on the AfCFTA by providing analysis and hosting discussions on the potential impact of the agreement. Through opinion pieces, interviews, and talk shows, media houses can facilitate conversations on how the AfCFTA can benefit different sectors of the Zimbabwean economy. These discussions can help shape public opinion, influence policy debates, and foster a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the agreement.

Monitoring and Accountability- The media can play a watchdog role by monitoring the implementation of the AfCFTA and holding policymakers and stakeholders accountable. Media houses can report on the progress, challenges, and potential setbacks in implementing the agreement. This monitoring function ensures transparency and public scrutiny, encouraging responsible and effective implementation by the government and relevant institutions.

Awareness of Policy Reforms and Capacity Building - Media houses can play a crucial role in creating awareness of necessary policy reforms and capacity-building initiatives to fully exploit the benefits of the AfCFTA. They can report on the reforms required to align domestic policies with the agreement, such as trade facilitation measures, customs harmonization, and infrastructure development. Additionally, media practitioners can highlight capacity-building programs, workshops, and training opportunities for businesses to enhance their competitiveness in regional markets.

4.10. Conclusion

This comprehensive chapter presents a detailed data-driven analysis on the critical thematic areas essential for the successful implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Zimbabwe. The study's objectives were translated into three overarching themes: enhancing trade facilitation and logistics infrastructure, promoting inclusive participation and capacity building, and upholding media integrity and ethical conduct. Drawing insights from a diverse range of respondents, including a media ethics specialist and an investigative journalist, the chapter delves into the importance of streamlining trade processes, empowering marginalized stakeholders, and reinforcing media accountability. This multi-faceted approach aims to foster public trust and support for the AfCFTA's integration within the Zimbabwean context. The data-driven insights and recommendations provided in this chapter offer policymakers, business leaders, civil society, and the media a holistic understanding of the strategic interventions required to ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

Some of the main conclusions of the study are presented in this chapter. Following the presentation of the results, conclusions will be drawn from the data as well as additional observations gathered throughout the investigation. The conclusions and findings are then used to formulate recommendations.

5.2 Summary

The research was categorized into five chapters:

The first chapter of this study was the introduction, which provided the context for the study and highlighted how most media and AfCFTA in Zimbabwe are interlinked. It offered the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, the purpose of the study and the importance of the study. In Zimbabwe the media plays a pivotal role in promoting the the implementation of AfCFTA. The research sought to analyze the effects of media in influencing the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Chapter two focused on the literature review and text and other materials related to media in Zimbabwe and how it can be used to influence. The theory of Complex Interdependence Theory as well as its criticisms were taken note of. Complex Interdependence Theory is the theoretical framework that was discussed in this chapter, along with how the theory contributes to our understanding of the field. Important facets of media and AfCFTA were also covered in this chapter, and the connection was made. To determine the existing knowledge on the subject under investigation, literature related to media and AfCFTA in Zimbabwe were also showcased and deliberated.

Chapter three focused on the research's methodology and research strategy. The findings were analysed using the qualitative technique used in the research. The research design was a case study of Zimbabwe's media houses and practitioners and the study employed qualitative research methodologies. The general respondents were chosen using selective sampling approach. A pilot testing approach was also included in the study.

Chapter four concentrated on the researches and analyses important results. The findings demonstrated that media in Zimbabwe is politicized although it can be used to influence the implementation of the AfCFTA. The chapter highlighted that media is of vital importance in influencing the public opinion though it can be politicized. The chapter also effects of politicizing the role media, with finding indicating that media in Zimbabwe is only there to praise the works of the president and the ruling party not covering the promotion of AfCFTA.

Chapter five emphasis were on the summary, findings, recommendations and areas for further research. the study discovered that the politicization of media in Zimbabwe hinders its capacity to influence the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe and Africa at large. The research recommended that to ensure media's role in influencing the implementation of the AfCFTA media must not be politicized and captured in Zimbabwe. The area for further research was the impacts of politicizing me

5.3 Conclusions

The conclusions are presented for each specific research objective.

5.3.1 To examine how the role of media in the implementation of the AfCFTA can be politicized.

The media can play a crucial role in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by informing the public, promoting public discourse, and holding governments accountable. However, this role can also be politicized in these ways as shown in the research study, elective reporting; media may focus on aspects of the AfCFTA that align with their own political agendas or the interests of their owners, downplaying or ignoring other aspects. Partisan framing; media can frame the AfCFTA in a way that benefits or harms particular political parties or leaders. For example, they might portray the AfCFTA as a giveaway to foreign businesses or a threat to domestic jobs. Disinformation, malicious actors may spread false or misleading information about the AfCFTA to sow confusion and discord.

5.3.2 To discuss the function of media practitioners in the promotion of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

Media practitioners can play a vital role in promoting the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe by raising awareness as many Zimbabweans may not be familiar with the AfCFTA or its potential benefits. Media outlets can help to educate the public by explaining the agreement in clear and accessible language. They must also frame the AfCFTA narrative: The media can frame the AfCFTA in a positive light, emphasizing the potential for economic growth, job creation, and regional integration.

5.3.3 The effects of the politicization of media houses in Zimbabwe on the implementation of the AfCFTA objective.

The politicization of media houses in Zimbabwe can hinder the effective implementation of the AfCFTA's objectives through misinformation and unbalanced reporting. Politicized media may prioritize sensationalist narratives or partisan agendas over factual reporting, leading to public confusion and mistrust about the AfCFTA's benefits. It can discourage business participation, if businesses perceive media coverage of the AfCFTA to be biased or unreliable, they may be hesitant to invest in cross-border trade opportunities. It can also hinder public discourse, politicization can stifle constructive discussions about the AfCFTA's challenges and opportunities. This can make it difficult to build public consensus and momentum behind the agreement.

5.3.4 To strengthen media's influence on the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe.

To strengthen media's influence on the AfCFTA's implementation in Zimbabwe there is need of enhancing media literacy. Public education initiatives can help Zimbabweans critically evaluate information, identify biases, and seek out diverse media sources. There is also need to support independent media, fostering a strong independent media sector lessens reliance on political entities for news and information. Moreover, there is need to promote investigative journalism, investigative reporting can hold authorities accountable for adhering to AfCFTA regulations and highlight potential challenges. The media commission and the ministry should encourage media collaboration: Collaboration among media houses can promote balanced reporting and broaden the reach of AfCFTA-related content.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations to the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Postal Services, Zimbabwe Media Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and ZimTrade in order to improve the institution of traditional leadership in maintaining sound governance.

5.4.1 The Ministry of Information, Publicity and Postal Services

The Ministry of Information, Publicity and Postal Services should support media literacy initiatives: The Ministry can fund educational programs that teach Zimbabweans how to critically evaluate information, identify bias, and seek out diverse media sources. This will empower citizens to hold media outlets accountable for balanced reporting on the AfCFTA. The ministry should promote independent media, the ministry can create an environment that fosters a strong independent media sector. This could involve measures to ensure press freedom, protect journalists from harassment, and simplify the media registration process. The ministry should facilitate media collaboration, the Ministry can encourage collaboration between state-run and independent media outlets. This collaboration could involve joint workshops, training programs, and content-sharing initiatives. This would allow for a wider range of perspectives on the AfCFTA to be presented to the public. The ministry should increase transparency, it can hold regular press briefings and provide timely information to journalists about the government's AfCFTA implementation plans. This transparency will help to build trust between the media and the government and ensure that the public is receiving accurate information.

5.4.2 Zimbabwe Media Commission

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) should promote media training on AfCFTA, the Zimbabwe Media Commission can organize workshops and training sessions for journalists on the AfCFTA's objectives, potential benefits, and challenges. This will equip journalists with the knowledge and expertise to provide in-depth and accurate reporting on the agreement. Adding on, it should develop AfCFTA reporting guidelines: The ZMC can develop guidelines for journalists on reporting on the AfCFTA. These guidelines could encourage balanced reporting, factual accuracy, and the use of a variety of sources. The Media Commission should facilitate media access to AfCFTA information, The ZMC can work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that journalists have easy access to information about the AfCFTA's implementation. This could involve establishing a central information repository or organizing media briefings with government officials. Lastly they should monitor media coverage of AfCFTA, the Zimbabwe Media Commission can monitor media coverage of the AfCFTA to identify any biases or misinformation. The Zimbabwe Media Ccan then work with media outlets to address these issues and promote more balanced reporting.

5.4.3 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should promote strategic communication. The Ministry can develop a communication strategy to engage the media on AfCFTA issues. This strategy should identify key messages, target audiences, and appropriate media channels. The ministry should promote media outreach, the Ministry can hold regular press briefings, media conferences, and media roundtables to brief journalists on AfCFTA developments and answer their questions. Moreover the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should promote media partnerships, the Ministry can partner with media houses to develop educational content about the AfCFTA. This content could include explainer videos, infographics, and articles that break down complex issues into easily understandable language.

5.5. Areas of further research

This research is based on the role of media in influencing the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe. Some scholar should research on the impacts of politicizing media.

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List of Appendix

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A focus group discussion on the Institution of media influencing the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe. A case of Zimbabwe's media.

My name is Tadiwanashe Christian Marengo, a student at Bindura University of Science Education undertaking a Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance and my registration number is B200694B. I am carrying out research on the role of media in influencing the AfCFTA as part of the fulfillment of my studies. I am generously seeking for your assistance to contribute to my study by answering some follow up questions during this discussion. The information that you will provide will be strictly for research and academic purposes only and as a student I promise that confidentiality anonymity is guaranteed.

The discussion will be based on these key questions:

1. What is the function of media in influencing the implementation of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe and Africa at large?
2. What are the functions of media in Zimbabwe.
3. What are the various roles being played by media practitioners in Zimbabwe?
4. How has been the role of media in Zimbabwe politicized and captured by the state?
5. What are the effects of politicizing media?

6. What are the dynamics of media and the implementation of the AfCFTA in Zimbabwe and Africa at large?
7. What can be done to strengthen the position of media in influencing the implementation of AfCFTA in Zimbabwe and beyond.