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# A Comprehensive Quality Management Model for Community Newspapers

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# **A comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers**

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Studies (Journalism) at the Potchefstroom Campus of the  
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# ABSTRACT

The quality of South African (and indeed global) journalism has been under close scrutiny for several years, resulting in criticism regarding issues such as a lack of depth, diversity and accuracy. A lack of effective and efficient media management is one factor influencing the quality of journalism in both the mainstream and community media sectors.

This study focuses on traditional commercial community newspapers that represent the needs, interests and opinions of a demographically and ideologically diverse readership. These newspapers are distinctive, but remain subjected to the same journalism standards as mainstream media because of the vital role they play in creating a platform for intimate community news. Managing quality pro-actively, continuously and across organisational levels is best accomplished within a Total Quality Management framework, which requires organisation-wide commitment to and responsibility for quality.

Media products such as community newspapers offer dual, complementary products of (intangible) content and (tangible) distribution, which are inseparable. Moreover, media products are subject to the cultural preferences and existing communication infrastructure of specific geographic markets. Following a systems- and process-based approach simplifies quality management in such complex organisations, because it offers consistent, predictable results and focused improvement opportunities. The systems approach also recognises the relationship between the organisation and its external environment, which is essential in media management.

The main objective of this exploratory study is thus to create a comprehensive quality management model, taking the nature and characteristics of quality community newspapers and the variables that influence quality in these organisations into account. This model could be a useful tool for owners, managers and editors at community newspapers to manage and improve quality in and across all functions and production processes in their organisations.

**Key terms:** *Community journalism; community newspapers; quality of journalism; quality management; journalism standards; newspaper production process; systems theory; process management; quality management model*

# OPSOMMING

Die gehalte van joernalistiek in Suid-Afrika (en elders ter wêreld) is die laaste jare skerp gekritiseer weens onder meer 'n gebrek aan diepte, verskeidenheid en akkuraatheid. Ondoeltreffende mediabestuur is een van die faktore wat gehalte in die hoofstroom- en gemeenskapsmediasektor beïnvloed.

Hierdie studie fokus op tradisionele, kommersiële gemeenskapskoerante wat die behoeftes, belangstellings en menings van lesers met 'n uiteenlopende demografiese en ideologiese profiel weergee. Hierdie koerante is eiesoortig, maar steeds onderworpe aan dieselfde joernalistieke standaarde as die hoofstroommedia weens hul belangrike rol as 'n forum vir intieme gemeenskapsnuus. Gehalte kan ten beste proaktief, deurlopend en oor organisatoriese vlakke heen bestuur word binne 'n raamwerk van omvattende gehaltebestuur (TQM). Hierdie benadering verg 'n organisasiewye verbintenis tot en verantwoordelikheid vir gehalte.

Mediaprodukte soos gemeenskapskoerante bied 'n produk met 'n tasbare (verspreiding) en ontasbare (inhoud) dimensie wat nie van mekaar geskei kan word nie. Daarbenewens moet mediaprodukte ook ag slaan op die kulturele voorkeure en bestaande infrastruktuur van 'n spesifieke geografiese mark. 'n Stelsel- en prosesbenadering tot gehaltebestuur vereenvoudig die proses in ingewikkelde organisasies, omdat dit die geleentheid bied om gehalte gefokus te verbeter en deurlopend voorspelbare resultate lewer. Die stelselbenadering erken ook die verhouding tussen die organisasie en die eksterne omgewing, wat noodsaaklik is in mediabestuur.

Die hoofdoelmerk van hierdie ondersoekende studie is dus om 'n omvattende gehaltebestuursmodel te skep wat die aard en kenmerke van gehalte-gemeenskapskoerante en die veranderlikes wat gehalte in hierdie organisasies beïnvloed, in ag neem. Hierdie model kan 'n nuttige instrument wees wat eienaars, bestuurslede en redakteurs van gemeenskapskoerante kan gebruik om gehalte in produksieprosesse oor alle funksies heen te bestuur.

**Sleuteltermes:** *Gemeenskapsjoernalistiek; gemeenskapskoerante; gehalte van joernalistiek; gehaltebestuur; joernalistiekstandaarde; produksieproses; stelselteorie; prosesbestuur; gehaltebestuursmodel*

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# CHAPTER 1:

## ORIENTATION AND CONTEXT

*We need news to live our lives, to protect ourselves, bond with each other, identify friends and enemies. Journalism is simply the system societies generate to supply this news. That is why we care about the character of news and journalism we get: they influence the quality of our lives, our thoughts, and our culture.*

— Kovach & Rosenstiel (2006)

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Newspapers have a significant role to play in society (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:7). They are important to the cultural and economic dynamic of specific markets, as the above quotation indicates. Newspaper markets are unique because they have traditionally served two diverse groups: readers and advertisers (Scott, 1999:11; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:7). According to Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:7, quoting Picard & Brody, 1997), “selling local readers to advertisers makes newspapers unusually valuable and identified with their geographic area.” At the same time, a newspaper’s content reflects the “life, character and soul of a community” (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:8). It is thus important that this role of newspapers in society is upheld to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of a particular community.

As is the case with global journalism, however, the quality of South African journalism has been under close scrutiny for several years, resulting in severe criticism regarding issues such as a lack of depth, diversity, investigative journalism, and accuracy (Ferguson & Patten, 1979:2-3; Greer, 1999:187-189; Arenstein, 2004; see also Harber, 2007). A lack of effective and efficient media management has been cited as one factor influencing the questionable quality of journalism (cf. Steyn & De Beer, 2002:2; Harber, 2002; Rabe, 2005; Memela, 2008) in both the mainstream<sup>1</sup> (i.e. “national and regional commercial English and Afrikaans-language print media” [Jacobs, 2004 in Hadland, 2007:16]) and community media sectors (cf. Greer, 1999:187-189; see also Arenstein, 2004).

Community media – a distinctive media sector (De Jager, 1979:48; The Rural Development Institute, 2002; Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173; Lauterer, 2006b; see also Lowman, 2007:8) and the focus of this study, play a vital role in creating a platform for intimate community news (Froneman, Swanepoel & Van Rooyen, 2005:62; Lauterer, 2006a:340; Naidoo, 2008; see also NAB, 2004; De Jager, 1979:2-5, 49). Amid the on-going debate about the survival of the printed newspaper, the prospects sustaining the community newspaper sector remain positive<sup>2</sup> (Marsland, 2005; McClelland, 2008; Anon., 2010; Anon., 2011). However, quality – specifically editorial quality (Marsland, 2005) – is a challenge publishers and editors should address. In a modern world where sophisticated customers have come to demand quality in general (Kotelnikov, n.d.), one should expect of community newspapers to adhere to the same rigorous journalism standards their mainstream counterparts are subject to (Schultz, 2011; see also Bogart, 2004:46; Howley, 2005:14).

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<sup>1</sup> Manzella (2008:274) uses the term mainstream to describe newspapers with a more socio-economically heterogeneous audience, “as opposed to an alternative paper such as the *Mail & Guardian*, whose audience tends to be a more educated elite.”

<sup>2</sup> This trend is not unique to South Africa. “Jim Chisholm, a newspaper analyst, points out that small local papers have fared better than larger regional ones in many countries, including America.” (Anon., 2010)

This study will indicate that the approach to quality at community newspapers should be holistic, focusing on the product as a whole and not solely on improving editorial quality. This requires a renewed focus on organisation-wide quality management. No organisation – including community newspaper organisations – can achieve high quality outputs (and subsequently reach its goals and objectives) without understanding the concept of quality management, and having quality processes in place (Rao, Lawrence, Dambolena, Kopp, Martin, Rafii & Schlesinger, 1996:6; Abrugar, 2010; Mitchell, 2011). Moreover, quality must be managed pro-actively and continuously, both on and across organisational levels (McQuail, 1992:10-11; Cobb, 2003:xii, 4-6; see also Crosby, 1995:66-73). From a community newspaper perspective, this means that all processes required to produce a quality product, i.e. from the pre-production phases of news reporting and writing, advertising procurement and page production through the press and post-production phases of printing and distribution (cf. Scott, 1999:8), should be managed effectively and efficiently (see chapter 3). Likewise, community newspaper organisations should continually strive to improve the quality of their products (Lauterer, 2006a:44). In this regard, Rankin's argument (1986:33) of more than 20 years ago remains relevant:

If a newspaper is to survive and show good progress today it must (plan). This planning requires a newspaper to be in tune with its community. It requires a product of quality to meet consumer demands. It requires newspapers to re-define their markets in order to capture advertising. It requires a degree of financial management unheard of twenty years ago. It requires constant upgrading of productivity and it requires delivery of product at the time the consumer demands it. All this, plus reasonable cash flow, financial resources and product creativity should spell success.

Managing the quality of media products is a difficult process, mainly because the products themselves are complex (cf. Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173; cf. Reca, 2006:182). Profound developments in technology and socio-political changes brought about by the sharp focus on media transformation and diversity (see 1.2), only adds to the complexity. Furthermore, the lack of universal, evaluative quality criteria necessitates that characteristics of quality be extracted from the literature by evaluating the principles and practices of good journalism and newspaper production, and apply these within the context of quality management in a community newspaper context (McQuail, 1992:11, who specifically commented on the lack of universally applicable *journalism* criteria; The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008; see also Conley & Lambie, 2006:42). However, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007), for example, do offer a list of widely accepted principles (“elements”) of good quality journalism, which they argue are fundamental and enduring across all sectors of the news media (see chapter 3). Moreover, the judging criteria for competitions such as the MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards offer useful guidelines regarding the quality of community newspapers, including the quality of advertising and printing (see chapter 5).

The Total Quality Management (TQM) framework might address the dilemma of managing quality of media products and the quality of processes implemented in media organisations (cf. Albarran, 2006:9-10) due to, among other factors, the emphasis TQM places on the involvement of all role-players in the quality management process. TQM is a “comprehensive approach to improve competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility through planning, organising and understanding each activity” (De Coning, 2009:3). Although management leads TQM processes, every employee is responsible for quality output. This approach is certainly relevant in the community newspaper context because of the strong personal relationships, high degree of participation, and necessity for strict deadlines (cf. Lauterer, 2006a:293). It could facilitate improved quality in all processes involved in producing community newspapers (cf. Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006:57-58). This, in turn, could contribute to these newspapers fulfilling their unique role in society “by informing, educating and rallying their demarcated piece of society, as well as reflecting the opinion of such communities and shaping them” (Verster, 2010:1; see also Harber, 2002; Memela, 2008), as well as reaching the primary goal of journalism, which is to provide citizens with

accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free and democratic society (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:12).

This chapter provides the context and motivation for this study, which main purpose is to develop a comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers in South Africa using a systems and process approach (see chapter 2). As a starting point, a summary of the media landscape and media use in South Africa is provided against the background of post-apartheid media development and transformation. An overview of the historical background and evolution of the community press and the role of this sector follows. Concerns about quality are highlighted and the concept of quality management is introduced. In conclusion, the chapter introduces the research objectives and central theoretical statements in the light of the problem statement, and explains the research method.

## 1.2 THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Media diversity in any country is considered a measure of the depth of its democracy (Zegeye & Harris, 2003:12; Burger, 2008:130). In such a dispensation, all citizens should have access to a diverse range of media, a right the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 provides for. Transformation brought about by democratisation in South Africa in 1994 entails empowerment and redressing imbalances – in the media<sup>3</sup> and elsewhere (Steenveld, 2002:91-92). Two important concepts define this transformation. The first is *media development*, defined by the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA, 2001:52) as “...development of the media environment and infrastructure so that marginalized communities, groups and persons have access to the media as owners, managers, producers and consumers of media.” The second key concept is *media diversity*, which entails “... access to the widest range of opinion and information sources by all, as well as equitable representation within the media in general” (MDDA, 2001:50). The concepts of media development and diversity imply that media transformation encompasses three main principles, namely (Steenveld, 2002:8):

- Ownership by historically disadvantaged groups, i.e. black people.
- Newsroom staffs that reflect the demographic profile of the country/distribution area (i.e. racial and gender equality).
- Content that facilitates greater access to the media, especially by people from previously disadvantaged groups; and reflects the opinions of all South Africans.

After the first democratic elections in 1994, the media sector in South Africa experienced significant growth, diversity and expansion (Hadland, 2007:27) “to accommodate the wider scope of interests and voices” (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:93). South Africa is indeed a country with a population characterised by “a wide diversity in race, culture, language, and religion” – leading to media usage being influenced by demographics (Hachten & Giffard, 1984:263). An array of fundamental developments took place, predominantly in ownership and staffing.<sup>4</sup> The previously white-dominated, privately owned print media has been transformed significantly, with black-controlled companies gaining control of important mainstream titles, black editors appointed to a number of newspapers and newsrooms becoming more representative of the multi-racial population (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:100; De Swardt, 2003:8; Steyn, 2006:106; Froneman, 2006). Consequently, diversity, independence and sustainability characterise the South African media landscape today, according to an African Media Barometer (AMB) survey (Bussiek, 2006:35; cf. ANC, 2010). Media in the country are predominantly

<sup>3</sup> Media transformation is not unique to South Africa. In fact, there is a growing global need for media transformation (Gallon, 2010:115; Global Council for Media Transformation, 2009; Kupe, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> For an in-depth investigation of the changes in the media in South Africa from 1994-2004, see Hadland (2007).

commercially driven and the mainstream press privately owned. This contrasts with most African countries where the dominant sector of the media benefits from government funding or is state owned (Kupe, 2004). At present, ownership of the South African print media is concentrated among four major players: Naspers through its subsidiary Media24, Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited (Caxton/CTP), Avusa Limited and the international Independent News & Media PLC (INM) (ANC, 2010:5-6). In this context, Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli (2008:173) state, "... the process of media concentration and convergence resembles the situation in any overly developed Western media market." Manzella (2008:264) describes the print media sector in South Africa as "an ideologically and politically diverse stew of class, race and politically based interests". The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) concur, stating the landscape is "large, complex, robust and mature, arguably ranking among the largest in Africa" and "relatively open" (WAN-IFRA, 2010:981).

The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) reported in 2007 that newspaper sales in South Africa were up 43.18% over the previous five years (WAN, 2007). Print is doing relatively well in South Africa (Burger, 2008:124), despite fierce competition from online media and contrary to the dropping circulation figures and closing down of print media in the developed world (Burger, 2008:123). The number of newspaper titles has increased, and several papers aimed specifically at black readers have emerged (ANC, 2007). According to AMPS 2009 (rolling 12 months survey), the average issue of the 21 daily and 26 major weekly newspapers reaches 47% of all adults in South Africa (Koenderman, 2010:15). This is in stark contrast to the situation towards the end of the 1990s when South Africa had the second lowest number of media titles in the world, and the (general) circulation of newspapers in relation to the population size was the fifth lowest (Duncan, 2000:52).

In 2009, penetration was found to be the highest among the coloured population (42.8%) and lowest among black people (24.9%) (Koenderman, 2010:15 citing AMPS 2009A). In February 2011, the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) reported that newspaper readership reach was maintained during the period July 2009-June 2010, but that South African adults (15+ years old) are on average reading slightly fewer newspapers and magazines than during the corresponding period the previous year (SAARF, 2011). Although South Africa has a wide range of media, both print and electronic, many people in remote, rural areas still do not have access to a diverse range of information (Bussiek, 2006:35; Koenderman, 2010:24; Hadland, 2007:16; WAN-IFRA, 2010:978).

The 2008 global recession did affect the newspaper industry in South Africa and the rest of the world. According to the WAN-IFRA, newspapers "remain a large and thriving industry world-wide, despite the impact of the global recession and the rise of digital media" (WAN, 2010). Circulation figures fell only slightly in 2009, the organisation reports in its annual World Press Trends update. Christoph Riess, CEO of the WAN-IFRA, said in a press release he noticed a tendency among journalists and commentators to concentrate on the negative side of the business "when it is clear there is much to be positive about". In South Africa, the ABC (2011) reported a gain of 28 members during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010, but notes that South African print circulation results will remain under pressure due to predictions that consumers will be generally poorer in 2011 than in 2010. Salient ABC findings in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010 are (ABC, 2011):

- Total newspaper circulation increased by 178 000 copies quarter on quarter, mainly in the free newspaper category. However, real circulation declined by 1%.
- Daily newspaper circulation declined by 7.7%. In contrast, the weekly newspaper category has shown strong growth driven by core circulation – mainly copy sales.
- Overall sharp decline in English titles, whilst Afrikaans and vernacular titles remain stable.

- The magazine category seems to have regained its economic foothold.
- The decline noted in weekend newspaper circulation over previous presentations continues to slow down, with core circulation stabilising and reduced deal-driven distribution.

The growth in the print media market over the last few years is mainly ascribed to the introduction of regional tabloid newspapers and new magazine titles. In the newspaper sector, populist tabloids (the so-called yellow press) and free-sheets (knock-and-drops) enjoy the biggest market share (Burger, 2008:124). Many free newspapers are part of the community media sector, contributing to continuous growth in circulation figures. During the first quarter of 2008, community newspapers experienced a 4.4% growth (with five new publications being introduced to this market), while free papers showed a 5.5% growth (with 12 new publications being introduced) (Anon, 2008). Gibson (2012) reported an 11%-growth in circulation for free newspapers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (2011) Release of ABC circulation figures. Major media groups own and distribute these “local free sheets” as “vehicles for local advertising” (Hadland, 2007:15, citing Milne & Taylor, 2006). Due to their reliance on advertising, these newspapers often have little space for editorial content.

The 2011-ABC figures show that the community and free press sectors in South Africa continue to grow (Gibson, 2012), by 8.5% and 11% respectively. In both cases, the growth is due to new entrants<sup>5</sup> and existing publications are not affected. Real circulation thus remains stable, which, according to Gibson, is positive given the general decline in circulation in the print market in 2011.

According to Hadland (2007:51, citing Hadland & Thorne, 2004), “Government has not missed the potential of the community media and has moved fast to establish links with the sector.” The MDDA was established in 2002 to facilitate the media diversity process (Burger, 2008:130; ANC, 2010), and “to enable historically disadvantaged communities ... not adequately served to gain access to the media” (WAN-IFRA, 2010:982). Through initiatives such as the Vernacular Press Forum (Sidego, 2002:12; Mtimde, 2006), the MDDA gave the community and small commercial media sectors in South Africa a further significant boost (Addison, 2006:viii; ANC, 2007). This includes encouraging ownership and control by people from historically disadvantaged communities (Burger, 2008:130), in line with the goals of media transformation.

Community newspapers are represented on several forums, illustrating their importance in society. In 2008, the Newspaper Association of South Africa represented 180 local newspapers (free and sold), and an estimated 260 small independent newspapers were members of the Association of Independent Publishers (Print Media South Africa, 2008). They play an important role by providing their communities with information important to their lives. In fact, Stovall (2005:56) states, “most people consider the production of local news to be the most important function of a newspaper”. McManamey (2004:3) argues that community newspapers are social capital. She quotes the World Bank’s definition of this concept that social capital “... refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions.” As such, community newspapers as social capital do not just underpin the societies they function in, but, together with other organisations, hold society together.

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<sup>5</sup> A total of 60 community newspapers are currently members of the ABC. Between 31 Dec. 2010 and 31 Dec. 2011, one member was admitted and three removed (Gibson, 2012). Free newspaper membership stands at 201, with 27 admissions and 3 removals during the same period.



The total number of community newspapers and magazines in South Africa increased from 260 in 2000 to 475 in 2008, declining slightly to 470 in 2009 and 2010 (Koenderman, 2010:16). According to Hadland (2007:103), “The imperative to diversify the media was matched by the rapid expansion of the mainstream media’s community newspaper divisions.” In 2008, ownership of approximately 50% of community newspapers was in the hands of the major publishing conglomerates (Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008), around 40 were state-funded and the remaining number independently owned. Media24 owns 49 community newspapers in six regions (Media24, 2011), INM owns 14 through Cape Community Newspapers (INM, 2011), Avusa Media Community Newspapers publishes nine weekly titles in the Cape (Avusa, n.d.) and Caxton/CTPs community newspapers division comprises 120 publications, either wholly owned or owned through major partnerships, spread throughout the country (Caxton/CTP, n.d.). In addition, the group’s Urban Community Newspapers stable has 11 papers. Another seven titles are in the Group Editors stable, which is owned by the Moolman family. A significant trend in the community newspaper sector, however, is the “small grassroots publications” that are entering the market (Koenderman, 2010:22). According to Hadland and Thorne (2004, in Hadland, 2007:15), “There are around 100 authentic community-run newspapers dotted around the country ranging from regular weekly papers to sporadic newsletters distributed by hand.” The generally growing circulation of community publications reflects audiences’ growing need to access localised and relevant information (McLachlan, 2007; NAB, 2007), often delivered in separate newspapers for different cultural groups (Burger, 2008:124).

These changes could potentially contribute to diversity of information, to the benefit of society and democratisation (Wasserman & De Beer, 2004). However, despite the generally positive outlook and relative health of the industry, researchers (e.g. Berger, 1999; Barnett, 2003:2-3) and the ruling African National Congress (ANC, 2007; 2010) express concern that the media are not keeping up with the general transformation in society. Factors impeding media transformation (and subsequently the quality of newspaper products) include (ANC, 2007):

- **Commercialisation** of business models because of depoliticised ownership and control (cf. Froneman, 2006; Barnett, 2003:6; cf. Duncan, 2000:56). This raises concerns about editorial diversity and the quality of news (cf. Mwangi, 2007:58, 70). The impact of commercialisation is seen in the focus on “non-political, advertising-friendly subjects and themes” (Hadland, 2007:76). Hadland (2007:180) says commercialisation is one of the most striking trends in post-1994 media developments in South Africa. He explains that almost every newspaper, including community newspapers, carries some form of government advertising (Hadland, 2007:172): “Commercialism, in the South African context, has thus lead to a subtle subsidisation of the media by the state. This is creating a dependence on advertising revenue from the state for many titles but is also contributing to the deterioration of ethical values that commercialism and dependence naturally brings with it” (see Hadland, Cowling & Tabe, 2007).
- **Centralisation** (aimed at ensuring editorial efficiency and economic gains) results in multi-tasking among newsroom staff members who are constantly expected to do more with less (Duncan, 2000:56; Bussiek, 2006:39). “Faced with increasing workloads, they may find it tempting to marginalize investigative reporting, and to compose stories using the most accessible, reliable sources of news, namely government and corporate businesses. The news of ordinary people takes a back seat, which in turn decreases access to the media. Multi-skilling becomes de-

skilling” (Duncan, 2000:56). The phenomenon of media convergence,<sup>6</sup> which is still only in emergent phases in South Africa, could also have a profound effect in this regard.

- **Tabloidisation** (i.e. “dumbing down” [Wasserman, 2010:159]) due to the increasingly competitive media market, staff reductions (and losing staff to government and corporate communication sectors), a “juniorisation” of newsrooms, a tendency to base editorial judgments on commercial factors rather than good journalism, and a general decline in specialised reporting (Harber, 2002; Jacobs, 2003:149 cited in Wasserman & De Beer, 2004; Bussiek, 2006:39; see also Franklin & Murphy, 1998:17-18).
- **A decline in journalism skills** (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002; Wasserman & De Beer, 2004; Manzella, 2008:267) highlighting the importance of training to facilitate the media’s role in democracy and socio-economic transformation (Berger, 1999:104). Wrottesly (2003:17, in Manzella, 2008:268) said, “The lack of experienced journalists has become in effect a chronic condition of South African news media.” Experienced news people leaving the industry to take up positions in government or business exacerbate the situation. De Swardt (2003:8) notes that initiatives to cultivate talent through, for example, scholarships, targeted recruitment, in-house training, diversity training courses, mentorships and new publications do not replace professional experience. The salient question according to De Swardt (2003:7) is thus whether media organisations conform to the highest standards of the industry by accurately portraying the changing society through newsrooms that are suitably equipped and empowered.

Against this background, the following section of the chapter focuses on the evolution and role of community newspapers in South Africa, further illustrating the importance of the sector, which dates back more than a century. Although an in-depth investigation of the history of community newspapers is not the goal of this study, an overview of their origin and development puts this sector of the press in perspective given the meaning of the concept “community newspaper” (see 1.3) in a transformed media landscape. Such an overview also provides a broader context for the focus of the study, namely the geographically defined, commercial printed community newspaper (see 1.4.1).

### 1.3 THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers were one of the earliest and most common methods of distribution of information about public life (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:30). Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press with movable type (circa 1439 [Wikipedia, n.d.]) simplified the duplication of news and advertisements, thus prompting the development of the printing industry (Claassen, 2006:226). Faure (2001:344) argues that newspapers were the first true mass media in the Western World. Ever since the first printed newspapers appeared in Europe in the late 1700s (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2009:18), they have been a delivery system for journalism, just like radio, television, other print media such as magazines, as well as online and other modern new media today (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:30).

<sup>6</sup> In the digital age, the “melding together of different media, incorporating new personalized services” is called media convergence (Wilkinson, 2003). It means that, thanks to digital platforms, the barriers of time and space are erased, and old definitions of what separated traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television, have gone. According to Wilkinson (2003), “We’ve blurred the lines between info-tainment, promo-tainment, and edu-tainment, and now it’s hard to separate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and mass communication.” Folkerts and Lacy (n.d.) explain the idea of convergence as “the combining of communication technologies to deliver a message”. According to Berger (2001), “The challenge of convergence is to find a model to integrate newsgathering and production efforts for different platforms, without compromising the specificity of each platform and indeed the needs of the specific audiences that go with them.”

De Jager (1979), one of the few scholars who studied the local press in South Africa, argued that there should be an environment conducive and receptive to the establishment of a newspaper. According to him (1979:34), newspapers originate due to a basic communication need: “As every new, civilised community (that can read, write and print) develops, a need for newspapers emerges to orientate and provide information” (Researcher’s translation.) De Jager listed several factors influencing newspaper origination, as evidenced in European press history (De Jager, 1979:30, citing Pienaar & Fourie, 1975:114):

- The existence of a community with a need for news.
- Because a printed newspaper is a public medium, a significant concentration of people is necessary for a publication to be feasible.
- Significant economic development in order to procure advertising. (Advertising became the life blood of European and American newspapers early on [De Jager, 1979:31] and remains the main source of traditional newspaper revenue [cf. Verster, 2010:5].)
- Significant technological development for the printing process to proceed smoothly.
- A measure of human development, i.e. a need for information and the ability to read and write.
- A transportation infrastructure so that the newspaper can be distributed.
- Newsworthy activities and events that not all members of the community are aware of.

New communities thus necessitate new newspapers.<sup>7</sup> De Jager (1979:32, citing Du Plessis, 1979) argued that all early newspapers were essentially local in nature, due to the limited capabilities of the printing process at the time, an inadequate transportation infrastructure, and a largely illiterate and widely scattered population (cf. Holdridge, 2010:498). This often led to newspapers not surviving beyond the first issue, e.g. *The Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet* in 1841. In fact, the first European and American newspapers were also local newspapers (De Jager, 1979:33) – despite initial opposition to local news content (Pienaar & Fourie, 1975 in De Jager, 1979:32). According to Sloan and Williams (1994:19), “Historians frequently have suggested that colonial newspapers downplayed local news on the assumption that local residents already knew what had happened in town.” Holdridge (2010:488), however, argues that, “newspapers remained the dominant medium for connecting the British diaspora spread throughout the empire”. This function as well as an attempt to minimise a sense of “dislocated locality” (Holdridge, 2010:494, 509) could explain the resistance to local news in colonial papers.

The history of the press in South Africa is thus intimately linked to the establishment of communities and towns, of which Cape Town was the first. With the Great Trek in 1838 the industry also expanded inland, and newspapers were started as people gathered into communities and settled in towns. These communities generally remained small and scattered due to the absence of mass industries in the country before World War II. Although some of these newspapers were also distributed in neighbouring towns, they were restricted to a single region and could thus by no means be described as national publications (De Jager, 1979:34). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost every town had a newspaper, the proprietor and editor often being the same person. A strong provincial and very independent press developed, largely because of the 1820 British settlers who came to the Eastern Cape and brought printing presses with them (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:90). The frontier editors furthered the cause of the settlers, Dutch Farmers and Voortrekkers, but excluded the black population, according to Diederichs and De Beer (1998:90). The black press thus developed separately, starting at missionary stations in 1830. The black press and the Afrikaans and English-language press formed the three broad historical sections (“traditions” [Hadland, 2007:69]) of the South African press (Jackson, 1993:31). After 1994, “and arguably for some time prior

<sup>7</sup> This does not just apply to geographically defined communities (see 1.3).

to that”, these terms became redundant (Hadland, 2007:70). Manzella (2008:264), however, argues that the old definitions – English, black and Afrikaans press, persist in terms of audience and ideology, “although there are signs that the ideological underpinnings of each may be shifting”.

Oscar Henry Frewin, an internationally renowned master printer for whom the OH Frewin Trophy for Typographical Excellence was named in 1949 (Anon., 1998), is seen as the father of the community newspaper in South Africa<sup>8</sup> (De Jager, 1979:43; Van den Bergh, 2009:10). Frewin, who started the *Middelburg Observer*, began lobbying in 1909 for an association that would represent the rural printed press in South Africa (Van den Bergh, 2009:10). He felt there was too little contact and cooperation between the handful of northern newspapers and the many in the Cape (Anon., 1998), represented by the Cape Press Association (CPA) (De Jager, 1979:43). At the time, community newspapers were generally known as country newspapers (the rural/country press) (De Jager, 1979:45; see also Da Gama Publications, Ltd., 1960:197). At a meeting in Bloemfontein on 15 October 1912, the CPA officially became the South African National Press Union (De Jager, 1979:43), representing all newspapers in the country<sup>9</sup>. In 1926, a country (rural) chapter of the NPU was created with Frewin as its first president, a position he held for 25 years (Van den Bergh, 2009:10).

After World War II, advertisers mainly focused on the urban press and few national advertisements were placed in country newspapers, causing growth to stagnate (De Jager, 1979:45). Frewin played an instrumental role in the creation of a sub-section of the country department of the NPU to represent the country press’ advertising interests. In 1951, an independent company called the Central Advertising and Public Relations Office for the Country Press in South Africa (Capro) was formed for this purpose (De Jager, 1979:45; Van den Bergh, 2009:10) (see section 3.2.2.1 for a discussion of advertising in the community press, with reference to the role Capro [now Capro Limited]<sup>10</sup> plays.) Community newspapers resumed a pattern of growth in the 1950s amid social and economic development. This sector’s growth in the 1960s was ascribed to a change in the market structure when industrial and mining development essentially fed rural South Africa (Du Plessis, 1979, in De Jager, 1979:19). In 1960, there were 130 community newspapers in small towns (Da Gama Publications, Ltd., 1960:122). During this time, the country chapter became known as the *Provincial Division of the NPU* and the name “country/rural” was no longer commonly used to refer to the community press (De Jager, 1979:45). At the end of the 1970s, 112 provincial (“country and local”) newspapers (De Jager, 1979:42) were members of the NPU.

Similar to what happened in the USA decades earlier (Anderson, 2006), the arrival of television in South Africa in 1976 brought about a change in both consumer and advertising patterns, which left many large newspapers competing with community newspapers for local advertising (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:98). Large newspaper groups soon realised the advertising potential of community newspapers and started acquiring community newspapers to broaden their sources of income and compensate for the loss television caused (Lubinga, 2001:20 in Verster, 2010:5; Verster, 2010:2). Growing competition from other media, especially television, as well as rising production costs led to the emergence of the chain ownership pattern (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:93). These authors argued that chain ownership brought about great management efficiency. For example, resources were combined to benefit all publications. In the process, however, the control over the newspapers with the highest circulation was in the hands of

<sup>8</sup> Diederichs and De Beer (1998:90) stated that Robert Godlonton, a British settler who started the *Graham’s Town Journal* in 1831 is described as the father of the indigenous press of South Africa.

<sup>9</sup> Diederichs and De Beer (1998:91) said the NPU was founded in 1882, led by Francis Dormer.

<sup>10</sup> <http://capro.co.za/>

four major groups, causing concern about quality due to factors such as homogenisation (Harber, 2002). According to Claassen (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:84):

Concern about the concentration of media ownership is quite common in democratic societies. The main objection to such concentration is that it diminishes the diversity or pluralism of news. Democracy is best served by the diversity of competing voices that must provide the public with a multiplicity of information and opinions on which to base its decisions. When the media are merged or are increasingly placed under centralised control, competition is minimized. Limited or a lack of competition leads to the decline of pluralism, and consequently threatens the functioning and survival of democracy.

As an advertising medium, the community newspaper has a clearly defined and essential task in the marketing process (see chapter 3). De Jager (1979:52) argued that it is the specific market structure in a particular area and not the specific characteristics of a communication medium that determines the success, popularity and applicability of that medium as an advertising vehicle. Furthermore, he said that the content of a medium is determined by how many use it and who these users are. When the number of centralised markets in South Africa grew, the value of the decentralised market increased relative to the total market in the country, and the relative value of the small and scattered market decreased. With decentralisation in the 1960s and 1970s, media in the large centres could also no longer serve the outlying markets – neither as editorial media nor as advertising channels (De Jager, 1979:50). Communities that were geographically removed from the epicentres became dependent on resources within that area to fulfil communication, economic and personal needs (De Jager, 1979:39; Jackson, 1993:87). At the same time the mass newspaper “broke out of its shell” as local newspaper. It targeted as many people as possible and no longer had space for news about schools, churches, associations and cultural activities in local communities. The strongest dailies – especially the English papers – developed in urban areas with a higher literacy level.<sup>11</sup> Newspapers also originated in larger towns closer to the metropolitan centres, as well as in suburban areas (De Jager, 1979:39). The suburban press, mainly distributed to suburban households, “mushroomed” in the 1980s for exactly the reasons De Jager explained (Jackson, 1993:87). According to Jackson, “... a local, suburban paper can deliver readers to advertisers far more cost-effectively... The local paper offers a more sharply focused readership compared with the more diffuse and spread-out readership available, at a higher cost, in what is essentially a regional newspaper.”

Alda Roux, general manager of community newspapers (central) at Media24, says the demand for free newspapers is increasing and paid-for titles show a downward curve – very often because their news is available free on the Internet (Marketing Mix, 2009:38). However, the fact that community newspapers supply news and advertising information that are close to the reader, gives this sector a competitive advantage.

Caxton/CTP, still the main suburban publisher in South Africa, follows a simple formula, according to Jackson (1993:87-88): “Offer advertisers assured high penetration – at competitive prices – in the markets they want, usually through free distribution; focus editorial content on the local community, typically a suburb or a small town for which the larger dailies provide minimal, if any, editorial, coverage; and sell, sell, sell to the advertisers.” Mainstream journalists and editors, who view editorial content as the core of newspapering, criticise the focus on advertising as the main reason for the existence of these newspapers (Jackson, 1993:88). Community newspapers are thus often dismissed as poor. These critics do have a point. Although providing a platform for local advertising is one of the functions of the community

<sup>11</sup> According to De Jager (1979:37), most Afrikaans speaking South Africans (at the time) lived in rural areas.

media, an exclusive focus on advertising revenue has a profound effect on the quality of a newspaper product as a whole (see chapter 5).

The significant changes in the South African print media market during the 1990s (see 1.2) include “the emergence of ... a new generation of local community newspapers” (Hadland, 2007:130; see also Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:100; Tomaselli & Teer-Tomaselli, 2008:172). The creation of the Forum of Community Journalists/Forum vir Gemeenskapsjoernaliste in 1991 under the initiative of Schalk Hoogenboezem, the then editor of the *Potchefstroom Herald*, is seen as a milestone in the history of the community press in South Africa. Hugo Redelinghuys, the father of the Sanlam Competition for Journalistic Excellence (see chapter 5), was a member of the first committee of this organisation that represents community journalists in the country (Van den Bergh, 2009:10). During this decade, the name of the local press chapter of the Press Union was changed to “community press”. However, the name “tuiskoerante” remained popular in especially the Cape, according to Van den Bergh (2009:10). Internationally, terms used to describe these newspapers included provincial, local, suburban, regional, weekly, and small papers (McManamey, 2004:16).

Traditionally “communities” refer to specific geographical communities (Johnson & Doucet, 2006:6). However, the definition is continuously evolving and broadening through debate locally and abroad. The general argument is that the meaning of “communities” within a media context should also include virtual communities and specific minority groups. From a community psychology point of view (cf. Visser, 2007:5-7) the concept can refer to people in a specific geographical area, a network of social relationships, a construction of a way of life. This concurs with the sociological understanding of the concept (cf. Sim, 1969:10). The concept of narrow target audiences is not new, though. Early newspapers targeted specific audiences, such as Calvinists, business proprietors and landed gentry. It was not until the 18th century that newspapers began to target broad audiences with political concerns (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2009:18). In the South African *print* media context, however, “community” still has a strong geographical association (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:3). Diederichs (2009:3) argues that, in modern journalism, journalists at “dorpskoerante” (small town papers) still have direct contact with their readers – more so than their peers at mainstream papers. This would include suburban newspapers, which form part of the community newspaper sector.

Although the term “community” (“gemeenskap” in Afrikaans) is generally used in South Africa to describe local/country/provincial newspapers and other media (as stated above), it is also used within a political (or alternative media) context. This can cause confusion about what a community newspaper, for example, really is. Berger (1996) stated that the community media sector in South Africa emerged from the struggle era. At the time, it was mostly used as “... a tool to counter state propaganda, inform, mobilise, and educate the masses about their rights and to facilitate the building of strong community organisations” (Milne *et al.*, 2006:3). This describes what is commonly known as the alternative media, but often referred to as community, resistance or grassroots media (cf. Jackson, 1993; Tomaselli & Louw, 2001). The alternative press<sup>12</sup> was at its most vibrant during the 1980s (Jackson, 1993:46). These independent newspapers, magazines, community newspapers and journals practiced committed or advocacy journalism against apartheid (Jackson, 1993:xvi; MDDA, 2000:49; Tomaselli & Louw, 2001:24). They were non-commercial (i.e. profit is not the sole reason for their existence), fulfilled a role within resistance in the country and saw the established commercial media as failing to fulfil the needs and reflect the aspirations of most (i.e. black) South Africans (Tomaselli & Louw, 2001:24). Van Kessel

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion about the alternative press, including the criticism against the use of the term “alternative”, see Jackson (1993:46-69). Tomaselli and Louw (1991 and 2001) discuss the alternative press in depth.

(2000:283) referred to a new alternative press that originated in the 1980s. These “community newspapers aspired to interact with their readership and to help shape, rather than only report, events”, e.g. the non-profit publication *Grassroots* (cf. Dockney, Tomaselli & Hart, 2010:81).

In the 1990s, the alternative media lost their importance due to the political changes in the country (cf. Hadland, 2007: 14). Several publications closed down because donors withdrew their support due to democratisation, e.g. *Work in Progress*, *Learn and Teach*, *Speak*, *Saamstaan* and *Namaquanius* (FXI Update, 1995). In the early 1990s, more attention was focused on creating a community radio sector. At the same time, a small print sector also took root in towns across South Africa. After 1994 and within the framework of media transformation, the focus shifted “from newspapers serving a political agenda in the interests of liberation to newspapers continuing to make an on-going contribution to transformation and community building” (Tracey, Mavhungu, Du Toit & Mdlongwa, 2009:8).

“The MDDA was established with the specific purpose of nurturing non-mainstream titles and outlets,” according to Hadland (2007:51, citing Hadland & Thorne, 2004). This step formalised the relationship between the state and the community “with a growing and largely unregulated array of contractual and financial relationships between community newspapers, community radio stations and various government departments and agencies” (Hadland & Thorne, 2004 in Hadland, 2007:51).

It is clear that there are two broad categories within the community press in South Africa: *traditional commercial community newspapers* that serve the communication needs of a diverse population in a specific geographic area (cf. De Jager, 1979:19; Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:97; MDDA, 2000:52; Milne *et al.*, 2006:3; Diederichs, 2009:3) and *non-commercial community newspapers* that serve the specific communication needs of previously disadvantaged geographic communities or communities of interest (MDDA, 2000:50; MDDA, 2006:53-54; Meissenheimer, 2006:31, quoted in Verster, 2010:1; WAN-IFRA, 2010:982; see also Berger, 1996). Within media transformation, the challenge is to ensure that the media industry adequately covers all interests, sectors and schools of thought, according to the MDDA (2000:9). Mhagama (2004:3) states, “Community media can therefore be categorized under alternative media because they give voice to the voiceless and allow them to participate in ... various stages of decision-making processes...” These newspapers, best described as community-oriented alternative media (Dockney *et al.*, 2010:80, quoting Bailey *et al.*, 2008:3-34) focus on transformation and community building and include small commercial newspapers as defined by the MDDA in the paragraph below.

The MDDA (2000:50) defines community as “a geographically founded community or any group of persons or sector of the public having a specific, ascertainable common interest”. The Agency describes community and small commercial media sectors, on which it focuses, as follows (2006:53-54):

- **Community media:** Defined in accordance with the definition of community radio used by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) as non-profit media (broadcast, print and new media). Community media serving geographical communities are owned and controlled by the community they serve through their elected representatives. Community of interest media, however, are not directly accountable to the interests they seek to serve. Any surplus generated by community media projects would be used for community development or re-invested in the community media project, and not for any individual benefit. A community media project would classically have a democratically elected board, and hold annual general meetings.
- **Small commercial media:** Independent media run by communities, groups or persons as small businesses for profit.

The MDDA explicitly excludes what it calls the local commercial press (also referred to as “community newspapers” in some quarters [MDDA, 2000:19]). The Agency states that the “local commercial press” (i.e. traditional community newspapers) serves “a particular geographical area, and is owned and controlled by individuals or companies for commercial profit”, adding that these newspapers serve middle to upper income groups (MDDA, 2000:52).

In a multicultural South Africa where different peoples share the same geographical space, the press can bridge the knowledge gap “between those who give and those who receive” (Balding, 1999:21); facilitate the transmission of economic information; provide a forum where development can be debated; champion fundamental rights; monitor processes and offer feedback which could lead to better governance (Balding, 1999:21). The transition to democracy presented South African community media (traditional or newly defined) with the challenge to redefine its role (Milne & Taylor, 2006:3). According to columnist Frank Meintjies (1998), the platform of community and grassroots media groups “is built on the values of participation, democracy and social utility”. However, Mwangi (2007:3) rightly argues that, “The gap created by the sparse body of literature and theory on community newspapers limits our understanding of this medium and its full impact on society.” Moreover, according to Hadland (2007:202), “It would seem that under pressure from the state, from advocacy activists within the (alternative) community media and governmental sector, from the weight of journalists’ own ignorance and lack of skills and also from the struggling self-regulatory authority and codes, that a public service orientation is growing in South Africa at the expense of autonomous, liberal professional journalistic values.”

From a social responsibility as well as development media theoretical perspective, a newspaper in post-apartheid South Africa’s liberal democracy is in a position to contribute to exemplify democratic values – teaching readers from different backgrounds and even opposing perspectives to respect one another’s views. Due to the separation of residential areas, schools and even the workplace to some extent under apartheid, such exposure had been severely curtailed (cf. Kalazana, 2000:14 in Verster, 2010:6). The researcher argues in this study that traditional geographically defined printed community newspapers are in a unique position to fulfil this function. These publications serve diverse communities and face a particularly complex challenge in representing the interests, opinions and needs of a demographically and ideologically diverse audience. Moreover, they are often the only newspaper in town. (See 1.4.1 for an operational definition.)

In order to formulate a relevant working definition for the term community newspaper in the context of this study,<sup>13</sup> the next section sheds light on the role of these publications, including in the South African context.

#### **1.4 THE ROLE, NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS**

As stated in 1.1, the purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with credible information so that they can function effectively in society (cf. Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:12). Howley (2005:18) says community media promote the “... public’s capacity to participate in decision-making processes in an informed and deliberative fashion...” The most basic role of community newspapers is thus to facilitate the transfer of information among all role players (Roberts & McCombs, 1994:250). In addition, community newspapers interpret information and events and communicate the context and consequences

<sup>13</sup> See Swanepoel and Steyn (2010:218-242) for a comprehensive discussion of the complex nature of defining community newspapers within a transformed media in South Africa.



to readers – in line with the fundamental principles of good journalism (see chapter 5). Community newspapers are furthermore important within a local economic environment because they offer local businesses the opportunity to advertise their products and services at affordable rates (Froneman *et al.*, 2005:62).

The nature of the information community newspapers provides is what distinguishes this sector from the mainstream press. Community newspapers create a platform where a community's (more intimate) news can be found (Froneman *et al.*, 2005:62; Naidoo, 2008; see also De Jager, 1979:2-5, 49). They orientate readers in terms of their own immediate environment by providing information that affects readers directly, enrich their lives and offer them a sense of safety and belonging (De Jager, 1979:2-5; Froneman *et al.*, 2005:62; see also Howley, 2005:3, 16; Milne & Taylor, 2006:4, 30). Subsequently, community newspapers can develop strong ties with readers. They view some events as important, even when bigger publications might ignore it (cf. Glover, 1998:122). Their understanding of what readers want from and mean by local news, helps them to flourish (Negrine & Eyre, 1998:42). One of the main roles of community newspapers is that of community building through wide coverage of community life and a contribution to community growth (Domatob, 2006). Community journalism is journalism at its "highest level" and should "bring people together by helping them to understand their neighbours and foster a sense of community" (Faure, 2001:373).

Lauterer (2000, quoted by McManamey, 2004:44) argued that community journalism is a *style* that puts local first. Community journalism as a style then entails providing local coverage and covering national and international stories from the salient *local* angle, i.e. the angle that would appeal to a publication's readership (Faure, 2001: 375; see also De Jager, 1979:2-5, 49; Froneman *et al.*, 2005:62; Naidoo, 2008; Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008). According to Lauterer, community newspapers "embrace their civic role by recognizing their public mandate to promote the general welfare of the community". It does not stop there, however. The newspapers accept that they are "key stakeholders and players in the forces that help build and celebrate their communities" (Lauterer, 1995:5).

Archer (1996:5) concurred that community journalism entails an in-depth focus on the community beat, and added that it uses relatively traditional reporting methods – the same methods journalists at mainstream media would employ (cf. Faure, 2001:374). In a South African context this includes playing the vital role of watchdog (e.g. monitoring the level of service delivery pertaining to the government's reconstruction and development policy [Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008]) and exposing injustices (cf. Balding, 1999:22; cf. Harvey, 2002:29). As such, community newspapers provide civic news and features *for the communities they serve* based on the information they obtain from entities in their *immediate environment* such as local councils, the courts, police and emergency services (Franklin & Murphy, 1998:8; Faure, 2001:374). Faure (2001:376) argued that not only the news and information in community newspapers focus on the specific communities they serve, but also the advertising. Using the *Record* in Pretoria as a case in point, Faure (2001:376) explains that advertisers recognise the importance and value of advertising to people in their own areas and gladly pay for a product that provides local news, including advertising information that would not be available elsewhere. Lauterer (2006:44) argues that community newspapers should be as vital to their advertisers as to their readers. Community newspapers allow advertisers to target specific geographic markets. Consequently, they know where the newspaper will be read and who will look at the advertising (Newspaper10, 2008:16). This is especially important for small businesses with smaller budgets.

Community newspapers' content also reflects community norms and values (McManamey, 2004:3) and thus normally upholds positive, moral and cultural values of the community (Mrutu, n.d.). An important

message that community newspapers send out is that everyday life in their communities is important and valuable. They therefore have a strong focus on positive news, which contributes to building community cohesion (McManamey, 2004:47) as opposed to the mainstream media's strong focus on the negative. This should not, however, mean that community newspapers shy away from hard news and current affairs. Reader (2008) adds that the focus on community values has an impact on news judgment (choosing what to cover and what not) and making ethical decisions that culminates in sensitivity in reporting (McManamey, 2004:48) (e.g. publishing information that would embarrass people in the community). This includes not offending readers in any way, for example through publishing pornographic material (including advertising) (cf. Faure, 2001:377). McManamey (2004:252) states that, "The manner in which community newspapers address and present issues and interests in content is linked to a sympathetic understanding of community needs, a strong focus on support and uplifting community spirit, and by including broad community contributions within content and process they engender community cohesion." This is due to the intensely personal nature of community journalism (Reader, 2008). Mainstream journalists might spend a few hours with someone, but community journalists run into the people they write about, especially in small towns. It can be both intimidating and helpful: community journalists are exposed to angry sources, but, on the other hand, it also encourages them to be more sensitive about how they treat sources.

Due to this sensitivity, community journalism is usually not sensational, McManamey (2004:48) argues. However, the excessive focus in the South African media on crime and trauma that is often seen on the community front, borders on the sensational. Hennie Stander, editor of the *Potchefstroom Herald*, explains that this is what readers want and newspapers carrying this type of news on the front page sell very well (Standar, 2007). McManamey (2004:48) argues that this merely shows that readers are interested in what happens in their communities, and more specifically, to their neighbours.

In South Africa in particular, cultural diversity and community relations are complex issues (Addison, 2006:30). Some community newspaper editors view the role of their publications as traditional (serving previously advantaged communities), but others embrace the development and transformation dimension of diverse communities with the challenges it brings (Swanepoel & Steyn, 2010:228). These authors quote the sole proprietor of a small Eastern Cape based publication who notes that he would like to see his paper play a constructive and reconciliatory role, but it is not easy in the particular divided community. In his experience just informing readers accurately and in an unbiased manner in many instances worsens the division due to the enormous cultural differences in South Africa. Even if you add compassion and understanding to your reporting and editorial comment, distrust persists. From a service quality perspective, cultural issues such as values, norms and ideology influence how people perceive quality (Laroche, Ueltshey, Abe, Cleveland & Yannopoulos, 2004:62). Due to the many service-related relationships connected to the production of a community newspaper, one could argue the multicultural and demographic realities in South Africa add to the complexity of assessing quality, because issues such as values, norms and ideology influence what editors, journalists and readers view as valuable. Newspapers need to approach these issues and respond to them in a way that is in line with the cultures, habits, customs and preferences of their specific communities (Addison, 2006:30). This author further explains that community newspapers are the ideal vehicles for providing the pertinent information and offering an individual experience – "General news providers just cannot compete on a localised level like that."

Where management is concerned, community newsrooms are characterised by a more cooperative flow of copy than is the case in many bigger mainstream newsrooms. This is due to a relaxed rather than structured process, entailing a more democratic style of management that involves staff in a variety of tasks (McManamey, 2004:45). This environment is conducive to a TQM approach to managing quality

(see chapter 2). For example, an experienced journalist could, in addition to reporting and writing stories, also be involved in sub-editing and even page layout. Reporters generally also help to proofread papers. Community newsrooms generally have a high staff turnover, particularly reporters, because many entry-level jobs are found in this sector (Stovall, 2005:74; Lauterer, 2006a:308). This affects newspaper management, as well as newspaper quality (see 1.2, see also chapter 3 and 5). Furthermore, because community newspapers employ fewer people, employees tend to take on more responsibility much sooner in their careers than those in the mainstream media (McManamey, 2004:47; Lauterer, 2006a:340). For both entry-level and committed community journalists, the sector provides a wider range of experiences than large newspapers, including experience as a photographer, columnist and page designer (Stovall, 2005:74). This emphasises the important role community newspapers play as a training platform for young journalists (Franklin & Murphy, 1998:16-17) and other employees – a role they need to accept and embrace.

According to the WAN, newspapers have traditionally taken an interest in their readers' welfare through activities such as investigative journalism, editorial advocacy campaigns and programs in fields such as literacy, education and youth development (Balding, 1999:9). The WAN argues that community newspapers in developing countries have a particularly important role to play, assisting communities in overcoming (social) problems that pertain to the most basic needs such as fresh water and proper nutrition, health information and education (Balding, 1999:I). In this way they would play "the fundamental role for which newspapers and other media exist: to, in full freedom, report on, inform about and analyse the actions of all players in government and in society" (Balding, 1999:I). Naidoo (2007) rightly argues that "newspaper readership is no longer measured by its status, but more so by its relevance, reach and reliability".

Audience participation<sup>14</sup> is a further salient distinguishing factor in community newspapers. Audience participation as an element of journalism is especially alive on the Internet, allowing people to report news in their own time and based on their own needs and preferences (SA Online Journalism, 2007). It is also found in letters to the editor in newspapers, as well as on talk radio. A closely related concept is that of citizen journalism (also called grassroots journalism [SA Online Journalism, 2006]) by groups and individuals worldwide (Esipisu & Kariithi, n.d.), including web logging (Banda, 2006). These types of journalistic practices offer avenues for empowerment of minority groups. It does, however, not constitute media per se, but rather the manner in which news and information is presented from a specific platform. In many cases, however, this type of journalism fails to comply with professional journalistic standards (Grubisich, 2005; see also Grimes, 1999:1).

Where audience participation in community newspapers is concerned, readers are more likely to identify with community members in local newspapers and community members are more likely to be involved as columnists, for example (McManamey, 2004:46; see also Howley, 2005:3; Mwangi, 2007:12-13). Thornburg (2011:318) rightly says (cf. Mhagama, 2004:29):

Community journalism ... has a history of audience participation. This type of reporting creates an overlap between the journalists and the audience by developing the news organisation as a forum for the discussion of community issues, rather than as a detached spectator. Civic journalism seeks to foster debate and discussion among the audience and strives to use journalism to build social capital.

<sup>14</sup> As opposed to participatory journalism, a form of news production and distribution that the public controls in some way or another (SA Online Journalism, 2007; cf. Urgoti, 1999:5).

Hiebert and Gibbons (2000:39) support this view:

The civic journalism argument poses the challenge that newspapers should become more involved in the workings of the community, and not just passive reporters of objective fact. The larger challenge is to preserve and expand their role as essential purveyors of information and opinion crucial to informing the public, which alone can maintain democracy.

Another difference McManamey (2004:47, quoting Cafarella, 2001) points out is that newsmakers in community newspapers are less media-shrewd than those in mainstream newspapers. Furthermore, mainstream newspapers tend to report on politics and decisions makers' views and how they influence the decision makers whereas community newspapers report on how government policies affect ordinary citizens.

In the community newspaper sector, Diederichs and De Beer (1998:97) distinguish between urban newspapers (e.g. the *South Coast Sun*, *Northcliff & Blackheath Times*, *Ons Stad*, *Kempton Express*, rural newspapers (e.g. the *Paarl Post*, *Potchefstroom Herald*, *Klerksdorp Record*), and free sheets (e.g. those Rockhaven Press distributes in Zulu in the townships of Durban). They list the following characteristics of community newspapers during this time period, which remain relevant today:

- Most community newspapers serve particular towns, districts or suburbs, cover local affairs and carry local advertising.
- Some are sold; many are free, surviving solely on advertising revenue. The latter includes many of the hundreds of neighbourhood (suburban) newspapers in which major press groups such as Caxton/CTP and Naspers play a big role. According to Burger (2008:124), these neighbourhood newspapers (called freebies, free sheets or knock-and-drops) have a guaranteed readership and rely on advertising as their sole source of income.
- Most of the community papers are bilingual (Afrikaans/English), and most are linked to major press groups – either directly or through an organisation that has a stake in it.
- Most community papers are published weekly in tabloid format. Some bigger publications are published twice weekly. Most appear in the afternoon and Tuesdays and Thursdays are popular publication days (Greer, 1999:185-186; Faure, 2001:345; Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008).

Scholars generally agree that the main differences between community newspapers and their mainstream counterparts lie in the close relationship with the community in which they operate, and in the local nature of the issues and events they cover. From the literature the following factors can thus be summarised as characteristics of community newspapers (Lauterer, 1995; Franklin & Murphy, 1998:16-17; Greer, 1999:187-189; Faure, 2001; Rural Development Institute, 2002; McManamey, 2004; Stovall, 2005:74; Lauterer, 2006b; Addison, 2006:30; see also Reader, 2008;<sup>15</sup> Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008):

- Community newspapers are sensitive to the wants, needs, expectations as well as norms and values of the communities they serve. They focus on promoting the wellbeing and development of the community. This has an impact on which issues are covered, as well as how the news is covered and presented.
- Community newspapers are a trusted source of detailed micro news and information at the local level (e.g. activities at centres for senior citizens and schools, as well as local advertising information), which is important and useful to members of the community even though it would be seen as insignificant in a national/global context. As such, they give a voice to local opinion and provide a platform for debate on a local level, which engenders identity and belonging.

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<sup>15</sup> Reader's (2008) views incorporate all community media, from small-town newspapers to websites serving virtual communities.

- Community newspapers are valued for fairness and balance (as opposed to sensationalised, biased reporting).
- People who are known local figures produce the community newspaper.
- Community newspapers are traditionally supported by advertising revenue as the main source, as well as subscription and street/vendor sales.
- Community newspapers are published on a regular, periodic basis.
- Community newspapers engage diverse communities and offer a cost-effective way to reach a segmented audience due to racial migration and continued integration (specifically in South Africa after the demise of apartheid).
- Community newspapers act as a training platform for young employees such as journalists, copy-editors and media managers.

In addition to the above, community newspapers should be characterised by professional journalism standards (e.g. good writing and accuracy [cf. Domatob, 2006]), as stated in section 1.1 (see also chapter 3 and 5). Within this context, the core functions and general characteristics of newspapers are important. The core functions of newspapers are to provide information and news and to present it in a fair, balanced and structured way, as well as to provide entertainment, interpretation, analysis and persuasion, socialisation and education, and advertising (Burgoon *et al.*, 1983:78; Hodder, 1994: 394-395; Kussendrager *et al.*, 1997:20; Hiebert & Gibbons, 2000:13; McQuail, 2000:97-80; Faure, 2001:344; Hadland *et al.*, 2007:13; Stovall, 2005:8-11; see also Conley & Lamble, 2006:31). Furthermore, to be called a newspaper, a publication has to conform to the four most important criteria of newspapers: universality (i.e. reporting on all matters relevant to the readers), publicity (i.e. being publicly available and striving to tell the truth), periodicity (i.e. appearing regularly on a set day[s]) and currency/actuality (i.e. reporting/commenting timeously on current issues) (De Beer, 1982:8; see also Allen, 1930:311, Groth, 1939 and Frank, 1961:1-2 quoted by Martin & Copeland, 2003:2). As print media, newspapers are manufactured through a printing process, they are characterised by their public nature, and produced by unique communicators (e.g. journalists and advertisers) (Faure, 2001:342). In addition, most newspapers are available at a fixed price, are factual and cover news of common interests, and are generally easy to read (Faure, 2001:344).

Biagi (2003:21) thus defines a newspaper as “... a paper that is printed and distributed daily, weekly, or at some other regular and usually short interval and that contains news, articles of opinion (as editorials), features, advertising, or other matter regarded as of current interest.” The ABC changed its definition of a newspaper to: “A publication published on a regular basis, consisting of a minimum of eight pages, and with a minimum of 35% editorial content over a reporting period.” (ABC, 2011) This safeguards adequate space for editorial content, which ensures that newspapers conform to the characteristics and functions described above.

#### 1.4.1 Community newspapers: An operational definition

Taking all of the above into account, a community newspaper within the framework of this study is a *traditional commercial* community newspaper that:

- Is published on a regular basis in a fixed format, consisting of a minimum of eight pages, and with a minimum of 35% editorial content over a reporting period.
- Serves a specific geographical area.
- Responds to the information needs of the community within this area through relevant news coverage characterised by professional news standards.
- Is owned either privately or by a media group and

- Is paid for.<sup>16</sup>

This definition is in line with the categories Small Commercial Media (SMME) and Corporate Owned Local Media in the 2010 Sanlam/MDDA Local Media Awards (Sanlam/MDDA, 2010). Furthermore, the researcher adopted the Forum of Community Journalists' definition of a "community journalist", which means "any journalist employed in an editorial function – including but not limited to editors, sub-editors and photographers – at a South African community newspaper published to serve the interest of a specific (geographically defined) community irrespective of whether it is privately owned or by a publishing group".<sup>17</sup>

In the next section, quality management, which forms the theoretical framework of this study, is introduced.

## 1.5 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The concept of quality management is widely addressed in the literature. It finds its place in almost all terrains of the corporate world, including the media. However, literature on *quality* management within the media is very limited, especially within the community newspaper sector. Notably, no quality management theory or model, within either the mainstream or the community newspaper context, could be found. The most pressing problem within research on quality management in the media lies in the fragmentation of studies and the fact that it is "unsystematic and non-programmatic" (Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006:57; cf. Albarran, 2006:13). Although many management theories from the field of organisational science have proven valuable in studying media organizations, these have primarily been developed through studies on the manufacturing and service industries (Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006:57-58). These authors state that the media industry will increasingly be seeking insights into effective management practices as the highly competitive environment changes. Therefore, research endeavours should continue beyond financial performance and organisational efficiency measures to include, *inter alia*, the quality of media content.

Quality within the community newspaper sector is vital, given these media's role to reflect on events in their communities (as outlined above) (Denton, 1999). However, no universal criteria exist to evaluate quality in the media (McQuail, 1992:11), let alone community media. Moreover, quality is not equated to excellence in general media terminology. The term "quality press" generally refers to "serious newspapers" (Branston & Stafford, 2003:198; cf. Merrill, 2004:31-33), as opposed to the "popular press", which generally draws more readers (Conley & Lambie, 2006:39). It is therefore necessary that the concept of quality be defined, as Miha Pogačnik (in Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth & Smith, 1999:153) rightly indicates that one cannot produce quality if you do not know how to perceive it. He defines quality as being "in the details", which could mean that the concept cannot be defined outside of the context of a specific product (e.g. community newspapers). In a study (such as the current one) that focuses on a specific media product, or group of products, context becomes even more important (cf. Reca, 2006:181-182).

<sup>16</sup> Free-sheets are excluded from the operational definition of a community newspaper in this study, because, according to the ABC (2011:24), "In view of the nature of free distribution, the advertisers' interests are of prime concern." This study focuses on community newspapers that equally serve two audiences: readers and advertisers.

<sup>17</sup> The definition appears in the nameplate of the organisation's website at [http://www.fcjonline.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage](http://www.fcjonline.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage).

Conley and Lambie (2004:42) argue that quality as a characteristic is in itself difficult to define. In cited studies, criteria that define quality in a community newspaper context include the amount of colour and graphics on the front page, style, and spelling errors.<sup>18</sup>

Defining quality from a media perspective becomes especially important since media products such as newspapers comprise a combination of unique characteristics, which distinguish them from other, non-media products (Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173). Chan-Olmsted states that the media offer dual, complementary products of (intangible) content and (tangible) distribution (material and immaterial components, according to Reca, 2006:182), which are inseparable. Furthermore, Chan-Olmsted argues that media products are subject to the cultural preferences and existing communication infrastructure of specific geographic markets. In addition, management often takes place on and across different organisational levels (cf. McQuail, 1992:10-11).

Several factors have negatively affected the community press worldwide. These include the growth in chain-owned and free newspapers, and technological developments (cf. Franklin & Murphy, 1998:9-18), often resulting in an exaggerated emphasis on profits, and subsequent lack of quality (cf. Sohn, Wicks, Lacy & Sylvie, 1999:99; also see Mwangi [2007] on the impact of media commercialisation on the content of chain-owned newspapers in South Africa). According to Mwangi (2007:ii), "... at least two thirds of the content ferried in conglomerate-owned community newspapers (in South Africa) has a market-driven slant – meaning that they do not carry high proportions of substantive content."

To consider quality management in a broad media context (cf. McQuail, 1992:10-11), this study implements the Total Quality Management (TQM) framework. This framework is widely used "to encourage and demand high quality in the products and services produced by organisations" (Albarran, 2006:9-10). As such, many view it as ideal to facilitate excellence in management (Rao *et al.*, 1996:viii) given the fact that every employee is responsible for delivering quality output.

### 1.5.1 The TQM concept

Since quality emerged as an issue in the industrial revolution in the 19th century, consumers became increasing more sophisticated and more sensitive to differences in quality. The end of the 1980s had confirmed the economic impact of quality, and over time, managers became convinced that with improved quality came better adherence to organisational goals and objectives (cf. Garvin, 1988:21-25). The link between quality and productivity was established. Continuously improving quality on all organisational levels became important to maintain a competitive edge. Organisation-wide awareness of quality also became more commonplace (cf. Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365).

These developments gave rise to the establishment of TQM (see chapter 2). The concept is, according to Albarran (2006:9), best described as "a series of approaches to achieving quality in organisations, especially when producing products or services". It encompasses all functions of a company's "value chain", involves all levels of the workforce, and emphasises a focus on processes (Rao, *et al.*, 1996:7).

<sup>18</sup> It should, however, be noted that quality issues such as these should be evaluated in context. For example, a lack of reliability, accuracy and scope are most often the result of budget cuts (Conley & Lambie, 2006:42; cf. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008).

### 1.5.2 Systems and processes within quality management

Following a systems- and process-based approach in quality management has numerous benefits, not least of which is “improved, consistent and predictable results” as well as “focused and prioritised improvement opportunities” (ISO, 2001). A system is “an organised whole which maintains relations with its environment” (Fauconnier, 1987:100). The systems approach recognises the relationship between the organisation and its external environment (Albarran, 2006:9), which is essential in media management. Although managers cannot control external factors, they ought to be aware of these, as well as the influence these might have on the news organisation, and calculate it into quality management.

A process can be defined as a collection of interactive components that transforms inputs into outputs by adding value and accomplishing a specific aim or mission (see chapter 3) (Gitlow, Oppenheim, Oppenheim & Levine, 2005:3). Moreover, a process is not only production-oriented. It includes aspects such as administration, maintenance and relationships, which are all individual processes. Quality management aims to improve processes, and therefore utilises flowcharts and feedback loops, which relay information about output back to permit analysis and subsequent improvement of the process or any part thereof.

### 1.5.3 TQM in a community newspaper context

The highly personal nature of relationships, high degree of participation, necessity for strict deadlines in community newsrooms (cf. Lauterer, 2006a:293) and numerous processes make the TQM approach relevant to study quality management in a community newspaper context. Before management at community newspapers can, however, improve quality, they need to analyse the processes involved in producing and distributing their product. However, this can only be done if they identify and document the different processes involved in the above (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3). Redmond (2006:122) states that *journalism* processes, products and effects have been studied extensively. Scanlan (2000:59), for example, described a process-based approach to reporting and writing, which represents only some of the sub-processes in a newspaper as a system. He argues that this approach provides the diagnostic tools to identify flaws in stories and develop solutions to address these. Scanlan’s work certainly has value for this study, but should, in terms of the systems theory, be extended to also include the other sub-processes within the specific operating context of the media products under investigation, as Redmond (2006:122) suggests.

Redmond (2006:126) emphasises that it is “critical” that researchers understand not just the *operating* context of media organisations, but also the “economic engine” (i.e. type of financing referred to above), which directly affects the behaviour of managers and employees. For example, the high staff turnover in a community newsroom due to (among other factors) lower pay makes maintaining and/or improving editorial quality difficult (Lauterer, 2006a:340). Due to the turnover, community newsrooms are generally and at any one point made up of entry-level employees, with managers often entering management positions early in their careers. This makes newspaper management at community level fundamentally different, Lauterer (2006a:308) argues. In this study, the researcher argues that a comprehensive quality management model could aid community newspapers in maintaining and improving quality by providing (especially less experienced) newsroom managers with clear and logical process-based guidelines to implement in their day-to-day activities.



## 1.6 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given the concern about sustaining quality in community newspapers, the lack of universal quality criteria and clear theoretical quality management guidelines, the problem to be addressed in this study is how to manage quality comprehensively in community media organisations in South Africa following a systems- and process-based approach.

### 1.6.1 Research questions

Given the above background and problem statement, the research endeavours to answer the following key questions:

- **RQ1:** What do the concepts of quality and quality management entail, viewed from both a general management and media management paradigm?
- **RQ2:** How could the concepts of quality and quality management be applied to community newspapers in South Africa?
- **RQ3:** What do organisational functional processes in community newspaper organisations involve?
- **RQ4:** How could the organisational functional processes be utilised to identify key processes in community newspaper organisations?
- **RQ5:** What constitutes the nature and characteristics of a quality community newspaper?
- **RQ6:** How could the characteristics of a quality community newspaper be utilised in order to measure quality in community newspapers in South Africa?

The answers to these questions will provide the theoretical framework and content of a quality management model, as well as pave the way for the development of a tool to measure quality in a community newspaper context.

### 1.6.2 Research objectives

The primary objective of this study is thus to develop a comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers in South Africa, taking into account variables such as type of financing and size and following a systems- and process-based approach. Such a model could serve as a guide for effective, comprehensive quality management at community newspapers in South Africa. To reach this aim, the following research objectives are derived from the questions above:

- **RO1:** To investigate and analyse the theories, principles and best practices of quality management from both a general management and media management paradigm in order to identify quality variables that could be applicable to community newspapers in South Africa.
- **RO2:** To investigate and analyse the different organisational functional processes in order to identify/map key processes in community newspaper organisations.
- **RO3:** To investigate and analyse the nature and dimensions of quality community newspapers and to identify quality criteria that could contribute to measuring and improving quality in community newspapers.

### 1.6.3 Central theoretical statements

The following central theoretical statements (CTSs) are made:

- **CTS1:** Media products are distinguished from non-media products by a combination of unique characteristics (Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173).

- **CTS2:** Good quality gives an organisation (e.g. a community newspaper) a competitive advantage (Rao *et al.*, 1996:6). However, if an organisation does not continuously manage quality across and on all organisational levels, it is confronted with the challenge of “patching up” problems in a reactive manner rather than address it pro-actively (cf. Crosby, 1995:66-73).
- **CTS3:** Community newspapers do not merely have a role to play in society; they are a vital part of the community (Addison, 2006:340). As such, they therefore create a platform to publish a community’s intimate news (Froneman *et al.*, 2005:62; Naidoo, 2008; see also De Jager, 1979:2-5, 49; NAB, 2004). However, they can only reach their objectives if they meet their audiences’ needs and expectations and understand the quality management concept illustrated through established quality processes (Negrine & Eyre, 1998:42).
- **CTS4:** An organisation is a multiplicity of micro-sub processes all fitting into a macro process with the aim of working in synergy (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3). Defining or documenting a process is an important step in improving it. This ensures that the process is logical, complete and efficient (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:70-71). Process data is generated through feedback loops that relate information from the sources of output back to the sources of input, subsequently improving the process (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3).
- **CTS5:** A comprehensive quality management model could fundamentally contribute to improved quality in all processes involved in the production of newspapers (cf. Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006:57-58). This, in turn, could contribute to community newspapers fulfilling their role in the South African society (cf. Harber, 2002; cf. Memela, 2008).
- **CTS6:** Community newspapers should adhere to the same standards of quality as their mainstream counterparts (cf. Bogart, 2004:46; cf. Howley, 2005:14).
- **CTS7:** Because there are no universal evaluative quality criteria for the media (McQuail, 1992:11), quality characteristics should be extracted from the literature by evaluating the principles and practices of good journalism and implement these in a community media quality management context (cf. Conley & Lamble, 2006:42; cf. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008).

## 1.7 THE METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Based on the problem statement (see 1.6), this study focuses on the development of a comprehensive model to enable community newspapers to manage quality effectively. To this end, the researcher chose a qualitative research design, which supports the objective of expanding understanding regarding the issues set out in the SROs formulated above (Silverman, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:1; Hatch, 2002:9; Donnelly, 2003:315; see also Hatch, 2002:9). This approach is well suited to “investigating work practices and managerial styles and carrying out organisational research” (Doyle & Frith, 2006:562). Following a deductive approach, the researcher created an interim quality management model by analysing existing quality management models and identifying variables that could apply to community newspapers (see chapter 2). The researcher then inductively verified and refined the model by exploring quality and quality management processes and practices at selected South African community newspapers (see chapter 4).

In this section, the research design, methods, techniques and instruments are described and motivated.

### 1.7.1 Qualitative research

Burnett (2002:25) distinguished three general types of research design: exploratory, descriptive and causal. Sohn, Wicks, Lacy and Sylvie (1999:274) stated that a researcher generally undertakes an exploratory

study to investigate a relatively new topic about which little guiding information exists – hence the term “exploratory” (cf. Burnett, 2002:25; cf. Schwab, 2005:302). According to Sohn *et al.* (1999:274), “Exploratory research can identify key variables, issues, or ideas that help the researcher better understand the general problem and define more specific research questions.”

Exploratory studies typically use qualitative research designs (Sohn *et al.*, 1999:274; Burnett, 2002:30). Qualitative research necessitates gathering, analysing and using a variety of empirical data that reflects real problems and meanings (Sohn *et al.*, 1999:275; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:1; Burnett, 2002:25). The word “qualitative” points to characteristics of units, processes and meanings that are best not investigated or measured in a quantitative manner according to number, intensity or frequency to gain sufficient understanding and insight. Qualitative researchers emphasise the social nature of reality, the intimate relationship between a researcher and her study material and the limitations that hinder the investigation. These researchers also accentuate the normative nature of investigation by seeking answers to questions about how social experiences are created and interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:9). Furthermore, qualitative research does not seek out universal principles. According to Donnelly (2003:315), “knowledge in qualitative interviews is situational and conditional.” Burnett (2002:30) agrees, arguing that qualitative research is undertaken “when the information needed is directional or diagnostic” and that one cannot usually draw definitive conclusions from this type of research. The research attempts to gain a general impression from the situation or idea.

The philosophical basis of qualitative research dates back to the German intellectual tradition in the humanities as found in Max Weber’s “interpretive sociology” (Giddens, 1991, cited by Hatch, 2002:8). Contrary to the attitude of French positivistic sociologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Weber and his followers emphasised *verstehen* (understanding) in their social analyses. Qualitative research aims to comprehend the meaning people create in order to belong in society (Hatch, 2002:9; Darlington & Scott, 2002:48). Qualitative work starts with the assumption that social circumstances are unique, dynamic and complex. Qualitative methods offer instruments a researcher could use to investigate social contexts as a whole instead of breaking it up in isolated, incomplete variables. Qualitative research is as much interested in what lies under the surface (i.e. “inner states”) than in what is obvious. Therefore, researchers also have to rely on their subjective judgment. Jensen (2002a:236), for example, described the researcher as an “interpretive subject”. However, it is the subjective and interpretive nature of qualitative research that concerns critics of this methodology.

This subjectivity certainly contributes to the limitations of qualitative research, e.g. a lack of validity and credibility in the quantitative sense of the word (Hatch, 2002:9; see also Sohn *et al.*, 1999:275). Rugman and Brewer (2001:489) stated that, “Although exploratory research is interesting, it tends to lack transferability of its research framework and findings in explaining other related topics.” Burnett (2002:30) concurred, stating that definitive conclusions usually cannot be drawn from qualitative research.

Quantitative studies, on the other hand, emphasise measuring and analysing the causal link between variables, not the processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:9). In this type of research design, measuring is done numerically (Gunter, 2002:210). Gunter argued that quantitative research is limiting, because it only describes and does not necessarily provide an indication of the meaning of the findings. Nevertheless, qualitative research does not compete with its quantitative counterpart. According to Silverman (2000:259), the ideal relationship is “a division of labour in which qualitative researchers seek to answer ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions and then pass on their findings, so that the causes and outputs of the phenomena identified (‘why’ questions) can be studied by their quantitative colleagues” (cf. Du Plooy,

2001:9). A single researcher can also follow this process. Quantitative and qualitative research can furthermore be combined in a single study to support or question data. Notably, qualitative research requires “rigorous, critical standards that should be applied to any enterprise concerned to sort ‘fact’ from ‘fancy’” (Silverman, 2000:7). A qualitative study is thus subjected to carefully documented analyses (Jensen, 2002a:245). Both Silverman and Jensen advocated careful planning and systematic procedures in qualitative research to preserve its integrity. This leads us to validity and reliability in research.

### **1.7.2 Validity and reliability**

The concepts of validity and reliability can influence every decision in the research process and researchers should take note of the risks (Botes, 2003:184). The basic epistemological standards for qualitative (and quantitative) research are the truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the research findings (Botes, 2003:176-177). To this end, the researcher should use specific, acceptable problem-solving methods; refer to existing research; be able to justify the research findings and convince the scientific community of the validity of the findings.

Validity requires that the research findings concur with existing findings on the topic. Furthermore, the research instrument(s) should determine what it is supposed to determine (Jensen, 2002b:267). Validity also refers to “the best account of the truth” (Botes, 2003:176). The basic characteristics of valid knowledge are that it is the result of relevant problem-solving methods, supported by empirical and theoretical explanations, accepted by a specific research community, and an accurate reflection of reality. The emphasis is on interpretation. Lacey and Luff (2001:22) stated that, “The ability of the findings to represent the ‘truth’ may not be appropriate if we accept the existence and importance of multiple ‘truths’. Rather, validity will be judged by the extent to which an account seems to fairly and accurately represent the data collected.” The fact that the researcher interpreted the findings within context by taking the characteristics of the cases into account increases the validity of this study.

In qualitative research, the emphasis falls on the credibility of the methods (Lacey & Luff, 2001:22). This does not necessarily mean external repetition, as is the case in quantitative research. Lacey and Luff suggested that to enhance the credibility of a study, qualitative researchers should consider:

- Describing the data analysis process and procedures (evidenced in chapter 4 of this study).
- Justifying why the procedures are applicable within the context of the study (see 1.7 and chapter 4).
- Document the process and the development of themes, concepts or theories from the literature (see chapter 2).
- Refer to external evidence, including existing qualitative and quantitative studies to corroborate the conclusions.

### **1.7.3 Triangulation**

The researcher implemented different forms of triangulation as part of the research design. Andersen (1989:262) stated that, “triangulation refers to the acceptance and embracement of multiple research methods, tactics, and strategies to address the same issue.” It enhances the validity and credibility of a study, and enriches the range of participant views (Merrigan & Huston, 2004:50; see also Lacey & Luff, 2001:23; Jensen, 2002b:272; Botes, 2003:181).

The following forms of triangulation, identified by Denzin (1978, cited by Janesick, 1994) will be implemented:

- *Theoretical triangulation*: media and management theories were combined, e.g. general quality management theories, and media theories such as media transformation as well as the classification of community newspapers.
- *Source triangulation*: data was gathered from different theoretical and empirical sources, e.g. community newspaper owners, editors, copy-editors, layout artists, journalists, and advertising staff members.
- *Methodological triangulation*: different methods were used to gather information, e.g. literature study, model building (theoretical analysis of core variables that influence quality in community newspapers) and depth interviews (pre-testing phase).

Combining various theories allowed the researcher to develop a model by creating a theoretical framework and applying that to community newspapers (see chapter 2). Source and methodological triangulation facilitated the deconstruction of the model into several levels increasing in sophistication, as well as the (empirical) verification (i.e. pre- and post-testing) and subsequent refinement of the model. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to extract quality criteria/guidelines for measuring and improving quality at community newspapers from the primary and secondary data (cf. Lacey & Luff, 2001:23; cf. Jensen, 2002b:272; cf. Botes, 2003:181), as illustrated below:

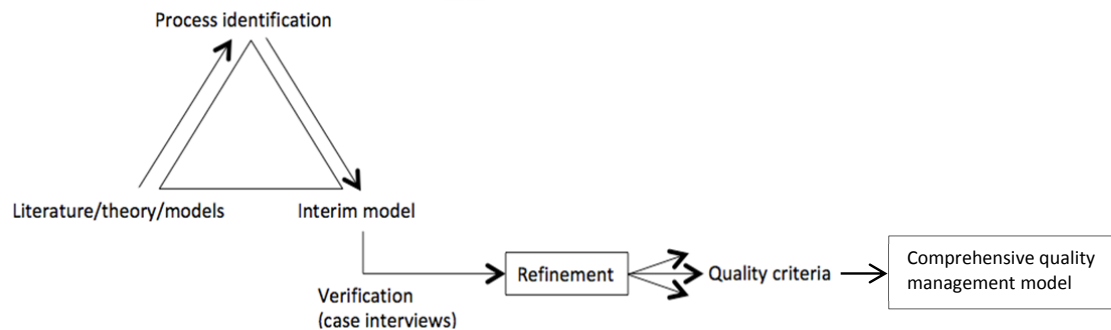


Figure 1: The triangulation process in this study.

#### 1.7.4 Literature review

Mouton (2001:87) argues that the purpose of the literature review is to investigate existing scholarship to see how other scholars explored the particular research problem. Mouton, who prefers the term “scholarship review”, states that a researcher should investigate how other scholars conceptualised the issues at hand, their empirical findings and instrumentation. The researcher studied books, academic journals, electronic databases (including Nexus, FerdiKAT, the catalogue of the Benner Library at Olivet Nazarene University in Illinois, USA, IShare, WorldCat, SA Media, Ariel, Questia and EbscoHOST), newspaper articles and Internet sources (e.g. blogs) with the main purpose to identify core elements of quality and quality management and repack these within the framework of the systems theory in organisational components. To this end, the researcher:

- Investigated the theories, principles and best practices of quality management.
- Identified quality variables that are applicable in community newspapers.
- Formulated working definitions of the terms “community” and “community media” given the current difference in interpretation.
- Explored the role of community newspapers within the framework of this study.

- Explored and analysed criteria that constitute quality and that are relevant to community newspapers with the aim of defining the nature and characteristics of a quality community newspaper.

The literature study thus provided the theoretical framework on quality management, highlighted research results related to the application of quality management theories, models and principles in a media management context (cf. Mouton, 2001:87; Milne & Taylor, 2006), and facilitated the formulation of the interim comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers.

Few research studies reviewed focused on management in general and on quality management in particular within the *community press*, especially in South Africa. One significant study by die Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) at the School of Journalism and Media Studies at the Rhodes University in Grahamstown investigated the key editorial and business strategies of six independent community newspapers (cf. Milne & Taylor, 2006). The case study sample, drawn from a population of 20 small independent or grassroots newspapers nominated as “successful ventures” by the MDDA and the Association of Independent Publishers of South Africa (AIP), provides an “overview of the challenges facing small independent community newspapers and the range of best practices and strategies they use to succeed” (Milne, Rau, Du Toit & Mdlongwa, 2006:2). However, although this research refers to issues *related* to quality, e.g. in editorial content and printing, it focuses neither on quality, nor on quality management. Nevertheless, the value of this research was that it provided an overview of the nature/characteristics of successful papers, the opportunity for illuminating management principles relating to quality, and provided some insight into production and printing processes. Furthermore, it provided insight into the case study research method, which supports Mouton’s view on the purpose and value of the literature review (cf. Mouton, 2001:87).

### 1.7.3 Empirical study

Darlington and Scott (2002:49) argue that, “The best data collection approach for any study is that which will yield data that best meet the research purpose and answer the research questions.” According to Burnett (2002:30), common research techniques employed in exploratory research include focus groups, depth interviews and projective techniques. The empirical phase of this study involved pre- and post-testing processes to inductively verify and refine the quality management model. In its qualitative design, this exploratory study utilised the Delphi technique to verify and refine the theory by means of cases and depth interviews.

The Delphi technique is a multi-round group decision-making technique involving soliciting opinions from a variety of group members, and then collating the opinions towards some consensus regarding a specific problem (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005:217). The process usually takes place through questionnaires, but face-to-face contact is also a common method of data collection. Several ways of applying the technique is described in the literature, e.g., through quantitative questionnaires (cf. Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005:215) and in-depth responses in open-ended questionnaires (Hardina, 2002:125 citing Chambers *et al.*, 1992). The mathematician Olaf Helmer co-invented the technique (Halal, Kull & Leffmann, 1997), originally for forecasting, but it has become popular for planning purposes (Toohey, 1999:84). It is also used “to foster shared perceptions of problems” (Hardina, 2002:122). Delphi involves the participation of a panel of “expert” key participants or participants (Hardina, 2002:125). The researcher asks the panel members for their opinion on an issue, takes the responses and synthesises them, and then sends the summary to the panel for revisions. This process can be repeated as many times (rounds) as it takes to reach consensus about an issue.

The researcher followed the case study approach to select the key participants in this study and used depth interviews as an instrument to gather the data. These methods are outlined below.

### 1.7.3.1 Case research

Case research has its roots in the broader field of social sciences (Voss, Tsikriktsis & Frohlich, 2002:196), and can be used for various research purposes, such as exploration, theory building, theory testing as well as extending and refining theory (Voss *et al.*, 2002:197). Baxter and Jack (2008:545) state that this method is important when investigating issues within context, because it supports deconstructing and reconstructing phenomena (cf. Yin, 2003:2). Denscombe (2007:38) argues that the case approach is effective when a researcher aims to investigate an issue in depth, including the “complexity and subtlety of real life situations”. According to Yin (2003:1), this method is also useful for examining questions of “how” and “why”, and when the researcher has little control over events.

The advantage of case research is thus that it can “close in” on real-life situations and “test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2011:307). The strengths of this method are depth, comprehending context and process, as well as the causes of a phenomenon and factors that link causes and outcomes (Flyvbjerg, 2011:314). On the contrary, the main point of criticism against this research method is a lack of precision. Yin (2003:1) emphasises that researchers should “exercise great care in designing and doing case studies to overcome the traditional criticisms of the method”. In this context, Soy’s view (1997) is relevant. She stated that case study research is flexible, but any changes in the research process should be documented systematically. This would help ensure the necessary precision.

Case research “is particularly suitable for developing new theory and ideas and can also be used for theory testing and refinement” (Voss *et al.*, 2002:196). In this study, however, the researcher was interested in cases only in as far as they provided key participants to verify and refine the theory (i.e. the quality management model). The aim is thus not to generalise the findings. In this context, Stake (1994:237) describes an “instrumental case study”, which refers to a case study of secondary interest. As such, the cases in this study were chosen using purposive, convenience/availability sampling, because the aim was not to generalise the findings in this study to parent populations, but to verify a model (cf. Trochim, 2006). The researcher was interested in particular groups and non-randomly selected cases based on known attributes (cf. Denscombe, 2007:39). Importantly, cases should be accessible to facilitate enhanced cooperation and bridge difficulties regarding time and distance. The attributes the researcher sought are described in the operational definition of the concept community newspaper (see 1.4.1). These are format, frequency of publication, target market, purpose, nature (i.e. traditional commercial), and ownership (i.e. independent or corporate).

According to Smith (1988:85), “Convenience sampling ... is justified when a researcher is not concerned about the generality of results, but wishes only to examine some phenomenon within a selected sample.” However, Denscombe (2007:41) argues that convenience should only come into play when the researcher is deciding between “equally suitable alternatives”. The information-oriented selection strategy Flyvbjerg (2011:301) describes is relevant in this context. This strategy allows the researcher to select cases “on the basis of expectations about their information content” with the purpose of maximising the utility of information from small samples of cases. Such a strategy also allows a researcher to select according to maximum variation. According to Flyvbjerg (2011:307), maximum variation selection allows a researcher “to obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome; e.g. 3-4 cases very different in one dimension: size, form of organization, location, budget etc.” The cases the researcher selected allowed for variation in size and structure of the community newspaper organisation,

affecting the production process. This includes factors such as the number and type of full-time employees, the roles the editor assumes (i.e. that of manager, editor, journalist etc.), and which processes are completed in-house and which are sub-contracted or handled by the parent company.

A case study approach is often used in management studies to better understand a given issue (Doyle & Frith, 2006:564-565). Moreover, the approach is also used in media management studies because the organisation is often the “unit of analysis”, and the approach allows for thorough investigation of such a unit. An investigation can also function on two or more units of analysis within a case, such as an individual, group or department (Haas, 2004:62). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:444) state that “the case is expected to be something that functions, that operates; the study is the observation of operations”. This study focused on newspaper production and organisational operations to develop the quality management model. The units of analysis were the various functional areas within the community organisation, i.e. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution.

Denscombe (2007:39) argues that further to selecting cases according to their distinctive features, the selection criteria have to be explained and “justified as an essential part of the methodology”. Furthermore, specific details relating to the criteria have to be provided for each case. The research topic in this study is quality management in South African community newspapers. The categories of newspapers this study focuses on are established (i.e. existing for at least 5 years) corporate-owned paid newspaper and small independent commercial newspapers, as defined by Sanlam/MDDA (2010) in their competition (see 1.4.1). Following Denscombe’s train of thought, a criterion for selecting newspaper organisations would be ownership, and details should be provided. These details are important because they serve to justify the researcher’s specific choices (cf. Denscombe, 2007:39).

### 1.7.3.1.1 Research population and sample

The target research population consists of the 150 community newspapers that entered the Sanlam Awards for Community Press in 2009.<sup>19</sup> This competition is “aimed at encouraging excellence and rewarding meritorious work.” (Print Media South Africa, 2010.) The assumption can be made that newspapers that enter the competition are committed to quality in journalism, which makes the population relevant to this study. Selecting from the competition entries allowed the researcher to choose cases from the lower, middle and upper end of the quality spectrum judged by achievements in the competition while still considering convenience/availability. In 2011, the researcher added a very small community newspaper that has never entered a competition to enhance maximum variation. The South African Audit Bureau of Circulations audits all cases annually.

Given the above, the researcher selected the following cases to verify and refine the model developed in this study: the *Potchefstroom Herald* (co-owned by Mooivaal Media, a subsidiary of Media24, and Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited [Z-Coms, 2009:48]), *Die Noordwester* (controlled by Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited and Noordwes Koerante [Edms] Bpk. [Z-Coms, 2009:53]), the *Zoutpansberger* and the *Limpopo Mirror* (wholly owned by the Zoutnet Group). Media24 and Caxton are the biggest publishers of community publications in South Africa. The Zoutnet Group is part of the newly formed Leading Independent News (LiN) Media, a group of nine small independent commercial newspapers in the Limpopo province (LiN Media, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> The name of the competition changed to the Sanlam/MDDA Awards for Local Media in 2010 when the MDDA joined Sanlam in this venture. More recent documentation refers to the competition as the MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards (MDDA/Sanlam, 2011).



Codes were given to each of the newspapers to not compromise the participants (see chapter 4), which is in line with the anonymity intrinsic to the Delphi technique.

### 1.7.3.2 Depth interviews

According to Burnett (2002:30), qualitative research is usually done with small groups of people (cf. Denscombe, 2007:111), and the sampling is conducted on a quota or availability basis. Interviews are therefore a common research method in this type of research.

Several types and forms of interviews are described in the literature, such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews; open-ended and focused interviews (Soy, 1997; Jensen, 2002a:241; Iorio, 2004:109; Denscombe, 2007:175-178; see also Kuper & Kuper, 2004:529). Semi-structured interviews involve a list of issues the researcher wishes to address and specific questions he/she wants to ask while leaving room for the interviewee to develop ideas and elaborate on issues from his/her experience and viewpoint. This type of interview can be sub-divided into one-to-one and group interviews (Denscombe, 2007:177). One-to-one interviews involving a single researcher and one interviewee (i.e. depth interviews [Darlington & Scott, 2002:48]) are the most common form of semi- and unstructured interviews. These interviews are easy to arrange, control and transcribe (Denscombe, 2007:177; cf. Gunter, 2002:215). Moreover, interviewing several people about the same phenomenon, allows a range of perspectives (Darlington & Scott, 2002:48). During group interviews, the interviewer acts as mediator through whom questions and answers are channelled (Denscombe, 2007:178).

The following key benefits of interviews are described in the literature (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005:188, 189; Denscombe, 2007:82; see also Darlington & Scott, 2002:48-50; Kuper & Kuper, 2004:528, 529):

- The researcher can explore issues in depth.
- The interviewee can raise issues he/she views as important. Moreover, interviewees can provide their version of their experiences in their own words, which diminishes the chance of researcher bias.
- The researcher has the opportunity to check that he/she understood the interviewee correctly, which decreases the chance of misinterpretation.

The researcher used depth interviews as a research instrument to collect data to verify and refine the quality management model. Voss *et al.* (2002:197) argue that a case study is a “unit of analysis in case research”. The authors explain this as follows: “It is possible to use different cases from the same firm to study different issues or to research the same issue in a variety of contexts at the same firm.” In line with these authors’ views, the research conducted interviews with staff members in the four functional areas of the selected community newspapers, i.e. editorial (editors, news editors, sub-editors, page layout editors and journalists), advertising (advertising managers, advertising representatives), production and circulation/distribution (managers). This method is crucial for collecting data in media management (Jensen, 2002a:240; Hollifield & Coffey, 2006:587), because the interviews will focus on quality management, quality management processes, and the factors influencing quality in the *specific* newsrooms. The researcher interpreted this data (the transcribed interviews) through qualitative content analysis (Du Plooy, 2002:50, 84).

Soy (1997) suggested that a researcher set a checklist of questions to ensure uniformity and consistency. In this study, the researcher structured the depth interviews around the research questions and objectives set in chapter 1 (see 6.1.1 and 6.1.2). The research method followed in this study is discussed in chapter 4.

## 1.8 SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

According to Albarran (2006:13), “...the body of literature on newspaper management is varied and somewhat disjointed in that many topics are considered, but there is little depth of knowledge.” *Quality and quality management within the community newspaper sector is therefore fallow terrain, especially in light of the important role this sector of the media plays in both the South African and international societies.* The lack of existing research on TQM in the media creates two specific challenges: (a) applying a theoretical, comprehensive quality management (interim) model in a variety of settings within the community newspaper sector, and (b) following a systems-based process approach, formulating a quality management model for specific products within this sector. This study therefore fills a significant void within the body of knowledge on media management and media quality, especially as it relates to the community newspaper sector in South Africa.

## 1.9 RESEARCH LAYOUT

In chapter 1, the focus is on the context and motivation for this study. This is provided through an exploration of the media landscape in South Africa, media transformation and the evolution of community newspapers. The nature and role of community newspapers in society is also explained, and the quality management construct is introduced.

In chapter 2, the concept of quality is explored and analysed. Theories, principles and best practices of quality management and their relevance to media management are investigated to formulate an interim comprehensive quality management model following a systems- and process-based approach. In chapter 3, the community newspaper production process is deconstructed with the aim of defining/mapping key production processes in a community newspaper organisation.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical phase of the study. Through the various research methods, the interim comprehensive quality management model is verified (pre-testing) and refined (post-testing) at the selected cases. Furthermore, the researcher will compare cases and draw conclusions.

Taking cognisance of the distinct nature of community newspapers, the variables influencing the quality of this sector within an organisational context are explored in chapter 5. Quality characteristics of newspapers in general and of community newspapers in particular, and the factors that influence quality, are identified and placed within the community newspaper as a system. In chapter 6, final conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

## 1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter explored the community newspaper construct in a democratic society against the background of media transformation in South Africa, focusing on the evolution, characteristics role and definition of this sector. The researcher made the point that the strength of the community press in South Africa lies in the fact that it is a unique public communication medium that targets the individual in his/her most intimate environment as a member of the community in which he/she lives. Neither the editorial role, nor this sector's role as advertising medium can be taken over by any other medium. A brief overview of the media landscape and media use in South Africa provided further context.

The issue of quality management was introduced and the argument made that a lack of effective and efficient media management – including quality management – is an important factor influencing the

quality of journalism. The chapter further provided a research chapter outline as well as an outline of the empirical section of the study.

In chapter 2, the issue of quality and quality management will be investigated comprehensively, paying particular attention to existing models. The purpose is to formulate an interim quality management model for community newspapers, as defined in chapter 1.

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## CHAPTER 2:

# QUALITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*Quality management as we know it today has evolved over the past century from an early embryonic set of ideas to a comprehensive framework for managing all aspects of quality in an organisation, private or public, for profit or not, manufacturing or service.*

— Bisgaard (2007:666)

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher probed the local newspaper landscape in South Africa within the framework of media transformation in the country, and investigated the evolution, nature and role of the community newspaper. The researcher further provided an operational definition of a community newspaper. Notably, the concept of quality management was introduced. In this chapter – building on the argument made in chapter 1 that a lack of effective and efficient media management influences journalism quality, the researcher explores and analyses existing quality management and general management models.

The investigation assisted the researcher to conceptualise quality and quality management by highlighting research results related to the application of quality management theories, models and principles in a media management context (cf. Milne & Taylor, 2006), and thus facilitating the formulation of the interim comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers. Within the broad framework of quality management, this chapter first orientates the reader by providing a broad explanation of what quality and quality management is, and why it is important. Furthermore, the researcher investigates the origin and paradigmatic development or evolution of quality and quality management in a general as well as applied sense (i.e. in the areas of business management and media management). Subsequently, the different trains of thought within quality management as well as the related principles are explored.

This chapter thus provides the theoretical framework on quality and quality management, which is important to operationalise the first specific research objective of the study (see 1.6.2), namely to identify variables that could be applied in a quality management framework relevant to community newspapers. To this end, the development of the concept of quality is explored, followed by an assessment of the principle approaches to quality. This leads to an investigation of several quality protagonists' contributions to quality theory, followed by an analysis of the dimensions of quality and an operational definition of quality. The next section focuses on quality management and the approaches, philosophies, models and techniques in this field. To increase the validity and credibility of the literature review and thus the research study, the researcher implemented theoretical triangulation by combining theories across the disciplines of media and management (see 1.7.1).

Against this background, the macro theoretical framework of this study – a systems approach to quality, is introduced. The theory is then put into perspective by exploring the significance of quality and quality management in an organisational setting, such as a community newspaper organisation. Finally, the macro quality management model for community newspapers is presented and explained.

## 2.2 PARADIGMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALITY CONCEPT

Issues of quality have existed since the beginning of civilization (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:30; Maguad, 2006:179; see also Garvin, 1988:3), initially focusing on concerns regarding the work of craftsmen (in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century). The meaning of quality work and quality results were self-determined within the family as the basic organisational unit in society (Maguad, 2006:179,180). In time, apprenticeships and guilds emerged to address these concerns (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:31). At the time, mass production was still unknown and product volumes small. As trade developed within village systems, the emphasis began to fall on the user as definer of the term quality product, and not just the artisans or merchants (Maguad, 2006:180). Quality checks were informal, infrequent, and retrospective (Garvin, 1988:3).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrial system emerged, giving birth to the concept of scientific management. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century (which introduced the technological era), quality became an issue due to “the emergence of massive forces, which demanded a quality revolution” (Maguad, 2006:179). The masses started gaining access to products previously only available to the rich. Quality emerged primarily as part of manufacturing, but issues such as meeting deadlines and product quotas initially overshadowed product quality.

Since then, different ideas, principles, methods and philosophies related to quality have emerged (Maguad, 2006:179). However, organisations still relied on the earlier methods and tools, such as statistical quality control and quality assurance (Garvin, 1988:27). With time, quality became a management function and quality management grew as a discipline. The focus on organisation-wide involvement in quality demanded that quality professionals became more aware of strategic goals, education and training, programme assessment, goal setting and consulting. Cooperating with other functional departments within the organisation<sup>20</sup> became important (Garvin, 1988:26). Management set goals with the customer as well as the expected performance of competitors in mind. Quality, which first emerged in the manufacturing department (i.e. the factory), now moved into the boardroom. Garvin (1988:36) argued that these developments required a new approach, namely that of strategic quality management. This approach requires market research on quality, pressures for continuous improvement, and high levels of communication and participation. Global managers’ responsibilities were consequently broadened to include quality.

## 2.3 PRINCIPLE APPROACHES TO QUALITY

Quality in general is defined as “peculiar and essential character”, “a distinctive, inherent feature”, “degree of excellence” (excellence referring to “the quality of being excellent: the state of possessing good qualities in an eminent degree” [Webster’s, 1993:791]), “inherent or intrinsic excellence of character or type”, “a special or distinguishing attribute” (Webster’s, 1993:1858). This dictionary further states that “quality may stress inherent, enduring good traits that make one somewhat superior”, “quality is a general term applicable to any trait or characteristic; it is frequently used in relation to inherent traits not immediately apparent and ascertained only after experience or examination” (Webster’s, 1993:1858).

Within a business context, however, quality manifests in the nature of products and services. Quality thus signifies excellence (as per the general definition of quality in the previous paragraph) of a product or service, i.e. how a customer judges the product or service itself (Schneider & White, 2004:51). However,

<sup>20</sup> Any business entity can be seen as an “organisation” – “... an abstract label for any group of people who come together and interact with one another in order to achieve a set of predetermined ends or aims.” (Evans, 1990:41; cf. Bostrom, 1998:243; cf. Jamrog & Overholt, 2005:620).

quality is hard to define (Schonberger & Knod, 1994:25; Schneider & White, 2004:9) due to the varying perceptions that depend on the perspective from which the term is explained (Garvin, 1988:39). This often leads to competing views about what quality actually means (Garvin, 1988:46). Garvin (1988:39) argued that quality could be better defined if it is to assume a strategic role. He was the first author to categorise the variety of definitions of quality as described in the literature in an effort to create a common understanding (Rao *et al.*, 1996:26). Drawing from the literature, Garvin (1988:40-46) identified five principle *approaches* to quality, namely the transcendent, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based and value-based.

### 2.3.1 Transcendent approach to quality

The transcendent approach assumes that works of high quality are timeless and enduring, implying that quality cannot be defined precisely but that one learns to recognise it through experience. Rao *et al.* (1996:26) state that Tushman's (1980) definition typifies this approach: "... a condition of excellence implying fine quality as distinct from poor quality... Quality is achieving or reaching for the highest standard as against being satisfied with the sloppy or the fraudulent." Examples of quality reaching the highest standards include Beethoven's symphonies, and Michelangelo's "David" (Rao *et al.*, 1996:26). These authors argue that this approach is based on subjectivity. Moreover, it offers little practical guidelines as to what defines quality (Garvin, 1988:42). This approach is in line with the general definition of quality found in dictionaries (cf. Webster's, 1993:1858). Schneider and White (2004:10) call this point of view the philosophical approach. In a general newspaper context, this approach would be used when choosing a publication, for example a serious newspaper as opposed to a sensational publication, based on personal communication needs, wants and expectations.

### 2.3.2 Product-based approach to quality

In the product-based approach, quality is viewed as precise and measurable. This approach emphasises durability, but fails to accommodate different tastes (i.e. where aesthetics is concerned). Rao *et al.* (1996:27) state that this approach is problematic because it implies that the absence or presence of an attribute implies quality, e.g. leather upholstery vs. cloth. Applying this approach in a community newspaper context would require criteria to measure the newspaper product against, for example, characteristics such as relevant local editorial content and advertising (cf. Conley & Lamble, 2006:42, The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008), and journalism-quality dimensions such as accuracy and reliability (cf. Huh, DeLorme, Smith & Reid, 2004). This approach is certainly valid in a peer review framework, for example when judging entries in a competition such as the MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards (see chapter 5).

### 2.3.3 User-based approach to quality

The user-based approach sees quality as personal and subjective, and relies on maximum satisfaction of the consumer/user. Juran's (1988:11) simple definition of quality, "fitness for use", applies here. The user-based approach equates quality to consumer satisfaction, which holds that organisations that adopt this approach to quality need to identify their target market(s) and its/their needs before producing a tailor-made product (Rao *et al.*, 1996:27) or service. Gitlow, Gitlow, Oppenheim and Oppenheim (1989:3) agree, adding that quality also includes the continuous improvement of an organisation's "extended process" (i.e. internal processes and those involving the organisation's integral parts, namely suppliers, customers, investors, employees and community). This process begins by communicating the customer's needs to the organisation, which is critical to the functioning of this process. The user-based

approach is particularly suited to defining quality within a services framework (Schneider & White, 2004:10).

Rao *et al.* (1996:27) highlighted that the user-based approach might lead to a delay in the customer stamp of approval, because a user might be dissatisfied with the product based on reasons that have nothing to do with the quality of the product, e.g. a lack of comprehension of how the product works. However, in defining quality in a way that is useful in managing it, what a user requires from a product/service is important. Those requirements (customer needs and expectations) define the quality of the product/service (Oakland, 1995:4), and meeting those requirements is vital (Oakland, 1995:5). Oakland (1995:5) argued that meeting customer requirements is not restricted to the functional characteristics of products/services. Once the customer's requirements are met consistently, delighting the customer "and then achiev[ing] a reputation of 'excellence'" can enhance the satisfaction (Oakland, 1995:5, 16). In this context, Oakland referred to satisfaction derived simply from owning a product. Gitlow *et al.* (2005:17) provide a "goalpost" definition of quality, which holds that output (the product/service) should fall within acceptable limits (i.e. "specification limits") around a desired value (the "nominal value"). The nominal value and specification limits are based on the wants and needs of the customer. This in essence concurs with the progressive view that the customer/end-user defines quality entirely based on his/her evaluation or experience.

In a community newspaper framework, the user-based approach could be applicable in the following way: It has been established that in order to know what customers (i.e. readers) want, target market research is necessary. In fact, "Quality starts with market research." (DTI [the UK Department of Trade and Industry], 2001c:2.) This is linked to the media's agenda-setting function, which broadly entails that by prioritising and framing news events the media could influence society regarding certain issues (Swanepoel, Fourie & Froneman, 2005). This means that the content of a newspaper is a hybrid of need-to-know information (which helps readers take informed decisions about issues impacting their lives), which satisfies the needs of the internal customer (journalists, editors etc.), and nice-to-know information (merely interesting/amusing), which satisfies the needs of the external customer (reader). Continuous improvement in the newspaper realm should include not just informing, but also educating the reader in line with the general functions of newspapers (see 1.4). It further involves improving readers' perception of quality so they continually expect higher quality products. This is in line with the core functions of newspapers, which (in this context) hold that a newspaper should provide information, interpretation, analysis and persuasion as well as education (Hiebert & Gibbons, 2000:13).

### **2.3.4 Manufacturing-based approach to quality**

The manufacturing-based approach, also called the technical approach (Schneider & White, 2004:10), focuses on the internal organisational processes and identifies quality as conforming to set requirements. While consumer interest in quality is recognised, it is not accommodated. This approach does, however, provide measurable standards and lead to subsequent reduced costs (Rao *et al.*, 1996:27). Within a community newspaper organisation, this approach would mean adherence to specific requirements in the production processes of the newspaper product, e.g. newsgathering, writing and editing; layout and design; printing and distribution (see chapter 3).

### **2.3.5 Value-based approach to quality**

Cost and price come into play when one defines quality from a value-based point of view. Quality thus presents the customer with a specific value related to the amount of money or time spent on the product

(Picard, 2004:19). Besides producing products “with higher quality more valuable than those of lower quality”, this approach to quality also involves developing customer trust and cultivating customer loyalty – an important factor also in newspapers that continually seek to increase sustainable circulation figures. Applying a value-based approach to quality in a newspaper environment would thus mean paying attention to reader retention by offering a product that is consistent in content quality, and gets to the reader on time. Better distribution is one way of building reader loyalty (cf. Newspaper10, 2008:12).

In the next section, the contribution of several scholars – notably American and Japanese – to the development of quality management as a discipline will be investigated. The aim is to identify appropriate inputs for the quality management model as it relates to community newspapers.

## 2.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF QUALITY PROTAGONISTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT THEORY

Quality management as a research field drew substantial interest over the last two decades (Singh & Smith, 2006:395)<sup>21</sup>. According to Blom (2004:45), “the quality management movement, rooted in the work of statistician W. Edwards Deming, focuses on improving the processes within an enterprise by holding the needs of customers uppermost in mind.” Several trains of thought exist in the quality management theory and a number of researchers made their mark towards developing distinctive total quality management frameworks (Mohr-Jackson, 1998:16; Maguad, 2006:188) (see 2.7.6). These contributors can be placed into three distinct categories, namely American theorists of the early 1950s, Japanese theorists in the late 1950s, and the “Western gurus” who followed the Japanese industrial success (DTI, 2001a:1). A brief overview of the contributions of theorists in these three categories is subsequently provided.

### 2.4.1 The American theorists who took messages of quality to Japan in the early 1950s

As outlined above and highlighted by Blom (2004:45), the quality management movement focuses on improving the processes within an organisation or enterprise by concentrating on the needs of customers. This focus emerged in the 1950s through the work of several American quality theorists, the most notable being W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran and Armand V. Feigenbaum (Gómez-Gras & Verdú-Jover, 2005:841).

As mentioned above, the quality management movement is entrenched in the work of **W. Edwards Deming** (1982) whose Fourteen Points of Management (Deming, 1986:23-24; Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:31; also called the Deming Management Method [cf. Anderson, Rungtusanatham & Schroeder, 1994:475]) (see table 1 in 2.4.4) emphasises issues such as the importance of top management involvement and organisational commitment, process management, continuous improvement, education and training, and prevention of error. Deming (1986:1) placed great importance and responsibility on management at individual and organisational level, believing managers to be responsible for 94% of quality problems (DTI, 2001a:1). His 14-point plan can be applied in small or large public or private organisations (DTI, 2001a:2). It concerns the creation of an organisational system that “... fosters cooperation and learning for facilitating the implementation of process management practices, which, in turn, leads to continuous improvement of processes, products, and services, and to employee fulfilment, both of which are critical

<sup>21</sup> These authors analysed the reasons why quality management fails.



to customer satisfaction<sup>22</sup>, and, ultimately, to firm survival” (Anderson, Rungtusanatham & Schroeder, 1994:473). Deming also advocated a systematic approach to problem solving (see 2.7.4). His emphasis on management involvement and organisational commitment, process management, continuous improvement, education and training, and prevention implies a chain reaction (cf. Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:26), which in turn implies the involvement of systems and associated interactive processes. As such, Deming’s approach to quality is certainly relevant in a community newspaper environment (characterised by strong personal relationships [cf. Lauterer, 2006a:293]) where several interdependent departments and processes are interacting to produce the newspaper product.

Another notable point of view is that of **Dr Joseph M. Juran** (1988), who developed the “quality trilogy” (DTI, 2001a:2) consisting of quality planning, quality control<sup>23</sup> and quality improvement. This approach entails that sound quality management requires the planning, improvement and control of quality actions. Contrary to Deming, Juran placed less emphasis on statistical methods and focused more on issues related to leadership and quality planning. Juran contributed in particular to a better understanding of planning, control and improvement in the quality process (Albarran, 2006:10). Juran also believed that quality is closely associated with the customer’s satisfaction (and argued that this could be improved by means of product and process innovation) or dissatisfaction with the product. He subsequently emphasised on-going quality improvement through small improvement projects initiated throughout the organisation (his “10 steps to quality improvement” [see table 1 in 2.4.4]). Notably, Juran concentrated not only on the external customer, but included the internal customer (i.e. the employee) as well. This implies that each person in the chain is both supplier and customer (Garvin, 1988:12-13; DTI, 2001a:3; see also Maguad, 2006:184-185). In this regard, Robbins and Coulter (2005:43) argue that the term “customer” includes “anyone who interacts with the organisation’s product or services internally or externally. It encompasses employees and suppliers as well as the people who purchase the organisation’s goods and services.” In the newspaper industry, suppliers can include information suppliers, external service functions, suppliers of systems and equipment, and suppliers of raw material and consumables (Nkume-Kwene & Besong, 2009:46).

Newspaper products are complex (Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173; Reza, 2006:182). In the community newspaper organisation, planning is thus essential to ensure that the various departments cooperate effectively and the numerous interactive and interdependent processes run smoothly. Juran’s emphasis on customer satisfaction is also relevant within the community newspaper context, because of this sector’s commitment to the primary goal of journalism, i.e. providing readers with the quality information they need to function in society (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:12).

**Armand V. Feigenbaum** (1956) took Juran’s ideas a step further by introducing the concept of total quality control (i.e. total quality) (Garvin, 1988:102), which entails eliminating root causes affecting quality (Boaden, 1997:557, citing Schonberger, 1986). This concept holds that control starts with the product design and ends when the product is placed in the hands of a satisfied customer. “Quality is everybody’s job,” Feigenbaum (quoted in Garvin 1988:13) argued (DTI, 2001a:3). Feigenbaum’s approach entails cooperation among multiple departments in an organisation to prevent errors early in the production process and avoid future problems. To operationalise the system, companies developed

<sup>22</sup> Customer satisfaction can be defined as a judgment of how the service (or product) affects a customer emotionally (Schneider & White, 2004:51).

<sup>23</sup> Walter A. Shewhart is considered the father of modern quality control. He published the book *The Economic Control of Quality of Manufactured Goods* in 1931, which advocated “controlling the process, reducing the variation in the system, and distinguishing between special causes and common causes”, adding to a new quality approach (Westcott, 2006:xv).

elaborate matrices listing responsibilities and activities of the relevant departments. Top-management ultimately remained responsible for the system's effectiveness (Garvin, 1988:13-14). The fact that multiple departments within a community newspaper organisation work together to produce a complex product, makes Feigenbaum's emphasis on cooperation and organisation-wide responsibility for quality relevant in a community newspaper quality management model.

### 2.4.2 Japanese theorists of the late 1950s

The work of the American theorists had an important influence on quality management in Japan. In fact, Ishikawa (1985:19, quoted by De Coning, 2009:22) said "Juran transformed Japan's quality control activities and created an atmosphere where quality control was regarded as a tool of management dealing with all components in business and not only with technology in factories." Reilly (1994:viii) summarizes the Japanese approach to quality as follows: "In Japan, quality is built in upstream through the involvement of *suppliers* to an organisation, the combined roles of *management* and *workers* within the organisation, an understanding of complete *system-wide process*, downstream identification of *customer* preferences, and a revolutionary *change* in the way managers think and behave." Several Japanese quality experts made significant contributions to quality management as a discipline, including Kaoru Ishikawa, Genichi Taguchi, and Shigeo Shingo, whose points of view all point to managing quality proactively.

**Kaoru Ishikawa's** (1985) main contribution to the quality management theory is his total quality viewpoint, emphasising company-wide as well as the human side of quality control (i.e. every employee should be concerned with quality). This is important in the community newspaper environment, which is characterised by strong personal relationships (cf. HSRC, 2006:62). Ishikawa is also known for his assembly and use of the "seven basic tools of quality" (DTI, 2001a:3), which includes the Ishikawa diagram (fishbone or cause-and-effect) that assists in quality improvement. It systematically represents and analyses real causes behind a problem/effect. Ishikawa is also considered as the "father of quality circles"<sup>24</sup> in Japan (Maguad, 2006:189).

**Genichi Taguchi** (1989) argued that issues of quality and reliability be "pushed back" to the design phase of any creation to ensure quality before actual manufacturing (DTI, 2001a:4), i.e. proactively focusing on quality and reliability. Known as "Taguchi methodology", this approach is fundamentally a prototyping method that enables a designer to identify optimal settings to produce a robust product that can survive manufacturing time after time, piece after piece, and provides what the customer wants (i.e. customer satisfaction).

**Shigeo Shingo's** (1986) approach of zero quality control entails correcting "errors" before they become "defects" (at the point where the product reaches the customer). The approach requires inspection and correction along the production system (DTI, 2001a:5). It is also strongly associated with Just-in-Time manufacturing, which has the objective to "improve manufacturing quality, efficiency, and responsiveness to customers", including having material ready at each step of a process "just in time to be used" (Hall, 1999:[13]74). Shingo invented the Single Minute Exchange (SME) system (in which set-up times are reduced from hours to minutes) and the Poka-Yoke (mistake proofing) system of identifying root causes of problems during production processes and preventing them from reoccurring. The Poka-Yoke system

<sup>24</sup> "Workgroups that meet to discuss ways of improving quality and solving production problems" (Smit & Cronjé, 1999:44). Quality circles emerged in the 1980s – "the concept of 'let those doing the jobs tell us how we can improve'" (Jablonski, 1994:12). The problem with quality circles, however, lay in that they are isolated from other operations and quality was not driven by management, but by workers without the authority and influence to make these circles successful.

aims to stop “errors” (which are inevitable) before they become “defects” (the result of errors not being detected and solved before products reach customers).

Applying Taguchi and Shingo’s proactive approach to the newspaper production process would entail that factors that could influence quality be identified and managed early on. For example, to ensure quality content, a community newspaper should employ journalists with the necessary skills and/or make provision for ample training in the workplace. Likewise, a community newspaper organisation should invest in suitable computer hardware and software to prevent problems during the printing phase. This could be achieved by properly charting the processes involved in producing the newspaper product.

### 2.4.3 “Western gurus” who followed the Japanese industrial success

The antecedents’ contribution to quality related issues as discussed above form the basis on which modern approaches towards quality improvement were formalised (De Coning, 2009:26). The work of two modern theorists – Philip B. Crosby and Tom Peters, stand out in this regard.

**Philip B. Crosby** (1995) emphasized a changing corporate culture and the notion of cost of quality, thus in essence supporting Shingo’s proactive approach (Maguad, 2006:189). Crosby is known for the concept of “Quality is Free” and is a known advocate of “Zero Defects”. This concept, designed in 1961-62 by the Martin Company that built missiles for the United States (Garvin, 1988:16-18, 20) where Crosby worked during the 1960s, emphasised motivation and employee initiative, and leaned on specific proposals and problem solving techniques. The Martin programme was adopted early on by the Small Engine Department of General Electric (GE). GE developed a key step: identifying problems at the source and the “design of remedial efforts (called error cause removal)” (Garvin, 1988:17). Martin contributed by “articulating a philosophy – that the only acceptable quality standard was zero defects – and that in showing how it could be instilled in the work force through training, special events, the posting of quality results, goal-setting and personal feedback” (Garvin, 1988:17) within the prevailing quality ethic at the time, namely acceptable quality levels (AQL).

Many arguments about how much quality is enough, flared up due to Crosby’s claim that “perfect quality is both technically possible and economically desirable” (Garvin, 1988:18). Crosby (1995:59-86) based quality improvement on four “absolutes of quality”, namely:

- The definition of quality is conformance to requirements.
- The system of quality is prevention.
- The performance standard is zero defects.
- The measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance.

These absolutes thus entail that requirements are set to ensure a quality product, that quality is managed proactively by preventing problems, that employees should strive for the highest level of quality, and that conformance to the requirements that have been set proactively will eliminate the need for measurement. Within this framework of absolutes, Crosby offered 14 steps to quality improvement (see table 1 in 2.4.4) and strongly supported the approach of involving all employees in quality management. This approach fits in well with the close-knit community newspaper organisation. In this context, employees often play different roles and teamwork is also emphasised.

**Tom Peters** (1982) believed leadership is central to quality improvement. He based his point of view on the concept of “managing by walking around” (DTI, 2001a:5), ensuring continuous contact with customers, innovation and people – described as the “three main areas in the pursuit of excellence”. Peters

discarded the word “management” for “leadership”. His approach includes three major activities, namely listening (suggests caring), teaching (values are transmitted) and facilitating (able to give immediate help). His work led to the McKinsey 7-S Framework, which illustrates seven interdependent variables an approach to organizing has to encompass (DTI, 2001a:6), namely strategy, skills, structure, shared values, systems, style and staff.

A sense of direction and a value system is crucial in a community newspaper organisation to avoid uncertainty among staff (cf. De Swardt, 2003:8). Sound leadership is thus essential. A community newspaper organisation with its close relationships is an ideal environment for the type of leadership Peters describes.

#### **2.4.4 Synopsis of the most salient theoretical approaches**

Table 1 unpacks the most salient theoretical premises discussed in section 2.4. Deming’s 14-point plan is shown as the baseline in the first column. The elements in the approaches of Juran, Feigenbaum and Crosby are arranged in the subsequent columns to show how and where the different approaches correspond:

**Table 1: Most salient theoretical premises**

<b>Deming's 14-point plan</b>	<b>Juran's 10 steps to quality improvement:</b>	<b>Feigenbaum's three steps to quality:</b>	<b>Crosby's 14 steps to quality improvement:</b>
1. Create constancy of purpose towards improvement of product and service with aim to become competitive, stay in business, and provide jobs.	1. Build awareness of need, opportunity for improvement. 9. Keep score of improvements.		
2. Adopt new philosophy. We are in new economic age. Western management must awaken to challenge, learn their responsibilities, and take on leadership of change.	2. Set goals for improvement. 3. Organise to reach the goals. 10. Maintain momentum.	3. Organisational commitment.	1. Management is committed to formalised quality policy. 9. Hold Zero Defects Day to broadcast change and as management recommitment and employee commitment.
3. Cease dependence on mass inspection to improve quality. Eliminate need for mass inspection by building quality into product in the first place.			3. Determine where current/ potential quality problems lie.
4. End practice of awarding business on basis of price tag alone – minimise total cost. Move towards single supplier for any one item, on long-term relationship of loyalty and trust.			4. Evaluate cost of quality, explain use as management tool to measure waste.
5. Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity, and thus constantly decrease costs.		2. Modern quality technology.	6. Take corrective actions, using established formal systems to remove root causes of problems. 7. Establish zero defects committee, programme.
6. Institute training on the job.	4. Provide training.		8. Train all employees in quality improvement.
7. Institute leadership. Aim of supervision should be to help people/machines/gadgets to do better job. Supervision of management/production workers in need of overhaul and supervision.	7. Give recognition.	1. Quality leadership.	2. Form management level quality improvement team responsible for quality improvement, process planning and administration. 12. Give formal recognition to all participants. 13. Establish quality councils for quality management information sharing.
8. Drive out fear, so everyone may work effectively for the company.			

<b>Deming's 14-point plan</b>	<b>Juran's 10 steps to quality improvement:</b>	<b>Feigenbaum's three steps to quality:</b>	<b>Crosby's 14 steps to quality improvement:</b>
9. Break down barriers among departments. People in research, design, sales, and production must work as team to foresee problems of production and use that may be encountered with product/service.			
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and targets for workforce asking for zero defects/new levels of productivity. Such exhortations only create adversarial relationships, as bulk of causes of low quality/productivity belongs to system and thus lie beyond power of workforce.			
11. (a) Eliminate work standards (quotas) on factory floor. Substitute leadership. (b) Eliminate management by objective. Eliminate management by numbers, numeric goals. Substitute leadership.			
12. (a) Remove barriers that rob hourly workers of their right to pride of workmanship. Responsibility of supervisors must be changed from sheer numbers to quality. (b) Remove barriers that rob people in management/engineering of their right to pride of workmanship. This means, inter alia, abolishment of annual or merit rating and of management by objective.			
13. Institute vigorous program of education and self-improvement.	4. Provide training.		8. Train all employees in quality improvement. 10. Encourage individuals/ groups to set improvement goals.
14. Put everybody in company to work to accomplish the transformation. Transformation is everybody's job.	5. Carry out projects to solve problems. 6. Report progress. 8. Communicate results.		5. Raise quality awareness and personal concern for quality amongst all employees. 11. Encourage employees to communicate to management any obstacles they face in attaining improvement goals. 14. Do it all over again – form a new quality improvement team.

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From the summary in the table above it is clear that the theorists' approaches to quality correspond to a large extent and that they have a common goal: continuous quality improvement. In the preceding sections, the researcher highlighted how the approaches could be applied in a community newspaper environment. In summary, the researcher thus argues that sound quality management in a community newspaper setting depends on firm, organisation-wide *commitment* to quality where strong *leadership* sets the tone through effective *planning* and every employee is *responsible* for quality. Breaking down any barriers among departments, e.g. the historic segregation of advertising and editorial is important to ensure *cooperation* towards a common goal of continuous improvement of quality. Moreover, quality management should be approached *proactively* to prevent quality problems. Properly *charting processes* and identifying areas of possible *concern* can achieve this.

In the following section, the concept of quality will be explored in order to formulate operational definitions for this study.

## 2.5 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF QUALITY

In an effort to clarify quality, theorists David Garvin, Leonard Berry, Valarie Zeithaml and Parsu Parasuraman, and Carol A. King deconstructed the concept into several dimensions related to products and services. It is important to explore the dimensions of both products and services, because of the unique nature of media products in general. Media products (e.g. community newspapers) are unique in the sense that they offer a *tangible product*, such as a printed copy of a newspaper, and *intangible content* (information) at the same time (cf. Reca, 2006:182). Moreover, they provide a *service* by presenting their communities with information, interpretation, analysis and education (cf. Hiebert & Gibbons, 2000:13) that are necessary in the daily decision making process. Scott (1999:ii; cf. Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:8) highlights another important difference, namely that newspaper organisations develop and produce an essentially new *product* simultaneously while adhering to strict deadlines. The quality dimensions are subsequently discussed and compared in the sections and tables below.

### 2.5.1 Quality dimensions: David Garvin

Garvin (1988) identified eight dimensions of quality from a user point of view. He argues that, although in many instances interrelated, each dimension is self-contained, because a product/service can rank high on one and low on another. These dimensions (categories) cover a range of concepts. Tangible and intangible products can be evaluated for quality using multiple dimensions and a company can choose which dimension(s) it wants to pursue (Garvin, 1988:61). An overview of the dimensions (cf. Garvin, 1988:49-60) is presented in table 2:

**Table 2: Garvin's eight dimensions of quality**

Dimension	Description	Approach to defining quality
Performance	Refers to primary operating characteristics of product/service. Involves measurable product/service attributes. Connection to quality depends on circumstances and is affected by semantics.	Contains elements of both product- and user-based approaches.
Features	Secondary characteristics supplementing basic functioning. Involves measurable product/service attributes. Translation into quality differences also affected by individual preferences.	Contains elements of both product- and user-based approaches.

Dimension	Description	Approach to defining quality
Reliability	The probability of a product malfunctioning/failing within a given period. Provides a competitive edge. Can be measured, more so in products/services that have been in use for some time. <sup>25</sup>	Contains elements of both manufacturing- and user-based approaches.
Conformance	The degree to which design/operating characteristics meet pre-determined standards. Equates good quality to operating within a tolerance band, but ignores deviations within this band. Relatively objective measure of quality and closely linked to reliability.	Manufacturing-based approach. (The link to reliability could make the user-based approach relevant as well.)
Durability	A measure of economic and technical product life, i.e. "... the amount of use one gets from a product before it physically deteriorates." Difficult to interpret when product can be repaired, which implies link to reliability.	Product-based approach. (The link to reliability could make the user-based approach relevant as well.)
Serviceability	Concerned with the customer's concerns about product breakdowns and restoration. Serviceability entails speed, courtesy, competence, and ease of repair. Some aspects can be measured, but others are subjective. Linked to handling of complaints – important within context of company reputation and quality. Has competitive potential.	Product-based approach, as well as user-based.
Aesthetics	The look, feel, taste, smell or sound of a product (i.e. the attributes that most appeals to customer needs and wants). Most subjective. Linked to perceived quality.	User-based approach.
Perceived quality	How the customer perceives product/service, based on indirect measures. Influenced by factors such as company reputation and affiliation. Most subjective. Linked to aesthetics.	User-based approach.

Garvin (1988:46) highlighted the competing views held by different departments, namely marketing, engineering and manufacturing. Marketing thinks about quality in terms of users and products, and engineers concentrate on specifications (i.e. a product-based approach). Manufacturers prefer the idea that quality means conformance (to requirements). He (1988:47-48) argued that companies can benefit from multiples views on quality, and that the approach should shift "as products move from design to market".

### 2.5.2 Quality dimensions: Leonard Berry, Valarie Zeithaml and Parsu Parasuraman

Rao *et al.* (1996:30) argued that Garvin's Eight Dimensions of Quality are not directly applicable to services, but relate more to product quality. These authors quote Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman (1990) who identified five principle dimensions within the service context (cf. Rao *et al.*, 1996:30-31). These dimensions, which form the refined version of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's Servqual model of service quality<sup>26</sup> (1985 and 1988, as cited by Schneider & White, 2004:31), are explained in table 3 (see section 2.9.1.3). Probable corresponding Garvin dimensions are added:

<sup>25</sup> Quality and reliability are often used synonymously (Oakland, 1995:5). Reliability refers to the ability of a product or service to continue to meet the requirements of the customer. Quality's "everyday" synonyms range from "luxury and merit to excellence and value" (Garvin, 1988:39).

<sup>26</sup> The researcher also takes note of the dimensions offered by Grönroos (six criteria for experienced service quality, 1990) and Gummesson's typology of service dimensions (1992) as discussed in Schneider and White (2004:33-38). These are largely in line with the Servqual model and focus on quality from a customer point of view.



**Table 3: Berry *et al.*'s five principle dimensions for service quality**

Dimension	Description	Corresponding Garvin dimension
Reliability	Performing a service reliably/dependably, meeting customer's expectations constantly.	Conformance
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.	Performance, serviceability
Assurance	Ability to communicate level of competence to customer and provide service with necessary courtesy.	Perceived quality/value
Empathy	Approachability and ability to communicate with and understand customer's needs.	Performance, serviceability
Tangibles	Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, communication materials.	Aesthetics

### 2.5.3 Quality dimensions: Carol A. King

King (1987, cited and adapted by Schonberger & Knod, 1994:25) proposed 10 quality dimensions, which are specifically applicable within a service environment. These correspond with the dimensions in Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's (1985, 1988) Servqual model of service quality (see section 2.9.1.3). King's principles are summarised in table 4. The related dimensions are indicated clearly:

**Table 4: King's 10 dimensions of service quality**

Dimension	Description	Corresponding Garvin dimension	Corresponding Berry <i>et al.</i> dimension
Reliability	Consistency of performance and dependability.	Conformance	Reliability
Responsiveness	Willingness/readiness to provide service; timeliness.	Performance, serviceability	Responsiveness
Competence	Possession of skills and knowledge to perform service.	Perceived quality/value	Assurance
Access	Approachability/ease of contact.	Performance, serviceability	Empathy
Courtesy	Politeness, respect, consideration for property, clean and neat appearance.	Perceived quality/value	Assurance
Communication	Educating/informing customers in language they can understand; listening to customer.	Perceived quality/value	Assurance
Credibility	Trustworthiness, believability; focusing on customer's best interest.	Conformance	Reliability
Security	Freedom from danger, risk, doubt.	Reliability, serviceability	Assurance
Understanding	Making an effort to understand customer's needs; learning specific requirements; individualised attention; recognising regular customer.	Performance, serviceability	Empathy
Tangibles	Physical evidence of service (facilities, tools, equipment).	Aesthetics	Tangibles

From the dimensions above it is clear that Berry *et al.*, Garvin and King concentrate on the customer's view of quality. Quality according to these authors can thus be summarised as (cf. Schonberger & Knod, 1994:25):

- Complex and therefore requiring diverse implementation measures targeted at a customer's current concerns.
- Requiring continuous improvement (i.e. continuously adding to the dimensions).
- "Whatever the customer wants."

Many of the dimensions outlined above can apply in a community newspaper context. A combination of the dimension, their descriptions and possible application are presented in table 5 below:

**Table 5: Quality dimensions in a community newspaper setting**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Application</b>
Conformance	Refers to specific quality requirements.	Adherence to quality characteristics of community newspapers, e.g. good journalism principles, content relevant to specific community. Also applies to timely service delivery, i.e. prompt and reliable newspaper distribution.
Reliability	Performing a service/delivering a product reliably/dependably, constantly meeting customer expectations.	Offering quality news and advertising content to the reader in a timely fashion through circulation/distribution.
Competence	Possession of skills/knowledge to perform service/produce product.	Skilled staffs to gather, prepare, present and deliver newspaper to audience.
Communication	Informing/education customers in a language they can understand. Listening to customer.	Presenting content in accessible format, i.e. simple, clear language. Receptive to reader/advertiser feedback.
Credibility	Trustworthiness, believability, focusing on customer's best interests.	Focusing on truth and accuracy in newspaper content.
Aesthetics	The look and feel of a product.	Linked to layout and design of a newspaper.
Understanding	Making an effort to understand customer needs. Individualised attention and recognition of regular customers.	Relevant to advertisers.
Tangibles	Facilities, tools, equipment, staff.	Specific place where newspaper is produced, equipped with suitable technology and competent staff.
Access	Approachability, ease of contact.	Advertisers, readers and news sources should have access to the newspaper organisation.
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.	Pertains to advertisers as well as readers and news sources.

This section provided an analysis of the dimensions of quality, which provides a clearer understanding of the meaning and interpretation of the concept. In the next section, definitions of quality will be explored.

## 2.6 CONCEPTUALISING QUALITY

From the approaches to quality and the points of view of quality protagonists the following definitions are noted (table 6):

**Table 6: Defining quality**

<b>Contributor(s)</b>	<b>Definition of quality</b>
Feigenbaum (1956, cited by Garvin, 1988:13)	"Quality is everybody's job."

Contributor(s)	Definition of quality
Tuchman (1980, cited by Rao <i>et al.</i> , 2006:26)	"Quality is achieving or reaching for the highest standard..."
Deming (1982, cited by The Quality Assurance Project, 2008)	"Doing the right thing right, right away"; increased productivity.
Juran (1988:11)	"Fitness for use"; customer satisfaction. Juran further distinguishes between quality as product (i.e. whatever is produced, be it goods and services [Juran, 1988:8]); performance, which creates customer satisfaction; and freedom from deficiencies (which implies conformance to requirements/standards).
Oakland (1995:16)	"... meeting customer requirements..."
Berry <i>et al.</i> , Garvin, King (Schonberger & Knod, 1994:25)	Whatever the customer wants.
Crosby (1995:59-86)	Conformance to set requirements.
Gitlow <i>et al.</i> (2005:17)	A product/service of which the output falls within acceptable limits around a desired value, based on the wants and needs of the customer.
Shingo (DTI, 2001a:5)	Prevention (which also implies conformance to requirements/standards).

Reeves and Bednar's (1994) investigation of the definition of quality<sup>27</sup> led them to several answers, such as quality is value, conformance to specification and requirements, fitness for use, loss avoidances, meeting and/or exceeding customer expectations, and consistency (Reeves & Bednar, 1994:419, 427). These authors said the bloom over time of a service economy led to changes in the way quality was defined and approached. Services differ from products in different ways (Reeves & Bednar, 1994:426):

- Services are primarily intangible and the attributes are difficult to demonstrate.
- Services are simultaneously produced and consumed. This means one cannot use an inventory to manage fluctuations.
- The customer is involved in the production and demand of many services, which makes quality control difficult.
- Services are extremely perishable.
- Services are a process rather than a thing.

Due to these differences, the definition of quality within a service framework will inevitably differ from a definition of quality within a product realm. In this regard, Reeves and Bednar (1994:427) quotes Shostack (1977) as follows:

A tangible object lends itself to precise and quantifiable measurement that cannot be duplicated in services because they cannot be touched, tried on for size or displayed on a shelf. They are exceedingly difficult to quantify.

In the light of this argument, the only appropriate definition of quality in a service framework – according to Reeves and Bednar (1994:427), is one that focuses on the expectations of customers, i.e. what customers call quality and how they perceive it. Juran (1988:8) added that the aim of quality should be to continuously meet internal and external customer<sup>28</sup> needs. Aucoin (1999:[13]69) agreed: "Quality is what a customer says it is and may differ from one customer to another. While most people have a rough concept of quality, one can define it as appropriate functions, features and workmanship for a customer

<sup>27</sup> Reeves and Bednar (1994) offer a comprehensive, systematical analysis of the evolution of the definition of the quality construct since the 1800s, concentrating on the writings of Shewhart, Feigenbaum and Juran.

<sup>28</sup> "... all persons who are impacted by our processes and our products." (Juran, 1988:8) Internal customers are "persons or organisations who are a part of our company" (i.e. staff), and external customers "mean persons who are not a part of our company but who are impacted by our products" (i.e. consumers, the government, the media, etc.).

target cost, but the one that does the best job for a given price.” He further argued that it is best to approach the quality of a product or process by identifying measurable characteristics. Identifying the characteristics happens through researching what the customer wants/prefers/needs and the organisation’s “best thoughts on how to meet them”, which is embodied in the product specifications (Aucoin, 1999:[13]69, 70).

Reeves and Bednar (1994:427-428) concluded that there is no global definition for quality and that different definitions of the construct of quality are applicable or appropriate under different circumstances. They argued that none of the available definitions of quality could be considered the best. Furthermore, all definitions have strengths and weaknesses in terms of criteria such as measurement and generalisability, managerial usefulness and consumer relevance.

The Praxiom Research Group Limited (2010) generally agrees with the point of view that there is no generally applicable definition of quality. This source rightly argues that quality is a relative concept and quotes the argument of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000 that quality cannot be established in a vacuum. Praxiom explains it as follows:

The quality of something can be determined by comparing a set of inherent characteristics with a set of requirements. If those inherent characteristics meet all requirements, high or excellent quality is achieved. If those characteristics do not meet all requirements, a low or poor level of quality is achieved ... Quality is, therefore, a question of degree. As a result, the central quality question is: How well does this set of inherent characteristics comply with this set of requirements? In short, the quality of something depends on a set of inherent characteristics and a set of requirements and how well the former complies with the latter ... Quality is always relative to a set of requirements.

This interpretation is in line with Pogačnik’s point of view that an organisation can only produce quality if it knows how to perceive it (Senge *et al.*, 1999:153). Therefore, according to Pogačnik, quality is “perceivable in details” and should be defined within the context of a specific product (or service).

Korelnikov (n.d.) adds to the above two authors’ points of view by offering a “new definition of quality” which focuses on “value entitlement”. This stance defines quality as “... a state in which value entitlement is realised for the customer and provider in every aspect of the business relationship. ‘Value’ represents economic worth, practical utility, and availability for both the customer and the company that creates the product or service.”

The points of view set out above illustrate that quality is perceived and interpreted in many ways, and that it is clearly a complex concept to define. The discussion highlights the importance of defining quality within a specific context, and that such a definition should be linked to quality requirements and characteristics. What sets a community newspaper apart is the fact that it is both a service and a product, which means that quality measurement is only possible to a certain extent. It is therefore important that community newspapers adhere to professional standards, including ethical codes set by the industry. Moreover, journalism’s first priority is the truth and its first loyalty is to citizens (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2006:5), which highlights the importance of the needs of readers and advertisers (as customers) in the quality chain. Keeping these factors in mind, the following **operational definition** of the term *quality* is formulated: *Inherent product/service distinction based on (a) set requirements/standards and (b) internal/external customer satisfaction.*

In the next section, the management of quality comes under the spotlight. As mentioned in chapter 1, quality must be managed to be sustainable. Several models and methods to manage quality were

developed because of the quality dimensions discussed above. These approaches, philosophies, models and techniques will now be discussed against the background of general management theory.

## 2.7 QUALITY MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, PHILOSOPHIES, MODELS AND TECHNIQUES

Cronjé, Du Toit, Mol, Van Reenen and Motlatla (1997:95) define management as the process through which human, financial, physical and information resources are utilised to reach an organisation's goals. The most important elements of the management process (i.e. the basic tasks of a manager) are planning, organising, leading and control (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:97; see also Juran, 1988). Management is essential to (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:94-95):

- Lead the organisation to reach its goals.
- Ensure a balanced functioning of the microenvironment, i.e. the organisation.
- Ensure that the organisation is in harmony with its (external) environment.
- Ensure that goals are reached synergistically and at the highest possible productivity level.

Management expert Peter Drucker (2006:194) says “management is, above all else, a very few, essential principles.” These principles (Drucker, 2006:194-196) can be summarised as follows:

- Management is about human beings, its task being to make people function together effectively.
- Management is embedded in culture, because it deals with the integration of people in a common venture. *What* managers do might be the same, but *how* they do it differs from country to country.
- Every organisation needs a mission, vision, values and clear objectives to which there is organisation-wide commitment.
- (Continuous) training and developing must be built in on every level of an organisation to help members grow and develop.
- Because organisations consist of people with different skills and knowledge doing different kinds of work, they need to be built on communication and individual responsibility.
- An organisation's performance relies on factors such as market standing, innovation, productivity, the development of human resources, quality and financial results. Performance should thus be built into an enterprise, measured (or judged), and continuously improved.
- The result of a business is a satisfied customer.

The term “management” in general thus refers to “... all the activities that are used to coordinate, direct, and control an organization,” in terms of the ISO standards (Praxiom Research Group Limited, 2010). *Quality management* therefore is all the activities coordinating, directing and controlling quality in an organisation, including formulating a quality policy and setting quality objectives, planning, control, assurance and improvement (Praxiom Research Group Limited, 2010; BusinessDictionary.com, 2010a).

Flynn, Schroeder and Sakakibara (1994:339) defined quality management as “... an integrated approach to achieving and sustaining high quality output, focusing on the maintenance and continuous improvement of processes and defect prevention at all levels and in all functions of the organisation, in order to meet or exceed customer expectations.” According to Robbins and Coulter (2005:43), quality management is “a philosophy of management driven by continual improvement and responding to customer needs and expectations” with the objective of creating an organisation “committed to continuous improvement in work processes”. These authors summarise the characteristics of quality management as follows (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:43):

- Intense focus on the customer.
- Concern for continuous improvement.
- Process-focused.
- Organisation-wide improvement in quality.
- Accurate measurements.
- Empowerment of employees.

According to certimedia.org<sup>29</sup> (2008), which focuses on quality and the media, quality management is a specific *way* of managing. It is based on rationality and a “search for efficiency”, and considers all stakeholders. It is a way to control and monitor risk activities. Beaumont (2007:1) adds to this point of view and describes quality management as “... the *approach* [researcher’s emphasis] an organisation takes towards ensuring customer requirements are met. That approach may be non-existent, nascent, evolving, chaotic, or it may be systematic and mature.”

The activity of managing quality thus focuses not only on the quality of the product, but also on how to achieve and sustain that quality (i.e. the process).

According to Herbert (2008:52), “quality management” is a broad term, which includes the distinct features of several approaches such as Kaizen (continuous improvement), quality circles and Six Sigma, as well as (quality management and assurance) standards, e.g. those contained in the 9000 series of ISO. The approaches that could be relevant to this study are subsequently discussed.

### **2.7.1 The management philosophy of Kaizen**

The principle that “widespread cultural change can be best achieved through the incremental process of gradual, small-scale, achievable projects incorporating the use of statistical tools and techniques” (Berry, 1998:98) is the basis of the quality management process. This is expressed in the Japanese concept of Kaizen, which means “on-going improvement involving everyone from the top managers to the workers” (Imai, 1986 cited by Maguad, 2006:190). The concept consolidates philosophies, theories and tools that have been used in Japan over the years, and is considered one of the most important factors in the Japanese industrial success. Following the Kaizen philosophy means that improvement is brought about gradually and continuously rather than through radical reorganisation (Berry, 1998:98; see also Anderson, Rungtusanatham & Schroeder, 1994:488). According to 12Manage (2008a), Kaizen is a “way of life” philosophy. It means that every aspect of one’s life should be constantly improved. Key elements of Kaizen include quality, effort, involving all employees, a willingness to change, and communication, which are applicable in the close-knit community newspaper organisation. This philosophy is particularly applicable in situations where long-term change is sought (12Manage, 2008a), e.g. better quality. It is people-oriented and requires discipline. It is also one of the fundamental principles of total quality management (Boaden, 1997:558) (see 2.7.6).

### **2.7.2 Benchmarking (quality control strategy)**

Benchmarking is a quality control strategy and related to Kaizen. It is described as one of the key quality management methodologies (Gray, Sohal & Saros, 1996:105). Benchmarking entails researching,

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<sup>29</sup> “Certimedia is the department of Challenge Optimum SA (Geneva, Switzerland) dedicated to media & quality management. Born in 2005 to help media companies meet the requirements of the international standards ISAS BCP 9001:2010.” (Certimedia.org, 2005-2012)

observing (Powell, 1995:19) and implementing (Camp, 1995, cited in Reid, 2006:31) best competitive practices (Powell, 1995:19). According to Berry (1998:98), how similar processes in different sections of an organisation perform, is compared through internal benchmarking. Establishing operating targets based on the best possible industry practices is essential to the success of any organisation (Camp, 1989:4-6). Berger (2005:192) defines benchmarks as “reference points drawn from comparable (and even competitive) situations so that a standard of ‘best practice’ can be identified”. The main purpose of benchmarking is to learn from other organisations in order to enhance the performance of a particular organisation. However, practices should not merely be copied, but rather adapted to the particular organisational environment (Reid, 2006:31). It involves studying outstanding organisations (performers; “the best competitors” [Quinn, n.d.]) and using them as benchmarks. Reid (2005:32) further suggests that this research should not be limited to one outstanding organisation (cf. Camp, 1989:4-6).

Benchmarking is common practice in the media, especially in the Western world. Spranger (2005) says benchmarks used in a media context are statistics and expert opinions, equal distribution, intramedia and intermedia comparison. The quality newspaper benchmark is useful for research focusing on information quality. According to Spranger (2005), comparing quality German newspapers to other media (i.e. intermedia comparison) is common. The newspapers are distinguished by the high professional standards of their journalists, and meet high standards in terms of their scope of coverage and the variety of issues they cover. In countries such as South Africa and Botswana, there are benchmarks for starting a radio station, for example (Rau, 2009:64). However, there is a lack of benchmarking standards in Southern Africa “particularly for media organisations in rural areas serving rural communities” (Rau, 2009:5).

Berger (2005:180) states that there is a “small but growing movement” assessing the definition of quality in the South African media industry. In this case, the ISAS BCP 9001, a quality management standard for traditional mass media and Internet content providers inspired by ISO 9001, is relevant (see chapter 5).

Benchmarking is a useful tool to assess organisational strengths and weaknesses and should be included in the quality management process. Community newspaper organisations should, in line with Camp’s (1989:2-4) suggestions, study best practices in the industry and adjust themselves accordingly. However, as stated in chapter 1, community newspapers should be subject to the same professional standards as their mainstream counterparts. For example, Schultz (2011), former managing editor of the community paper *The Kankakee Daily Journal* in Kankakee, Ill., that implements total quality management, argues that community journalists should strive to be as good as their peers at *The New York Times*.

### 2.7.3 Cause-and-Effect diagram

This diagram, developed by Kaoru Ishikawa in 1943 and also known as the fishbone (see section 2.4.2.1), is a useful tool to map as well as analyse the inputs that affect quality (Alan Chapman/Business, 2004-2009b; see also Wruck & Jensen, 1994:7). Potential causes of a problem (i.e. effect) are shown at the end of a horizontal arrow and the contributing factors are mapped as arrows entering the main cause arrow. Causes and sub-causes can be mapped by using this graphical technique, making it easier to identify weaknesses and solve problems (Maguad, 2006:189; 12Manage, 2008b). Victor, Boynton and Stephens-Jahng (2000:109) describe the fishbone as a “tool for continuous improvement”. According to 12Manage (2008b), the technique helps identify all possible causes of a problem, not just the most obvious. It contributes to determine the root causes of a problem or quality characteristics in a structured manner. It encourages group participation and utilizes group knowledge of the relevant process, while facilitating focus on the causes of an issue without resorting to complaints and irrelevant discussion. This technique

could be useful in a community newspaper context to root out persistent quality problems in any of the various processes.

#### 2.7.4 Plan–do–study–act (PDSA) cycle

The PDSA cycle is a model containing four steps that an organisation can implement to carry out change or continuously improve the quality of a product or service (Tague, 2004; 12Manage, 2008c; Quinn, n.d.). It is also called PDCA, the Deming cycle, the Deming Wheel or the Continuous Improvement Spiral and the Shewhart cycle. The cycle should be repeated continuously to effect continuous improvement. It originated in the 1920s when Walter A. Shewhart introduced the Plan, Do and See concept, which Deming modified (12Manage, 2008c). PDSA is related to the philosophy of Kaizen (see section 2.7.1), and is commonly used in quality management to improve organisational processes (Berry, 1998:105). The cycle consists of “a logical sequence of four repetitive steps for continuous improvement and learning” (Berry, 1998:105; Tague, 2004; 12Manage, 2008c):

- **Plan:** Recognise an opportunity and plan a change. This step involves analysis. Plan for change. Analyse and predict the results.
- **Do:** Test the change by carrying out a small study. Execute the plan, taking small steps in controlled circumstances.
- **Study:** Review the test, analyse the results and identify what has been learnt. Study the results.
- **Act:** Take action based on what has been learned in the previous step. Take action to standardise or improve the process.

According to Tague (2004), the PDSA model should be used when starting a new improvement project, developing a new or improved design of a process, product or service, defining a repetitive work process, planning data collection and analysis in order to verify and prioritize problems or root causes, or when implementing any change. As with most of the quality management tools and techniques, the PDSA cycle can help community newspapers organisations approach changes and improvements in a systematic and concrete manner.

#### 2.7.5 The customer satisfaction model

Customer satisfaction is an important concept in quality management and several macro and micro models of customer satisfaction exist (Hom, 2000:100). The well-known Kano model is a quality management and marketing technique, which is used to measure client well-being and good spirit (12Manage, 2008d). It was first described in 1984 by the Japanese quality management theorist Noriaki Kano and entails a ranking scheme that distinguishes between “essential and differentiating attributes related to concepts of customer quality” (Wikipedia, 2009; cf. Roberts Information Services, 2009). The customer satisfaction model contains six categories of quality attributes of which the following three influence customer satisfaction (12Manage, 2008d):

- **Basic factors:** “Must have” – these requirements do not cause satisfaction as such, but will cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled. They are therefore seen as prerequisites and establish a “market entry threshold”.
- **Excitement factors:** If these requirements are not fulfilled, they will not cause dissatisfaction. They surprise the customer and cause “delight”. By including these factors, an organisation can distinguish itself from its competitors.
- **Performance factors:** These are requirements directly connected to a customer’s needs and wants. If performance is low, dissatisfaction follows and vice versa.



Kano also mentions “indifferent attributes” about which customers do not care, “questionable attributes” customers might or might not expect, and “reverse attributes” which are the opposite feature of those a customer expected (12Manage, 2009). If customers perceive good quality, they are satisfied, which leads to company loyalty. This, in turn, aids the organisation in reaching its goals in a more effective and efficient manner (cf. Mohr-Jackson, 1998:19). The customer satisfaction model could be especially useful in a community newspaper environment to ensure balance, i.e. that readers receive not only information they want, but also the information they need to function in society, but might not care about.

In the next section, the concept of total quality management (TQM) will be explored. As stated in chapter 1, the TQM approach could be particularly useful in giving direction to the quality management process in community newspapers.

## 2.8 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)

Robbins and Coulter (2005:43) state that a “quality revolution swept through both the business and public sectors during the 1980s and 1990s. The generic term used to describe this revolution was total quality management ...” TQM was inspired by a small group of experts, of whom Deming and Juran are most famous. Powell (1995:16-17) traced TQM’s origins back to 1949 when initiatives, influenced by the likes of Deming and Juran, were implemented to improve Japanese productivity and enhance their post-war quality of life. At the time, Deming and Juran’s ideas and techniques were not popular in America (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:43). TQM produced many improvements in Japan and as quality control programmes became more widely used, it was soon clear that TQM also had potential for application in service and non-profit organisations. American organisations began to take serious notice of TQM in the 1980s amid fears that Japanese rising quality might surpass quality in the USA.

Towards the end of the 1980s, consumers were viewed as more sophisticated and therefore more sensitive to quality differences. The impact of quality on the bottom line had by then also been confirmed. High quality was expected to create customer loyalty and subsequently increase customers’ repurchase rate (Garvin, 1988:25). In addition, factors such as increased foreign competition, a decline in profitability and market share, product liability suits, and government pressure made managers much more aware of the issue of quality (Garvin, 1988:21-23). They became convinced that improved quality could assist organisations in achieving their organisational goals and objectives. Organisations also increasingly started to establish the link between quality and productivity, and managers started to focus on continuously improving quality on all levels in attempts to exceed quality levels of their competitors. Active involvement of top-level managers was now essential (Garvin, 1988:26). Learning through example, employees became more aware of the issue of quality. In this process, many organisations established organisation-wide commitment to quality (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365).

In the literature there are many different views on exactly what TQM entails – “confusion” even, according to Soltani, Lai and Gharneh (2005:1011). According to these authors, the view of each contributor<sup>30</sup> influences his/her management background. Each offers a set of key factors or elements, for example Juran’s trilogy, Deming’s 14 points and Crosby’s 14 steps (see section 2.4). Many quality management scholars have also endeavoured to identify general TQM principles or elements, such as Powell (1995:19), whose research led to a summary of 12 common TQM factors. Another example is the nine common principles Dale and Cooper (1992:19) found to run through many interpretations of

<sup>30</sup> Boaden (1997:165) excludes the principles of the gurus when looking at TQM elements, because of doubt whether they were really promoting TQM.

TQM and the seven key elements of TQM these authors highlight (Dale & Cooper, 1992:20-22). Soltani *et al.* (2005:1012-1013) also cite Morwani's (2001) view of an integrated TQM as a composite of seven constructs. Also included in table 7 below is a list of TQM elements Boaden (1997:165) found to be most commonly mentioned in the literature:

**Table 7: Illustration of different views on TQM components**

<b>The 12 TQM factors (Powell, 1995:19)</b>	<b>The key elements of TQM (Dale &amp; Cooper, 1992:20- 22):</b>	<b>Motwani's 7 TQM constructs (Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005:1012- 1013)</b>	<b>Elements of TQM (Boaden, 1997:165)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Committed leadership.</li> <li>2. Adoption and communication of TQM.</li> <li>3. Closer customer relationships.</li> <li>4. Closer supplier relationships.</li> <li>5. Benchmarking.</li> <li>6. Increased training.</li> <li>7. Open organisation.</li> <li>8. Employee empowerment.</li> <li>9. Zero-defects mentality.</li> <li>10. Flexible manufacturing.</li> <li>11. Process improvement.</li> <li>12. Measurement.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commitment and leadership of the CEO.</li> <li>2. Cultural change.</li> <li>3. Planning and organisation.</li> <li>4. Education and training.</li> <li>5. Recognition.</li> <li>6. Involvement.</li> <li>7. Measurement.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Top management commitment.</li> <li>2. Quality measurement and benchmarking.</li> <li>3. Process management.</li> <li>4. Product design</li> <li>5. Employee training and development.</li> <li>6. Supplier quality management.</li> <li>7. Customer involvement and satisfaction.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer focus.</li> <li>2. Organisation-wide commitment to quality improvement.</li> <li>3. Training and education.</li> <li>4. Organization-wide involvement in quality improvement.</li> <li>5. Focus on processes.</li> <li>6. Use of teams and teamwork.</li> <li>7. Use of appropriate tools and techniques.</li> <li>8. Goal setting, measurement and feedback.</li> <li>9. Continuous improvement as a philosophy.</li> <li>10. Change in organisation culture.</li> <li>11. Inclusion of quality principles in product and service design.</li> </ol>

Boaden (1996:553) is one of several authors who contested TQM's uniqueness over the past 20 years. She concluded that principles commonly accepted as defining TQM are in fact part of several other initiatives or are accepted as good business/management practices. These include customer focus, commitment and involvement of all employees, a focus on continuous improvement and a process approach. She argued that the only aspect unique to TQM is the fact that it developed from the mathematical foundation of quality control, and called it "... an alternative focus on a common set of management principles." Tarí (2005:191), who set out to identify the components of TQM to help managers successfully implement quality management, concurs and concludes that "... there is no unique model for a good TQM programme; and TQM is a network of interdependent components, namely critical factors, practices, techniques and tools."

From Boaden's original list of TQM elements (1997:165, see table 7), she developed principles of TQM and "corresponding implementation actions (practices)". This is the result of her argument that many of the so-called principles listed by other authors are in fact practices, which contributed to the confusion about what TQM really is. By describing TQM in this way, Boaden (1997:166-167) "highlights the motivation and rationale behind certain practices, rather than the activities themselves". It is the *activities* that are more subject to changes in fashion, she argues. She summarizes TQM as follows (table 8, Boaden, 1997:167):

**Table 8: Boaden's view of TQM**

Principles	Practices
Customer focus with emphasis on the customer-supplier relationship, internally and externally.	Training and education considered as an investment.
The commitment of everyone to quality improvement, especially managers.	The use of teams and teamwork.
The involvement of everyone within the organisation in quality improvement.	The use of appropriate tools and techniques, reviewed regularly.
A focus on processes.	Goal setting, measurement and feedback for all aspects of the business.
Continuous improvement as a philosophy.	

Despite the lack of consensus about general TQM principles, there is a “continuing agreement about the critical success factors” of TQM (Soltani *et al.*, 2005:1010). These factors include firm leadership commitment, continuous training/development of the workforce, organisation-wide involvement in the quality management process (including internal and external stakeholders) (Aucoin, 1999:[13]70), and the use of various scientific tools and techniques.

Aucoin (1999:[13]69) described TQM as the “heart of any endeavour, for it involves organising for and delivering the inherent worth of a product or service.” He defines TQM as “... identifying what customers want and organising to provide what they want.” Organising for quality means “... establishing the organisational systems for making quality a critical aspect of a product or service and providing the environment for delivery of quality.” (Aucoin, 1999:[13]69-:[13]70.) Yeung, Cheng and Lai (2006:156-157) argue that TQM is primarily a paradigm shift involving “a fundamental change in the way business is conducted: organisations are managed as a system, employees are empowered, focus is placed on customers, and a set of effective management techniques is adopted.” Yeung *et al.* (2006:157) quote Dean and Bowen (1994) who maintained that customer focus, continuous improvement and teamwork are the three major components of TQM.

Aucoin (1999:[13]70) distinguished between two “major foundations” to TQM (i.e. ways of improving quality): one analytical, and the other behavioural or organisational (cf. Wilkinson, Marchington & Daleuman, 1994). Analytical quality improvement has to do with managing the quality of the processes through which a product is produced. Organisational improvement involves how individuals and groups affect quality. This view concurs with the importance the Japanese placed on the organisation-wide involvement in quality. Although not quite new, the “soft aspects” or people-based issues are emphasised in later studies (Tari, 2005:186; Soltani *et al.*, 2005:1011), such as studies by Bou and Beltrán (2005). These authors state that the effect a TQM strategy has on an organisation’s results, is greater when it is implemented through a “human resource strategy” (2005:82-83). They emphasise the social dimension of TQM, namely the involvement of employees with quality objectives. However, Bou and Beltrán (2005:82) caution that, “Greater employee participation and influence in work decisions should be accompanied with the encouragement of a common vision of organisational goals. Otherwise, an increase in employee responsibilities would be perceived only as an intensification of the workload and thus some resistance to TQM could appear among the workforce.”

The stance within TQM is thus that an organisation can only produce quality products/services if the whole organisation contributes towards reaching this objective, which concurs with the systems approach to management (see 2.9). Better quality influences both factors that predominantly contribute to an organisation’s profitability, namely income and cost (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365). By adding value to its product/service through quality, an organisation acquires an edge over its competition (Rao *et al.*,

1996:6). The results of quality management from a TQM point of view are “... better employee relations, greater customer satisfaction and retention, higher productivity, improved profitability, and increased market share” (Jablonski, 1994:27). According to Rau, *et al.* (1996:vii-viii), TQM is more than just detecting defects in a process or service – it encompasses tools and practices such as customer focus, total participation, continual improvement and a wide range of applicability. The main aim of this framework is to increase competitiveness and in the process reach organisational goals and objectives as effectively and efficiently as possible (cf. Dale & Cooper, 1992:11; cf. Mohr-Jackson, 1998:19).

TQM is, according to Albarran (2006:9), best described as “a series of approaches to achieving quality in organisations, especially when producing products or services”. It encompasses all functions of a company’s “value chain”, involves all levels of the workforce, and emphasises a focus on processes (Rao, *et al.*, 1996:7; BusinessDictionary.com, 2010b). However, several authors caution that the success of TQM depends on several factors. Crosby (1995:66-73) argues that if quality is not continuously managed throughout and on all organisational levels, organisations are confronted with “patching up” problems in a reactive manner, rather than addressing it pro-actively. Powell’s (1995:29) research findings supported Crosby’s point of view. Equally important, he added that executive commitment, open organisation and employee empowerment are critical to the success of TQM – more so than “TQM staples such as benchmarking, training, flexible manufacturing, process improvement, and improved measurement.” Powell argued that although these tools are essential in a fully integrated TQM initiative, they do not produce performance advantages on their own.

Many therefore view TQM as an ideal framework to promote excellent management (Rao *et al.*, 1996:viii)<sup>31</sup>, as it emphasises the importance of clear management goals (including quality goals) and performance standards (cf. Crosby, 1995:3) to ensure focus, and adequate skills (including management skills) (Sohn *et al.*, 1999:250). These all contribute towards setting direction to all employees on how to reach individual and organisational goals and objectives.

The DTI (2001c:1) rightly says:

TQM is the way of managing for the future, and is far wider in its application than just assuring product or service quality – it is a way of managing people and business processes to ensure complete customer satisfaction at every stage, internally and externally. TQM, combined with effective leadership, results in an organisation doing the right things right, first time.

According to Roche (1996:19), who advocated Total Quality Journalism (“an integration of total quality and the public trust of journalism” [1996:vi]), mass media organisations did not participate in the quality revolution and journalism and TQM are not traditionally linked. In fact, Loomis (1999:185) stated that TQM initiatives were resisted in the newspaper industry. Roche (1996:19) argued that in the 20 years before 1995, TQM-organisations focused on the customer, while many newspapers focused on self-preservation. However, as discussed in chapter 1, the TQM framework could be applicable in a community newspaper context due to several factors. The emphasis TQM places on organisation-wide involvement in the quality management process, is not just suited to the strong personal relationships, high degree of participation, and necessity for strict deadlines that characterise community newspapers, but also to the more democratic management style in these newsrooms that involves staff in a variety of tasks. Furthermore, TQM’s emphasis on clear management goals, performance standards, and adequate skills could facilitate quality improvement in all processes of community newspaper production by

<sup>31</sup> Cronjé *et al.* (1997:95) define management as the process through which human, financial, physical and information resources are utilised to reach an organisation’s goals.

providing direction to all employees on how to reach individual and organisational goals and objectives. In addition, several TQM factors highlighted in this section correlate with the quality dimensions that could be applicable in a community newspaper organisation (see table 5). As such, TQM's emphasis on closer customer relationships relate to the dimensions of understanding, responsiveness and access; the competence dimension can be linked to the TQM factors of increased training and employee empowerment, and conformance relates to the inclusion of quality principles in product/service design in TQM.

From the definitions discussed above the operational definition of quality management in this study is: *Quality management is all the activities involved in coordinating, directing, controlling and assuring quality in an organisation.*

In the next section, the researcher explores the systems theory, which is applied as the macro theoretical framework in this study to develop the quality management model for community newspapers. According to Van Tonder (2004:37), systems theory offers a macro-level theory "that allows for progressively more complex views of organisation over time, in parallel with the evolution of organisational and managerial thought".

## 2.9 A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO QUALITY

The systems approach first developed in the field of physics. Austrian scientist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, viewed as the father of the General Systems Theory, introduced the theory of the organism as an open system in 1940. Von Bertalanffy stressed the complexity of living systems and the interconnectedness of parts, and suggested that by understanding the nature of a system's parts, one could understand the nature of the object or event itself (Roth, 1992:xx; Hendrickson & Tankard, 1997). A notable contributor to the field is Canadian political scientist David Easton, who is renowned for his application of systems theory to the study of political science (Bang, 1993:3) in the 1960s. Easton's research focused on applying the systems approach to understand how political systems work (cf. Easton, 1957).

Van Tonder (2004:37) argues that the systems theory is a truly macro and universal theory that has withstood the test of time "by continuously allowing for altered views and definitions of organisation to emerge despite erratic changes observed in the empirical reality of organisation over the past century or so. In this sense, systems theory has essentially allowed organisational theorists over time to redefine the organisation and the *organisation-environment relationship* in an increasingly complex manner".

The systems approach to management emerged in the 1950s as a counterpoint to existing practices that focused on selected aspects and functions of an organisation in isolation. It became popular in the 1980s, based on the principle that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts" (Roth, 1992:xxi, 1). In fact, Mintzberg (1989:223) argued that the general systems theory, through the concept of synergy, says  $2 + 2 = 5$ , because "parts of a system may produce more working together than they can apart". Churchman (1968:29) defined a system as "a set of parts coordinated to accomplish a set of goals". Similarly, Fauconnier (1987:100) defined it as "an organised whole which maintains relations with its environment." The systems view sees the organisation as an integrated system comprising related systems (McNamara, 2008; Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:108-109; Morgan, 1989:48) and functioning within systems (Baker & Branch, 2002:2). For example, an organisation functions within the larger system (i.e. "suprasystem" [Van Tonder, 2004:38]) of society (Westcott, 2006:xii) and can thus be seen as a subsystem of society. The classical approach ignored these relationships (Smit & Cronjé, 1999:48). To understand the system, one has to determine what an "organisation does using what inputs, with what

resources to achieve what results” (Glans, Grad, Holstein, Meyers & Schmidt, 1968:12). According to Churchman (1968:30), a system is closely linked to goals and objectives and thus needs to be managed. Management sets goals, generate plans for the system, allocates resources and controls the system’s performance (Churchman, 1968:44). Smit and Cronjé (1999:62) argue that the systems approach can be viewed as a simplified way to package processes. However, the main aim of the systems approach is to model the *ideal* organisational design (Dawson, 1993:10-11; see also Katz & Kahn, 1966).

As mentioned above, according to the theory, systems are hierarchically ordered, and embedded in bigger systems (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21). An organisation (i.e. a system) consists of interdependent and interrelated subsystems/components (Dawson, 1993:10-11; cf. Smit & Cronjé, 1999:47-63; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21; Van Tonder, 2004:37; Praxiom Research Group Limited, 2010) such as:

- Production/technical, which provides the primary function or purpose of the organisation;
- Supportive (i.e. personnel, sales and distribution functions); and
- Adaptive (systems ensuring that an organisation adapts to change, e.g. research function) subsystems.

Glans *et al.* (1968:18) defined a system’s environment as “... everything outside ... that influences the business ... including competitors and competitive products/services, geographical considerations, market status and customer goodwill”. Mintzberg (1989) further deconstructed a system’s environment. He referred to everyone who works in an organisation as the “internal coalition” (1989:98) (i.e. micro-environment). The “external coalition” (Mintzberg, 1989:99) consists of influencers outside but still close to the organisation (i.e. intermediate environment), including suppliers, competitors, partners and publics. Some are passive, such as stockholders, but there could be an active, dominant influencer/group such as an outside owner or interest group. Finally, Mintzberg (1989:108) described the “outside context” of a system, which relates to markets, political climate and economic conditions. Morgan (1989:72) distinguished between an organisation’s “task environment” (i.e. intermediate environment) and contextual environment (i.e. macro-environment) that extends beyond an organisation’s operations (cf. Ingram,<sup>32</sup> 2011). Churchman (1968:36) argued that the environment in part determines how a system performs. The demand for products, for example, lies in the environment and the nature of the demand influences the system’s performance. Dawson (1993:198) distinguished between the external and internal environments. An organisation has more control over the internal environment than the external environment. According to Ingram (2011), the internal environment includes the corporate/organisational culture (see 3.3).

Robbins and Coulter (2005:64) concurs with other authors that the term “external environment” refers to “forces and institutions outside the organisation that potentially can affect the organisation’s performance”. Similar to Mintzberg’s distinction, these scholars argue that the external environment comprises two components, i.e. the specific and general environment. The specific environment includes external forces with a direct and immediate impact on managers’ actions and decisions, and “directly relevant to the achievement of an organisation’s goals” (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:64). The main forces are customers, suppliers, competitors and pressure groups. On the other hand, the general environment

<sup>32</sup> Ingram (2011) distinguishes between the mega- (general) and task (specific) environments. The mega-environment includes broad conditions/trends in society where the organisation functions, and the task environment comprises customers and clients (individuals/organisations purchasing products/services), competitors (other organisations offering or with the potential to offer rival products/services), suppliers of resources needed to conduct operations), labour supply (potentially employable individuals), and government agencies (providing services and monitoring compliance with laws/regulations at various levels).

includes “the broad economic,<sup>33</sup> political/legal,<sup>34</sup> sociocultural,<sup>35</sup> demographic,<sup>36</sup> technological,<sup>37</sup> and global<sup>38</sup> conditions that *may* affect the organisation” (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:66). Gupta (2009) says an organisation’s external environment includes all entities outside of the organisation’s boundary “that have significant influence on its growth and survival”. He lists related industries, laws and regulations, technologies, demographics, raw materials and skilled workers as possible influences. According to McNamara (2008), “The external environment includes a wide variety of needs and influences that can affect the organisation, but which the organisation cannot directly control. Influences can be political, economic, ecological, societal and technological in nature.”

Dawson (1993:198) argues that the various elements of an organisation’s environments affect one another (cf. Glans *et al.*, 1968:18). McNamara (2008) adds to this view that a highly effective organisation (as an open system) regularly exchanges feedback with its external environment. These organisations also try to understand their environments through methods such as market research and evaluations. Apart from economic, political, societal and technological influences, the specific demographic community a community newspaper serves, which includes both readers and advertisers, has a profound effect on the newspaper as organisation (see 2.9.1). It is therefore important that managers do not just recognise the importance of the various environmental components, but also understand how they could affect the organisation (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:69).

Two types of systems are identified in the literature, namely a closed system and an open system. According to Abel (1999), systems have boundaries that separate them from their environments. A closed system has very little interaction with its external environments, for example a machine (Hillmer & Karney (2001:374). Hillmer and Karney quote Morgan (1986) who stated that many common management practices are consistent with the definition of a closed system (the machine metaphor). On the contrary, the boundaries in open systems are permeable and difficult to delineate (Abel, 1999). Open systems therefore interact with their external environments (Robbins & Coulter 2005:35), often resulting in change. In fact, the system’s performance cannot be separated from its environments (cf. Glans *et al.*, 1968:65). This view of an organisation has become common in recent years (cf. Robbins & Coulter, 2005:34), with scholars using metaphors such as a living being, social group or ecological community to describe an organisation. An open system can avoid decline because it is receptive to resources and sustenance from its environments. On the other hand, closed systems can deteriorate quickly (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:22). Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978, cited in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21) defined organisations as “open social systems that would be characterised by a set of processes”. The three most basic processes mentioned are input (acquiring resources from the environment, e.g. finances, physical facilities, raw materials and people), throughput (using the input by transforming and refining it) and output (the end result which is exported to the environment).

Open systems are not without constraints. The fact that a system is always imbedded in a larger system can be a constraint in itself, for example, when the larger system controls the finances (Churchman, 1968:75) and/or sets constrictive policies regarding employment. This could tie the hands of managers of

<sup>33</sup> The systems of producing, distributing and consuming wealth (Ingram, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> The legal/governmental systems within which an organization must function (Ingram, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, behaviours (Ingram, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Associated demographic trends characteristic to the given geographic area (Ingram, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> The current state of knowledge regarding the production of products/services (Ingram, 2011).

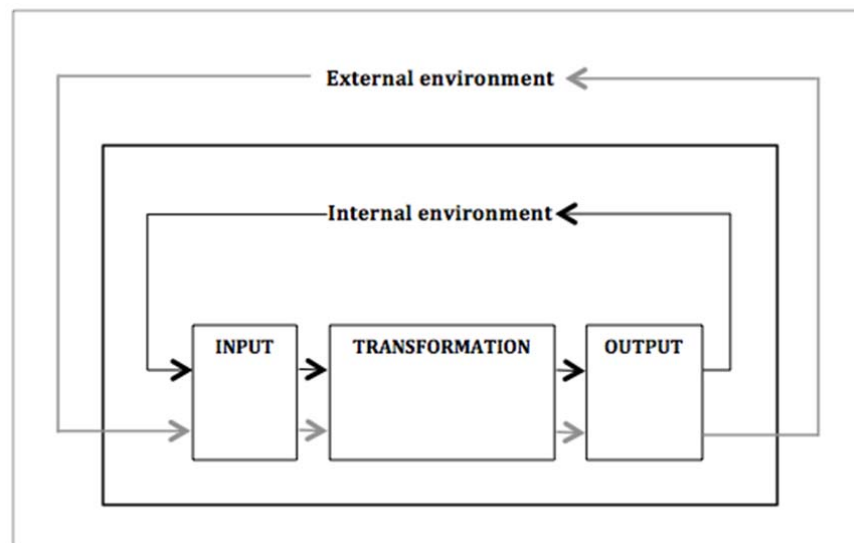
<sup>38</sup> I.e. international: the developments in countries outside the home country with potential to influence the organisation (Ingram, 2011).

chain-owned<sup>39</sup> community newspapers, for example, by preventing adequate staffing levels due to budget constraints.

Thus, an organisation is an open system that gets inputs from the environment, processes these in the form of products/services (transformation/throughput process),<sup>40</sup> tries to understand them through market research, and supplies them as outputs to the environment (Fauconnier, 1987:100; Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:58-59; McNamara, 2008). The transformation process involves employee work activities, management activities and technology and operations methods (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:35). Inputs can be materials, information and services relating to outputs of products, information and services using resources such as money, personnel, facilities, inventories and information (Glans *et al.*, 1968:13). These authors argued that the system's inputs are closely linked to an organisation's operations (i.e. functional areas). In the newspaper environment, this can be illustrated as follows: journalists, who form part of the editorial function, receive input from sources (the external environment) in the form of information. Through the process of writing (transformation), they turn the information into news, which is the output their audience receives (cf. Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:22) through the activities of the circulation/distribution function. Glans *et al.* (1968:18) distinguished between *logically required*, e.g. raw materials to produce a product, and *imposed* inputs that are mandated by management, e.g. policies.

Furthermore, an organisation is highly dependent on the environment for sustenance and survival. "[Organisations] rely on their environments for essential inputs and as sources to absorb their outputs." (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:35.) According to these authors, "No organisation can survive for long if it ignores government regulations, supplier relations, or the varied external constituencies upon which it depends." In the case of a community newspaper, trying to understand its environment could relate to audience research to determine their content (output) preferences and expectations. Feedback from the external environment (i.e. readers) can contribute to effective changes to address these preferences.

The interrelatedness explained above can be illustrated as follows (fig. 2):



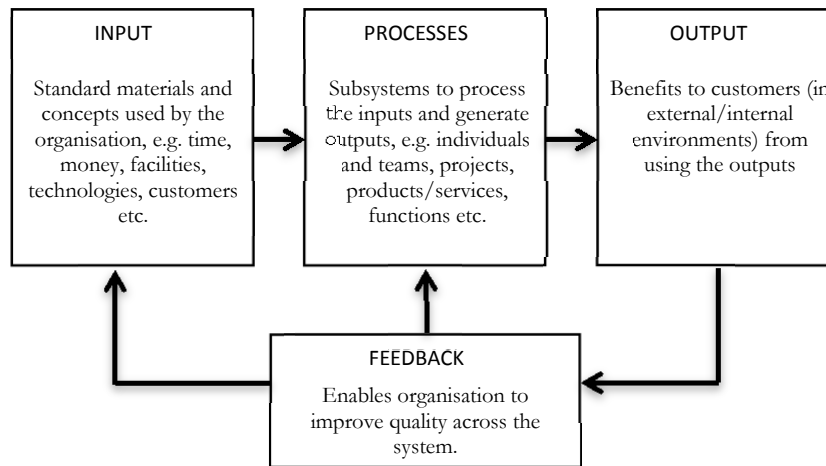
**Figure 2: A system is highly dependent on its environments**

<sup>39</sup> In respect of small newspapers, Mogel (2000:35) referred to the "cluster concept".

<sup>40</sup> The transformation process entails all the activities transforming inputs from the environment(s) into products/services (i.e. outputs) to the environment(s) (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:37).



Following the above explanation, the systems model can be illustrated as follows (figure 3, adapted from McNamara, 2008):



**Figure 3: The system approach: a simple way to package processes.**

Because a community newspaper organisation produces a product that is in fact both product and service, it is a complex system. By breaking quality down into smaller components (i.e. elements and processes), the complexity of the different subsystems is also reduced and therefore easier to manage. Furthermore, the interdependent and interrelated role community newspapers play in society makes the systems approach coupled with a process-based approach the appropriate choice as a macro theory in this study.

Table 9 provides a synopsis of a system's environments and what the different contributors include in each:

**Table 9: The organisational system's environments**

Contributor	Internal environment		External environment
	Micro	Intermediate	Macro
Churchman (1968:36, 72, 184)	Employees.	Readers, stockholders, interest groups.	Marketplace.
Morgan (1989:84, 72)	Units, departments, work groups.	Customers, competitors, suppliers, labour unions, shareholders, government agencies.	Cultural, social, political, technological, economic, demographic contexts.
Mintzberg (1989:99, 108)		Suppliers, competitors, partners, publics, e.g. stockholders, outside owner, interest groups.	Markets, political climate, economic conditions..
Flynn <i>et al.</i> (1994:349)	Staffs in different departments, e.g. journalists, advertising representatives and designers.	Readers and advertisers.	
Sylvie & Witherspoon (2002:21-22)	Departments (editorial, advertising, production, circulation/distribution).	Subscribers, readers, advertisers.	

Contributor	Internal environment		External environment
	Micro	Intermediate	Macro
Robbins & Coulter (2005:64, 66)		Customers, suppliers, competitors, pressure groups.	Broad economic, political/legal, sociocultural, demographic, technological, global conditions.
McNamara (2008)		Readers, advertisers.	Political, economic, ecological, societal, technological.
Xiaoge (2009:360)			Social, economic, cultural, political context.
Gupta (2009)		Related industries, raw materials, and skilled workers.	Laws and regulations, technologies, demographics.

### 2.9.1 The community newspaper as a system

Xiaoge (2009:360), who focuses on development journalism, said: “Systems theory demonstrated the relationship between interrelated and interdependent subsystems, i.e. between journalism and its social, economic, cultural and political environments.” Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:15) argue that newspapers are “pyramidal, hierarchical systems with different functional units, vertical (mostly downward) communication, and management that is predominantly task-focused than employee-centred.” These authors summarise the characteristics of a system and applied it to newspapers as follows (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21-22):

- Systems consist of components, and are hierarchically ordered, which means they are embedded in larger systems and made up of subsystems. For example, newsroom staffs are subsystems embedded in newspaper organisations, which may be embedded in a chain of papers in a large organisation.
- The components within a system are interdependent. In a newspaper organisation, the components are the different departments, e.g. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution. As such, the different departments work together to keep the system working. This involves different tasks, such as selling advertising to pay for news space, writing content to keep subscribers and readers interested, and showing the circulation figures to advertisers to keep them interested. Robbins and Coulter (2005:35) emphasise that coordination and cooperation within the organisation/system is essential for optimal performance: “Decisions and actions taken in one organisational area will affect others and vice versa.”
- Interaction/communication cannot be kept out of a system. Reporters, editors, readers (i.e. internal and external stakeholders) bring information into newspapers. They talk about the products to people outside the system. Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:16) state that newspapers as organisations “reflect the importance of communication as the critical process that coordinates the work of people to create a product”.
- Systems depend on feedback for maintenance/growth. Change can only take place if a system receives feedback. A newspaper can, for example, change the news content according to reader preferences if it heeds the feedback from readers about what they expect. This feedback comes in different forms, e.g. telephone calls to reporters or letters to the editor. Furthermore, if a system is open to its environments, it can avoid decline. New reporters are for example necessary to replace those retiring or finding alternative employment. If not, the process of gathering news stops.

- A system is more than the sum of its parts. A newspaper is therefore more than its departments, paper and ink. It also comprises its mission and reputation.
- Organisations as systems receive inputs from their (internal and external) environments, and create outputs through internal processes that are sent back into the environments. For example, newsprint arrives in the production section and becomes newspapers that are circulated in the environments. Reporters gather news, write stories and share those with readers.

### 2.9.2 A Process approach to quality

This study also applies the process approach to quality management, an integral part of systems theory (see chapter 3). This approach is a continuance of the classical school of management's approach which entails dividing the activities of an organisation into functional areas, and the management process into a variety of elements (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:111). The approach provides "a conceptual framework for studying management and encourages the development of a uniform management approach" (Smit & Cronjé, 1999:28). It developed due to a need for guidelines to manage complex organisations (Smit & Cronjé, 1999:40).

According to Cronjé *et al.* (1997:111), the process approach has the following characteristics:

- It aims to develop a uniform approach to management by setting a logical framework for the classification of management knowledge.
- It acknowledges a core management knowledge base, and views the contributions and approaches of all management schools as supplementary to one another.
- Contrary to the classical approach that investigates organisational functions in isolation, the process approach views the management functions (planning, organising, leadership and control) as mutually interdependent. This perspective is influenced by the systems approach.
- The process approach is eclectic in nature, and therefore represents the development of perspectives on management at any given moment.

Following a systems- and process-based approach in quality management holds numerous benefits for organisations in general, notably "improved, consistent and predictable results" as well as "focused and prioritised improvement opportunities" (ISO, 2001). The approach embraces the strengths of the scientific and human relations approaches (Dawson, 1993:10-11).<sup>41</sup> According to Smit and Cronjé (1999:10), a process is "a schematic way of doing things". Processes are depicted as logical sequences of actions.

Against the theoretical background discussed in this section, the next section of this chapter points out why quality and the management thereof is important in an organisation such as a community newspaper.

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<sup>41</sup> A major limitation of the systems approach, however, is the fact that it seeks to define the ideal/general design for an organisation (Dawson, 1993:10-11). This author did state that the contingency approach has, to a large extent, replaced the systems approach, which considers an organisational design to be the product of several interrelated factors. The researcher takes cognisance of the limitations of the systems model, but deems the approach as relevant to the objectives of this study.

## 2.10 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY FOR ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Searching for reasons why the German and Japanese managers were so successful in the American market, U.S. managers found that their German and Japanese counterparts were consumed by the quest for quality (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:110; cf. Jablonski, 1994:11). The pertinent question in this section is thus: Why quality and quality management? There is indeed strong evidence in the literature that quality (and managing quality) has a positive effect on an organisation's performance as a whole (Oakland, 1995:3; Rommel, Kempis & Kaas, 1994; Sharma & Gadenne, 2001:433; Dawson, 1993:242). The following benefits are highlighted:

- (Improved) quality gives an organisation the competitive edge (Oakland, 1995:3, 2005:1054; Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365; Reed, Lemak & Mero, 2000:19 [these authors specifically argue that *TQM* is linked to a *sustainable* competitive advantage]; Anderson, Rungtusanatham & Schroeder, 1994:472).
- Quality makes an organisation more profitable/increases market share (Jablonski, 1994:27; Oakland, 1995:3; Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365).
- Striving for quality within a customer-based approach enables all people to communicate with one another in pursuit of common goal (i.e. improved quality) (Oakland, 1995:3).
- Total quality management improves employee relations, and relates to higher productivity (Jablonski, 1994:27).
- Quality is tied to greater customer satisfaction and retention/loyalty (Jablonski, 1994:27; Schneider & White, 2004:20).
- Quality adds value to a product or service (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:365).

Improved performance could lead to organisational excellence, which is defined as "... an overall way of working that balances stakeholder interests and increases the likelihood of sustainable competitive advantage and hence long-term organisational success through operational, customer-related, financial, and marketplace performance excellence." (Edgeman, Dahlgaard, Dahlgaard and Scherer, 1999, cited in Edgeman & Jonker, 2000:29) However, the definition of an excellent organisation differs depending on whom you ask, according to Farrar (2004:24) (see table 12 in 2.10.1).

Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman's excellence movement of the early 1980s emphasises a set of basic characteristics an organisation has to aspire to in order to be excellent. These characteristics are punctuality, continuous contact with the client, promotion of entrepreneurship, motivation, concern about the business of which the organisation has the necessary expertise, and a simple, lean structure (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:110). Organisational performance standards and characteristics of excellent organisations described by these authors and elsewhere in the literature (cf. Senge, 1994:123; cf. Edgeman & Jonker, 2000) overlap with many of the quality factors and actions described in this chapter, for example product/service reliability, process management, the development of employees and responsibility. Foley (2001:155) said that excellence is the business aim and therefore also the purpose of quality management. He concludes that organisational excellence is merely another name for quality management.

In their study on the general effect quality programmes have on corporate performance (specifically in the automotive industry in Europe and Japan), Rommel *et al.* (1994:52) created four phases of quality management (table 10):

**Table 10: Four phases of management**

Phase I	Inspection	An inspection department is responsible for product control, mainly at the end of the process.
Phase II	Assurance	The production department strives for better understanding of – and control over – the production process, using tools such as statistical process control. These companies have begun to orientate themselves towards zero defects.
Phase III	Prevention	Trying to “design to zero defects,” Phase III companies encourage intense cross-functional cooperation, especially between research and development and the production department. Accordingly, they use cross-company problem-solving training. They also use preventative quality tools.
Phase IV	Perfection	Phase IV companies strive constantly for perfection, and their quality programs “cross internal and external borders.” Internally, they are characterised by reliance on cross-functional teams, far-reaching delegation of decision responsibility, and an internal customer/supplier principle. They focus sharply on customers during the design phase, translating customer wishes into products, services and processes <i>before</i> production. Externally, they have lasting and mutually trusting relationships with their suppliers.

Rommel *et al.* (1994:54) concluded that the higher in this hierarchy an organisation functions, the better its overall performance will be. They argued that the above distinction is important, because to just have a quality programme is not enough: “What matters is *which* output-oriented goals a company pursues.” Cronjé *et al.* (1997:37-38) stated that each division within an organisation has its own goals, which should all contribute towards achieving the organisational goals and objectives.<sup>42</sup> Managers manage the different functions separately as well as collectively to enable the organisation as an independent institution to achieve this. Businesses generally have between one and 18 goals (Shetty, 1979, quoted by Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:39). The most important goals generally are profit, growth, market share, social responsibility, welfare of employees, quality of products, and service to customers. The fact that quality issues are among the most important goals, yet again illustrates the salience of quality and quality management within an organisational setting.

According to Oakland (2005:1054), “Any organisation basically competes on its reputation for quality, reliability, price and delivery, and most people now recognise that quality is the key to achieving sustained competitive advantage.” Modern-day organisations are continually exposed to internal and external change, e.g. changing environments, changing wants and needs of customers and staff, as well as economic and technological changes. These changes place new demands on how organisations view issues such as success, competition and goals (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:57). Given these changes, quality management programs are thus important to improve overall organisational effectiveness (Sharma & Gadenne, 2001:433).

Korelnikov (n.d.) argues that improving quality is intrinsic to “running a business the smart way”. However, although quality is a requirement for organisational success, it is no guarantee of success. This author states that quality is a prerequisite, not a differentiator in the world of marketing, because consumers expect quality. In summary, an organisation cannot successfully reach its organisational goals and objectives if quality is not an integral part of its activities.

<sup>42</sup> Lewis (1996) defined goals as broad, general intentions that are intangible and abstract as opposed to objectives, which are narrow, precise, tangible and concrete. Goals cannot be validated, but objectives can. Goals are broad statements of what will be achieved, whereas objectives are specific, measurable outcomes, linked to a specific timeframe.

### 2.10.1 Quality management models within an organisational context

A variety of models for managing quality within an organisation are discussed in the literature. In this section, models that could be relevant to a quality management model for community newspapers are explored, namely Six Sigma, the ISO management principles, core competence, Servqual and the European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) model.

Motorola pioneered the **Six Sigma** theory in 1982. It consists of quality tools and philosophies aimed at ensuring rigorous and repeatable quality improvement (Foster, 2004:401, cited by Maguad, 2006:196). Although this theory is considered a business strategy rather than a programme specifically aimed at quality improvement, it is important in this study because of its overall objective. This is “to design products, processes, or services that consistently meet customer expectations” (Maguad, 2006:197). In the Six Sigma approach, which also links quality to organisational goals, quality means almost perfect (only 3.4 defects in a million) (Quinn, n.d.).

The international standard for quality management is ISO 9001. Since 1987, more than 600 000 companies around the world have decided to be certified in compliance with the requirements of the **ISO 9000 series**. This series comprise of quality management and assurance standards/guidelines published by the International Organisation for Standardisation (hence the reference to ISO). The main aim of these standards is to ensure consistent industrial quality standards worldwide (Beatty, 2006:141-142). According to the ISO web site ([www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)), most of the ISO standards are specific to a particular product, material or process. However, ISO 9001, which specifically pertains to quality, is a generic set of standards which can be applied to “any organisation, large or small, whatever its product or service, in any sector of activity, and whether it is a business enterprise, a public administration, or a government department. ISO 9001 contains a generic set of requirements for implementing a quality management system<sup>43</sup> ...” This means the ISO 9001 standards can also be applied to a newspaper organisation to meet a key objective, which is to keep the customer satisfied.

The eight management principles in the ISO 9001 are (ISO, 2010):

- **Customer focus:** researching, understanding and meeting/exceeding the needs and expectations of the customer, and including a customer focus in the organisation’s objectives.
- **Leadership:** creating/maintaining an internal environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving the organisation’s objectives.
- **Involvement of people** at all levels within the organisation with the aim of using their abilities to the organisation’s benefit.
- **Process approach:** managing activities/related resources as a process helps ensure that desired results are reached more efficiently.
- **Systems approach to management:** an organisation reaches its objectives in a more efficient and effective way if interrelated processes are identified, understood and managed as a system.
- **Continual improvement** of overall performance should be a permanent objective.
- **Factual approach to decision making:** effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information.

<sup>43</sup> The term “management system” refers to “what the organisation does to manage its processes, or activities, so that its products or services meet the objectives it has set itself.” These are satisfying the customer’s quality requirements, complying with regulations, and/or meeting environmental objectives (ISO, 2010). Management system standards provide an organisation with a model to set up and operate a management system. The operating principle is the PDCA/PDSA cycle (see 2.7.4).

- **Mutually beneficial supplier relationships:** because an organisation and its suppliers are interdependent, a mutually beneficial relationship will enhance the abilities of both to create value.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) developed a method (“22-item instrument” [Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988:12]) service organisations can use to improve the quality of their service (Fedoroff, 2008). The method (or model of service quality [Schneider & White, 2004:31], called **Servqual**, involves that organisations develop an understanding of how customers perceive quality in service. According to the authors, measuring customer perceptions of quality is “an appropriate approach” (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988:13). Their approach to defining and measuring service quality continues to be relevant (Schneider & White, 2004:29).

The items used in the Servqual scale were derived from the 10 criteria consumers use to judge service quality, and are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding/knowing the customer (empathy), and access (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985 as cited by Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988:17). Of these, reliability is the most important and tangibles of the least concern to the customer (Fedoroff, 2008). The criteria are described as follows (table 11):

**Table 11: Service quality criteria**

<b>Tangibles</b>	Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
<b>Reliability</b>	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
<b>Competence</b>	Possession of required skill and knowledge to perform service.
<b>Courtesy</b>	Politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel.
<b>Credibility</b>	Trustworthiness, believability, honesty of the service provider.
<b>Security</b>	Freedom from danger, risk or doubt.
<b>Access</b>	Approachability and ease of contact.
<b>Communication</b>	Organisation listens to its customers and acknowledges their comments. Keeps customers informed.
<b>Understanding the customer</b>	Making the effort to know customers and their needs.

Except for courtesy and security, all the criteria described correlate with the quality dimensions applicable in a community newspaper environment (see table 5.)

C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel (1990) were responsible for the development of the concept of **core competence**, which can be defined as “the skills and abilities by which resources are deployed through an organisation’s activities and processes such as to achieve competitive advantage in ways that others cannot imitate or obtain” (Strategy Explorers, 2008; cf. Businessdictionary.com, 2009). These competences (i.e. distinctive/unique/core capabilities) are closely linked to an organisation’s performance and subsequently, competitive advantage. According to 12Manage (2008e), the Core Competence Model is a corporate strategy model. According to this model, “competitiveness derives from an ability to build a core competence, at lower cost and more speedily than competitors”. Furthermore, a core competence can be any combination of “specific, inherent, integrated and applied knowledge, skills and attitudes”. It is similar to the Kaizen concept – built through a process of continuous improvement/enhancement (12Manage, 2008a).

Prahalad and Hamel (1990:5) said that, “If core competence is about harmonizing streams of technology, it is also about the organisation of work and the delivery of value.” They describe core competence as

follows: “Core competence is communication, involvement, and a deep commitment to working a cross organisational boundaries. It involves many levels of people and all functions.” A core competence meets the following conditions: it provides consumer benefits, it is not easy for competitors to imitate, and it can be leveraged widely to many products and markets. “A core competency can take various forms, including technical/subject matter know how, a reliable process, and/or close relationships with customers and suppliers.” (Mascarenhas *et al.*, 1998, cited in Wikipedia, 2009) Examples of core competencies in newspapers are expertise in writing, or layout and design.

The **European Foundation Quality Management Model (EFQM)** is a non-prescriptive TQM framework based on nine criteria (12Manage, 1999). The model recognises that there are a variety of approaches to achieving *sustainable* excellence (Value Based Management.net, 2008). Of the nine, five criteria are related to what an organisation does (“enablers”), and four to the organisation’s achievements (“results”) (12Manage, 1999). Feedback from the results helps an organisation to improve its performance. In his discussion of the EFQM excellence model, Farrar (2004:24) says that an excellent organisation might be described as follows by the different stakeholder groups (table 12):

**Table 12: Stakeholder views on characteristics of an excellent organisation**

Group of executives	Workforce	Customers	Suppliers	Society
Focused on results.	Good employer with better than average conditions of service.	An organisation, which exceeds expectations.	A company that is good to do business with, which pays its bills on time.	Plays by the rules.
Achieving the bottom line.	Interested in the welfare and development of its people.	An organisation, which aims not merely to satisfy but to delight.		Does not exploit its workforce or environment.
Staying the course.	Sets a clear direction.	Delivers an excellent product or service.		Puts something back into the community.
Maximising shareholder value.	Communicates to engage and involve staff.	Continually looks for ways of improving product/service.		Has a sense of moral purpose.

Farrar’s findings suggest that organisations – in this case community newspapers, should be aware of the differences in perceptions of quality, and take care to include all relevant perspectives when defining the concept and establishing criteria for quality management.

### 2.10.2 Quality management in the media

Media management research became an area of interest in the 20th century as media conglomerates began to form first in the newspaper industry, and later in radio, motion pictures and television (Albarran, 2006:3). However, issues of quality – in particular accuracy, are no modern media malady. Quality is a concern due to the role of the media as disseminator of information (cf. Picard, 2004:60). In 1936, Mitchell Charnley of the University of Minnesota started a trend in mass communication research when he reported the first accuracy survey of news sources in *Journalism Quarterly* (Maier, 2002:11). Charnley found that approximately 50% of reports in three American newspapers contained numerous inaccuracies.



The credibility of the media in general, public trust and the reliability of news sources are serious current concerns, especially due to the blossoming of citizen journalism via the Internet (Certimedia.org, 2008). Furthermore, newspapers in particular are under tremendous economical, moral, political and commercial pressure among dramatic changes in technology and increased competition. Picard (2004) argues that despite these problems, "... newspaper and journalistic quality are recognised as central elements in achieving the social, political and cultural goals asserted for journalism in democratic societies." Omar (2002) concurs and argues that quality in journalism is fundamental in every developing country. Maintaining quality on all levels could thus enable community newspapers to fulfil their role in society (see 1.2).

According to Picard (2004:61), newspaper quality (and this includes the quality of community newspapers) involves the content and methods of journalism and information: providing coverage, information and analysis that enhance understanding, as evidenced in the expertise of staff members.

Quality also involves the operational activities associated with the newspaper, such as consistent availability of the publication at newsstands and few delivery errors, the technical effectiveness of the organisation, printing excellence, ease of use of the paper, accuracy in billing, and quick problem resolution. According to Picard (2004:62), "These types of issues of quality management have dominated newspaper industry discussions of quality in the past couple of decades, but there is a growing concern among many in the industry that the issues of content quality are now the more important issues upon which to focus." (Picard refers to mainstream newspapers, but his arguments are also relevant in a community newspaper context.)

Managing quality in the media (in general) has several benefits (Modoux, 2010:2). Because community newspapers are subject to the same professional standards as the media in general, these benefits are relevant for this sector:

- Improving the quality of the organisation will improve the quality of the media content.
- Building a basic quality management system will ensure continuous improvement of the organisation.
- Increased audience/readership.
- Attract new advertisers and sponsors.
- Motivate staff.
- Target a quality label.

In the next section, community newspapers as organisations are explored.

### **2.10.3 Community newspapers as organisations**

The penny press developed in the USA in the 1830s and newspapers as organisations changed dramatically when copies were sold on streets to a population that became increasingly urban (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:17) rather than relying on revenue from subscribers and party contributions (Stovall, 2005:380; Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2004:267). The penny press was aimed at the common person's interests in issues such as sports, local news, crime and human interest (Harrower, 2010:10; Campbell *et al.*, 2004:269). In fact, these papers "intensified the focus on local communities" (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:142). Newspaper proprietors began hiring reporters and as commerce increased, the use of newspapers as advertising avenues developed. Advertising became important not just as a means to finance the newsgathering (and production) process, but also as "a channel of information about goods and services in growing local and regional economies" (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:18; cf. Underwood,

1993:42). As newspaper organisations grew, the need for other components to manage advertising, circulation and sales developed (Ward, 1997:265, cited by Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:18). Competition for readership led to the development of editorial sections such as sports. Newspaper organisations with multiple functional units developed due to the growth in urban areas and these organisations soon began to resemble other organisations manufacturing and advertising products (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:18). Although the basic process of putting together a newspaper has not changed much over the last century or two,<sup>44</sup> newspapers as organisations have changed. Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:13) state that newspaper entities have evolved into systems and networks, and argue that this makes them unique knowledge organisations (2002:21).

Newspapers as pre-modern organisations began with a person and a printing press (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:17). These authors (2002:15-16) liken newspapers today to modern organisations. They argue that an organisation is not a place, but a social construct because it is created through relationships. In any newspaper organisation, communication is the process through which news is gathered, information is developed into stories, stories are edited, citizens are contacted and enrolled as subscribers, photographs are selected and arranged on a page, internal functions such as accounting and financing are coordinated, and stakeholder opinions (internal and external) are sought and used. Thus, a newspaper is an interaction-intensive organisation with communication the intended purpose of its products. “As the organisational components communicate, new information continually flows into the organisation from its environment.” (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21.) This occurs through letters to the editor, comments to reporters about stories, and how advertisers assess the placement and/or success of their advertisements. Moreover, interaction also takes place in a new media environment when readers comment online on stories, and/or share them through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. This adds a new dimension to information flow from the environment to the organisation.

As organisations, community newspapers have goals and objectives (Shetty, 1979, cited in Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:39) and focusing on quality should help them achieve these. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:5), the essence and purpose of journalism is “to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (cf. ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:24). These authors add that quality journalism helps society define a community, and identify its goals, heroes and villains. Journalism (i.e. community newspapers) serves as a watchdog that “push(es) people beyond complacency and offer(s) voice to the forgotten” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:12). Community newspaper organisations should thus aspire towards excellence, making quality management a salient issue.

Newspapers as modern organisations developed chains (media conglomerates), which currently dominate ownership of weeklies, also in South Africa. In the USA, these chains started small newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s, especially in towns where only one newspaper existed (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:18-19, citing Vivian, 1995:86). This included family-owned newspapers. As chains started to acquire other forms of media organisations, such as radio and television, the structure became complex (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2004:100). “Most contemporary newspaper organisations, especially the national, regional, and large city dailies, operate as traditional, modern pyramidal organisations.” (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:19.) According to these authors, community newspapers are different. They cater for the needs and interests of specific audiences and their structure and operations are similar to those of pre-modern organisations (cf. Pollard, 1937:21). This makes it easier to adapt to the changing interests of their customers (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:19).

<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note just how much things have stayed the same. Pollard (1937:21) could just as well have been talking about a modern community newspaper when he described the structure of small newspapers in the USA in the 1930s.

Folkerts and Lacy (2004:14) state that media organisations in a market system supply the demand for information and ideas in three markets, namely the consumer (i.e. reader), advertising and marketplace of ideas. In mass communication as a market system, people seek information, “and businesses either sell or give information through communication markets” (2004:15). Businesses buy advertising and thus exchange money for the attention of the public. When people exchange ideas in a political debate, this takes place in the marketplace of ideas, which is a non-commercial market. The authors describe the process as circular: the media organisation (a) evaluates the demand for information and ideas in the three markets, (b) draws on people as sources in the system, and (c) supplies the content to satisfy the demand.

According to Faure (2001:349), “A newspaper is produced by a formal organisation that has the capital, human resources and technology to do so.” A newspaper organisation as a system depends on information from its environment in order to organise and present that (in a fair and honest way [Stovall & Mullins, 2006:14]) to customers (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21). These organisations are typically divided into four functional areas (i.e. departments, or subsystems in the system of a community newspaper), namely editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution (Pollard, 1937:19-20; Fällström, Nordqvist, Hedin & Ionesco, 1997; Scott, 1999:1; Harrower, 2010:25; see also Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21). These four departments have been part of newspapers for at least 150 years (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:153) and can be described as the four main components of a newspaper organisation. The departments work in synergy to produce the product. Stovall (2005:62) and Biagi (2003:83) distinguish two main divisions, namely editorial and business. They describe advertising, circulation and production as business functions, and add that the business side of the newspaper organisation also handles other administrative duties such as financial issues, human resources, maintenance and promotion (cf. Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:111; cf. Faure, 2001:349; cf. Campbell *et al.*, 2004:285-286). Deppa (1982), however, argued that the newsroom (i.e. editorial) is the most important department, because “a newspaper and the efforts of its news-editorial department(s) will be judged by how well it gathers and processes news”. Most South African newspapers are based on the British model, which holds that management and editorial departments are controlled separately (Burger, 2008:123). In small, close-knit community newspaper organisations, this is often not the case. One person often performs several functions. An editor, for example, could be the owner, publisher, and financial and advertising manager, depending on the structure or the organisation (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:23).

The different departments serve the different markets (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:15), but interaction is necessary for the system to work (cf. Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:37-38; cf. Bostrom, 1998:243, 244), for example selling advertising to pay for news space, writing editorials and stories to maintain the interest of readers and subscribers, and showing circulation figures to advertisers so they will continue to place advertisements to sell their products (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21). Newsrooms, for example, depend on other functional areas in the newspaper system for their survival (Harrower, 2010:25). In this regard, the traditional divide between the editorial and advertising sections is narrowing globally and, in some cases disappearing completely. Greenslade (2010) quotes Marc Reeves, former editor of the British newspaper the *Birmingham Post*, who said at the WAN-IFRA conference in Hamburg, Germany in 2010: “That artificial divide we created when we put the noisy people in a room marked ‘advertising’ and the studious types in another labelled ‘editorial’ was the biggest mistake newspapers and other media ever made. It allowed journalists to insulate themselves from the business they were in to the point of revelling in their detachment.”

Hadland, Cowling and Tabe (2007:2-3) argue that dividing the editorial and advertising functions has traditionally been seen as protecting the integrity of a newspaper (cf. Pennington, 2010). These authors mention concerns raised in South African media circles about whether this integrity is under threat, and

refer to media experts (e.g. Harber, 2004) who argue that the strict separation of the two functions are no longer appropriate in the new business climate (Hadland *et al.*, 2007:5). Still, until a viable new business model has been developed, newspapers in general rely heavily on advertising revenue to survive. This dependence on the business side of the organisation has certainly contributed to the animosity between business and editorial. Nevertheless, close cooperation between the editorial and business side of a newspaper does not necessarily (and should not) imply compromised journalistic integrity, but greater cooperation could foster understanding. Such understanding could eliminate conflict and, in turn, contribute to better cooperation towards reaching the organisation's goals and objectives. After all, the functional areas in a community newspaper system are interdependent. In support of this argument, Flanagan and Finger (1998:310, quoted by De Coning, 2009:3-4) said, "TQM, which is a business philosophy, is based on the belief that continuous improvement will occur through dedication and a sharing of constancy of purpose by everyone in the organisation."

A newspaper system can avoid deterioration by drawing on the external environment for resources and sustenance. Reporters who leave or retire have to be replaced for the news cycle to continue. Similarly, advertisers who migrate to other media have to be replaced lest the newspaper becomes too small and does not generate enough income to be sustained (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:22-23). For the system to continue functioning, it has to be able to cope with the complexities of the environment. For example, as the community becomes more diverse, the newspaper organisation has to adapt and develop by employing diverse reporters, or it could add new news beats (i.e. journalism topics) as customer interests change (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:23; cf. Itule & Anderson, 2007:19).

Cobb (2003:11) rightly argues (from an integrated, holistic approach) that a systems approach gives an organisation the opportunity to integrate several approaches to quality as well as the relevant best practices. The key to systems thinking, according to Cobb (2003:10-11) is that it "... requires an understanding of how the business operates (or should operate) as a system and then [uses] whatever standards and best practices are appropriate ...". Organisations that do not follow a systems approach tend to follow whatever approach is "in fashion" at a particular moment, mimicking others mechanically without fully understanding the meaning of that approach their particular business. Whichever approach is followed, becomes the norm. This could be the reason for the myriad approaches and the extent of overlap between them, as explained above. Using a systems approach allows one to concentrate on the organisation in question and its processes. This means that quality standards are used as "a checklist of best practices to validate the design" rather than on using best practices/quality standards to define the design of the management system (Cobb, 2003:63). In addition, it allows an organisation to draw on the best from several approaches (cf. Cobb, 2003:11-12).

A community newspaper organisation can thus also be described as a complex set of interdependent subsystems. It receives resources and information and processes these in a variety of ways, returning a dual, complementary product of (intangible) content and (tangible) distribution (Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173; material and immaterial components which are inseparable, according to Reca, 2006:182) to individuals and systems in its environment. The purpose of a newspaper organisation's products is communication through, among other activities, gathering news, developing it into stories, editing these stories, and enrolling community members as subscribers (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:16-17). To ensure quality of the newspaper product, quality has to be managed within and across all the functional areas (Flynn *et al.*, 1994:339; Rao, *et al.*, 1996:7). This can best be done following a systems- and process-based approach.

**In summary:** Churchman (1968:30) argued that a system is closely linked to goals and objectives, and, according to Glans *et al.* (1968:12), one has to know what an “organisation does using what inputs, with what resources to achieve what results” in order to understand a system. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:5) say the purpose of journalism is “to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (cf. ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:24), and that quality journalism helps society define a community. The main sections of a community newspaper as an organisation are the principal functional areas of editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution, supported by the administration/finance function (Pollard, 1937; Scott, 1999; Faure, 2001:349; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002; Biagi, 2003; Folkerts & Lacy, 2004; Stovall, 2005; and Harrower, 2010 – among others – support this view [see 2.9.3]). Roche (1996:22) rightly argued that quality journalism requires the integration of all these functions of a newspaper business (Flynn *et al.*, 1994:339 and Rao, *et al.*, 1996:7 support this view). A newspaper is therefore an interaction-intensive organisation with communication the intended purpose of its products. Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978, cited in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21 and supported by Fauconnier, 1987:100, Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:58-50, Robbins & Coulter, 2005:34-35 and McNamara, 2008) identified *input* (acquiring resources from the environment), *throughput* (or processes – using the input by transforming and refining it through the different components of the system) and *output* (the end result which is exported to the environment) as the three most basic processes. The following inputs identified in the literature are relevant to community newspaper organisations (table 13):

**Table 13: System inputs**

<b>Input</b>	<b>Contributor</b>
Capital	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), Fink (1988:11), Evans (1990:222), Cronjé <i>et al.</i> (1999:36), Faure (2001:349), Katz & Kahn (1966, 1978 in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21), Robbins & Coulter (2005:35).
Physical facilities	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), Katz & Kahn (1966, 1978 in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21), Williams (1978:93).
Materials	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), Schein (1980, in Van Tonder, 2004:37), Evans (1990:222), Cronjé <i>et al.</i> (1999:36), DTI (2001c), Sylvie & Witherspoon (2002:22), Katz & Kahn (1966, 1978 in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21), Robbins & Coulter (2005:35).
Human resources (people)	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), Williams (1978:26), Schein (1980, in Van Tonder, 2004:37), Fink (1988:11), Evans (1990:222), Cronjé <i>et al.</i> (1999:36), Faure (2001:349), DTI (2001c), Katz & Kahn (1966, 1978 in Sashkin & Morris, 1984:21), Robbins & Coulter (2005:35).
Knowledge, skills and training	Cronjé <i>et al.</i> (1999:36), DTI (2001c).
Information	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), Schein (1980, in Van Tonder, 2004:37), Cronjé <i>et al.</i> (1999:36), Faure (2001:354), DTI (2001c), Sylvie & Witherspoon (2002:22), Robbins & Coulter (2005:35).
Organisational policies and procedures	Glans <i>et al.</i> (1968:13), DTI (2001c).
Equipment and technology	Williams (1978:46, 64), Fink (1988:11), DTI (2001c), Faure (2001:349, 360, 362), Robbins & Coulter (2005:35), Harrower (2010:25).

As stated above, throughput/processes are linked to the functional areas of a community newspaper. Therefore, the processes that will be included in the model are organisational (as the supportive function, including finances and administration), editorial, advertising and production. The output of a community newspaper organisation is the final printed product, which is distributed to readers through the circulation/distribution process.

The input-process-output approach is illustrated in figure 4:

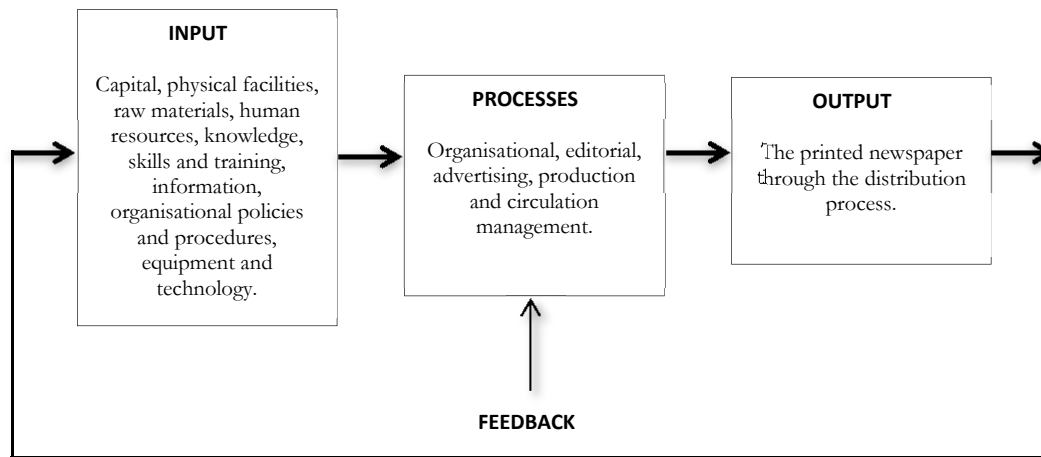


Figure 4: The input-process-output approach

## 2.11 TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY MANAGEMENT MODEL

Against the above background, and following a deductive approach in this exploratory study, the researcher aimed to first create a macro- quality management model through the analysis of existing quality management models and the identification of variables that could be applied to quality management in a community newspaper context. The frameworks outlined above allowed the extraction of several variables that could be applicable to a quality management model for community newspapers.

An organisational focus includes both “soft” and “hard” factors (see 3.2), i.e. intangibles (the social/cultural dimension of an organisation), and tangibles (the technical environment) (cf. Abel, 1999). In a community newspaper environment, it is often difficult to separate the two within a process approach. For example, ethics – an intangible, is critical in every editorial process and should not be treated as an isolated topic (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:232). The variables that have been extracted from the theory are grouped and summarised in table 14. For clarity purposes, tangible (“hard”) and intangible (“soft”) factors are separated:

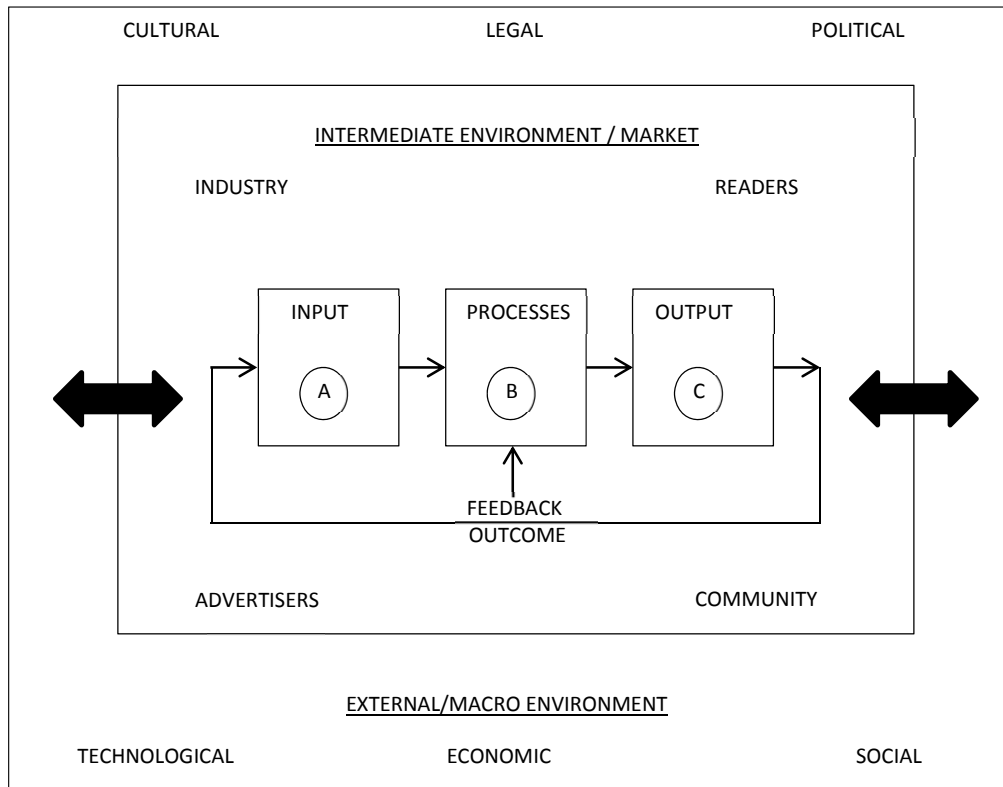
Table 14: Quality variables

Tangible facts	
Variable	Description
<b>Planning</b> (Protagonists: Shewhart, Juran, Crosby, Deming; Rankin, 1986, 33; Dale & Cooper, 1992:20-22; Crosby, 1995:59-86; Cronjé <i>et al.</i> , 1997:111; Berry, 1998:105; Albarran, 2006:10; Tague, 2004; De Coning, 2009:3; see also DTI, 2001a:2)	Planning is a “systematic process that translates quality policy into measurable objectives and requirements, and lays down a sequence of steps for realizing them within a specified timeframe” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2010). Planning includes developing and deploying policies and strategies, setting up appropriate partnerships and resources; and designing in quality (Oakland, 2005:1059). It involves assessing the current situation as well as past efforts, and requires consultation/cooperation with other departments. Planning for quality would include recruiting and hiring well-trained employees, e.g. journalists with appropriate qualifications and skills to deliver produce quality news reports. It also requires target audience research to determine preferences (Modoux, 2010:10).
<b>Manage quality pro-actively, following a systems- and process-based approach</b> (McQuail, 1992:10-11; Crosby, 1995:66-73; DTI, 2001a:4, 5; ISO, 2001; Ishikawa (1985:19 in De Coning, 2009:22; see also Cobb, 2003:xii, 4-6)	Organisations should strive to eliminate mass inspection by building quality into product design. They should thus determine where the current/potential quality problems lay. The quality chain reaction is relevant. For example, good journalism is futile if the newspaper does not reach the audience. However, if the newspaper reaches the audience but its content is sub-standard, readers will lose interest. An organisation reaches its objectives in a more efficient and effective way if interrelated processes are identified, understood and managed as a system (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21-22).
<b>Continuous quality improvement</b> (Protagonists: Deming, Feigenbaum, Juran, Crosby; Deming, 1986:23-24; Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 1989:3; Berry <i>et al.</i> , 1990; Anderson <i>et al.</i> , 1994:473; King, 1987, 1994:25; Flynn <i>et al.</i> , 1994:339; Powell, 1995:29; as a key factor of TQM: Boaden, 1997:165; Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 2005:25; Robbins & Coulter, 2005:43; Soltani <i>et al.</i> , 2005:1010; Dean & Bowen, 1994, in Yeung <i>et al.</i> , 2006:157; Herbert, 2008:52; De Coning, 2009:3-4; see also Garvin, 1988:36)	Organisations should aim to constantly improve their production and service systems and levels of quality and productivity, while decreasing costs, e.g. through modern quality technology such as up-to-date computer equipment for news writing, editing and design. It also implies that managers and staff alike take corrective actions where necessary. In the newspaper context, these steps refer to aspects such as sound news judgment; reliable, trustworthy information; and maintaining diverse information content.

Intangible factors	
Variable	Description
<b>A culture of quality with the emphasis on organisation-wide commitment as well as responsibility for quality</b> (Garvin, 1988:26; Boaden, 1997:165; Cronjé <i>et al.</i> , 1997:365; Aucion, 1999:[13]70; see also Japanese and American protagonists – 2.4.1, 2.8; Maguad, 2006:189)	Create consistency of purpose towards improving the product and/or service, focusing on becoming and remaining competitive. A philosophy of quality is necessary to build awareness of the need and opportunity for improvement. To this end, a quality policy with clear goals and objectives is essential so every employee knows what is expected of him/her (Sohn <i>et al.</i> , 1999:250.) In a community newspaper environment, this includes adhering to institutional and professional codes of conduct. Staff members should be encouraged and supported to integrate quality awareness. Improvements should be noted, progress reported and results communicated to motivate staff and maintain quality momentum. Responsibility for quality should be individual as well as collective, and facilitated by clear quality guidelines.
<b>Sound leadership and cooperation through effective communication</b> (Quality management protagonists Deming, Juran, Peters and Feigenbaum; Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985 in Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1988:17; Prahalad & Hamel; 1990:5; Dale & Cooper, 1992:20-22; King, 1987 in Schonberger & Knod, 1994:25; Powell, 1995:19; Cronjé <i>et al.</i> , 1997:97;DTI, 2001a:5, 6; DTI, 2001c:1; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21-22; Soltani <i>et al.</i> , 2005:1010; Juran, 1988: Drucker, 2006:194-196; iso.org, 2010; see also Albarran, 2006:10)	The aim of supervision should be to help people do a better job. Organisations should thus have feedback and recognition systems in place. This keeps the focus on learning and behaviour that maintains quality (Flynn <i>et al.</i> , 1994:346), which especially important in a creative environment. Managers are particularly responsible to drive out fear. Given the integrated approach in community newsrooms, organisations should break down barriers among departments and integrate systems. Teamwork is necessary to prevent production problems and ensure a quality product. This requires effective communication (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:16).
<b>Empowerment of employees through training and skills development</b> (Protagonists Deming and Juran; Dale & Cooper, 1992:20-22; Powell, 1995:19; Boaden, 1997:165; Soltani <i>et al.</i> , 2005:1012-1013; Robbins & Coulter, 2005:43; see also Drucker, 2006:194-196)	In addition to carefully recruiting and selecting suitable employees (Flynn <i>et al.</i> , 1994:348), community news organisations should offer on-the-job skills-based as well as quality improvement training. (Sohn <i>et al.</i> , 1999:204.)
<b>A strong focus on (external and internal) customer satisfaction</b> (Protagonists: Deming, Juran, Taguchi; Jablonski, 1994:27; DTI, 2001c:1; Schneider & White, 2004:20; 2008:d; see also Hom, 2000:100)	A loyal and motivated staff component can play an important role in establishing and maintaining quality aspects in any organisation. In a newspaper environment, internal customers/suppliers are staffs in the different departments, e.g. journalists, advertising representatives and designers. External customers/suppliers include readers and advertisers. Maintaining close relationship with and among customers and suppliers is essential in quality management (Flynn <i>et al.</i> , 1994:349).



The comprehensive model will be built incrementally from further theoretical perspectives as well as empirical verification. The levels of sophistication and details will thus increase through the course of the chapters of this study as the research objectives are operationalised. At this point, the macro- quality management model for community newspapers (A) can be illustrated as follows (figure 5):



**Figure 5: The macro quality management model for community newspapers.**

### 2.11.1 Explanation of the macro quality management model for community newspapers

According to the systems theory (see 2.9 and 2.10.3), an organisation is an open system that functions within an environment, external and internal, as indicated in figure 3. To survive, the organisation needs inputs such as capital and human resources from the environment(s) (see table 13), transforms these through various processes (e.g. editorial and advertising – see figure 3) into outputs that find their way back into the environment(s) (see figure 3). A system further relies on feedback from its environments for maintenance and growth (see 2.9.1). The comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers will thus have four main components in terms of the systems theory (see 2.9): inputs such as human resources and capital, transformation/processes such as editorial and design, outputs in the form of the printed newspaper and distribution/circulation, and feedback, for example from readers and advertisers. The macro model (A) illustrates these main components.

A quality management model also has an impact and outcome dimension. Outcomes are a “soft” factor, according to Abel (1999), and represent the results of an organisation’s work. It represents what an organisation ultimately aims to achieve. However, the outcome does not influence quality nor does it have an impact on the organisational dimensions. It is mentioned, though, due to the external environment within which an organisation functions (see chapter 1).

The macro model will be broken down into an intermediate (B) and micro model (C). A and B both focus on the content of the model, and the main components illustrated in A will be broken down in B. The quality variables extracted in 2.11 (table 13) are important in terms of the content of the model, because they have an impact on how well the system performs. C will have a quality focus, concentrating on quality criteria in order to move towards measuring and improving quality in community newspapers.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided the theoretical quality and quality management framework necessary to operationalise the first specific research objective of this study (see section 1.6.2). This entailed providing the theoretical framework of quality and quality management in order to identify the variables applicable to community newspapers. The evolution of quality was explored and the principle approaches to quality explained to illustrate the complexity of quality as a concept. The contribution of several salient theorists was discussed, which involved various models, theories and techniques of quality management. The researcher also pointed out their relevance within the context of this study. TQM as the preferred approach to quality management in community newspapers was explored. Moreover, the systems approach was introduced as the macro theory in this study and community newspapers as systems was explained. The researcher also provided a brief overview of the process approach, which will be discussed further in chapter 3.

Chapter 2 also placed the theoretical framework further into context by explaining the significance of quality and quality management for organisational performance. This included a discussion of community newspapers as organisations against the background of quality management in the media. Most importantly, the researcher illustrated the main components of the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers in the macro model (A).

Chapter 3 will focus on the intermediate model (B) by deconstructing the main components of the macro model (A).



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## CHAPTER 3:

# AN ORGANISATIONAL, FUNCTIONAL PROCESS ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

*Quality also involves the operational activities associated with the newspaper, such as consistent availability of the newspaper at newsstands and few delivery errors, the technical effectiveness of the organization, printing excellence, ease of use of the paper, accuracy in billing, and quick problem resolution. These types of issues of quality management have dominated newspaper industry discussions of quality in the past couple of decades, but there is a growing concern among many in the industry that the issues of content quality are now the more important issues upon which to focus.*

— Picard (2004:62)

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher conceptualised quality and quality management by exploring approaches and existing models and methods. It investigated the role of quality in organisational excellence and placed community newspapers in an organisational framework within the broad framework of the systems theory as the main theoretical premise for this study (see 2.8 and 2.9). Most importantly, variables with regard to a quality management framework for community newspapers were identified, operationalising the first research objective of this study (see 1.6.2). Subsequently, the researcher provided a diagram illustrating the four main components (inputs, processes, outputs and feedback) of the proposed quality management model for community newspapers in terms of the systems theory, followed by an explanation of the components (see 2.9). This is the macro (A) level of the model. These main components will be deconstructed in this chapter (the intermediate [B] level), providing an in-depth exploration of the content of the model.

Underwood (1993:112) argued that where quality is concerned, one should scrutinise the product on the news pages as well as the activities relevant to other areas of the newspaper organisation. This includes “the management practices, the control systems imposed by corporate ownership, the treatment received by newsroom staffers, the latitude given to reporters to dig below the surface of events, the encouragement to do enterprise journalism, the commitment to staffing levels, [and] the resources invested in the newsroom” (Underwood, 1993:112-113). This opinion implies that one should look at the organisation as a whole. In a community newspaper context, this means investigating the key functional areas, i.e. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution, as well as the support function (administration/finance, see 2.10.3) in terms of the main components of the macro model. In this context, Smout’s view (2002:11, as quoted by Berger, 2005:186) that “overall quality can be fatally undermined by a lack of quality in one area”, is relevant. Furthermore, if quality statements in an organisation’s mission do not manifest in the products, the whole quality chain is undermined (Berger, 2005:187). Berger (2005:180) adds that quality is “the achievement of objectives previously specified for a particular activity”,<sup>45</sup> and concludes that if something does the job it has been designed for, it could be

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<sup>45</sup> Activity: “A related set of operations”, usually self-contained, directed towards satisfying goal(s) fundamental to the business (Glans *et al.*, 1968:18).

classified as a quality product/service. However, Botha (2000:6, as quoted by Berger, 2005:180) said, “If something produces perfect results but the results do not fit the purpose of the institution or organisation, its perfection will be irrelevant.” This opinion reiterates that quality needs to be managed within a specific context, i.e. a community newspaper organisation committed to a culture of quality (see chapter 2).

As a starting point, the “hard” (tangible) and “soft” (intangible) dimensions of organisations will be discussed, leading into an exploration of organisational culture. The aim is to illustrate the importance of the soft dimension in a quality context. This section is followed by an analysis and summary of the literature regarding process theory. This provides the background as well as the research method to identify the key processes in a community newspaper organisation, which is necessary to operationalise the second and third specific research objectives in this study (see 1.6.2). The researcher then identifies/maps the key processes within each functional area, while explaining the research method used. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the community newspaper organisation as an integrated system.

### **3.2 THE “HARD” AND “SOFT” DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONS**

Several authors indicate that an organisation consists of both “hard” and “soft” factors and emphasise the importance of both (see 2.11). Summarising the literature on organisational nature, Abel (1999) characterises organisations as socio/technological systems influenced by both hard and soft factors and dimensions. Hard factors include technology, work processes, accounting systems and formal structure, while soft factors include issues such as social dynamics and institutional/organisational culture (i.e. the beliefs, values and attitudes applicable to an organisation), leadership capabilities and social dynamics. According to Abel, the quality of the inputs is a major dimension of the quality of the outputs in a system (see 2.10). As such, both the “hard” and “soft” dimensions affect the quality of any output. Similarly, Westcott (2006:13) argues that the social and technical systems are integrated. He says the technical system defines how products/services are to be realised and includes equipment, work processes and procedures, and human resources to carry out the processes. The social system consists of how people communicate, interrelate and make decisions. It manifests in culture, which in turn is evidenced by how the employees behave (Westcott, 2006:14). Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:241) argue that a newsroom’s long-term health depends on its quality, not just its efficiency. In a newspaper organisation, the latter can be measured as circulation figures, profitability and quality copy. Roche (1996:v) argued that, “The intersection of business, customer focus and quality journalism results in newspaper vitality and maintenance of the public trust.”

As stated, the hard and soft dimensions of work affect the quality of any output (Abel, 1999). The Kaizen philosophy (see 2.7.1) is useful to align the “hard organisational inputs and aims”, especially in process-driven environments, and “soft management issues” such as motivation and empowerment, and keep them aligned (Alan Chapman/Businessballs, 2004-2009a). Lenka and Suar (2008:60) argue that a “soft” quality management approach is more applicable to service organisations than to manufacturing organisations, requiring fewer quality management tools and techniques. According to these authors, (soft) “elements of leadership, human resources, customer focus, management commitment, empowerment and communications are applicable in service firms”. These aspects are also notable quality factors within TQM, and are labelled as the “soft” aspects of TQM (Lenka & Suar, 2008:58). Moreover, these aspects have a significant input on quality (see chapter 4).

### 3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR

According to Robbins (2001:510), “organisational culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations”. This shared meaning includes factors in an organisation such as assumptions, values, norms, attitudes, symbols and expectations (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:25; Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Kloppe, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2004:357; Mobley, Wang & Fang, 2005:12; Westcott, 2006:14). O'Donnell and Boyle (2008:4) concur, stating that, “Culture ... gives organisations a sense of identity and determines, through the organisation's legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which ‘things are done around here’. An organisation's culture encapsulates what it has been good at and what has worked in the past.” According to Geel (2005:19), the components of an organisation — identity, strategy, structure/procedures, technical support and human resources — are embedded in culture, and support this culture. He includes purpose, vision, mission, aims, tasks, norms, values and policies in a definition of the concept of culture. Detert, Schroeder and Mauriel (2000:851) came to the conclusion that, “Although there is as yet no single, widely agreed upon conception or definition of culture, there is some consensus that organisational culture is holistic, historically determined, and socially constructed, and it involves beliefs and behaviour, exists at a variety of levels, and manifests itself in a wide range of features of organisational life.”

Every organisation — including a community newspaper — has its own culture that determines how its members behave (Pearce & Robinson, 1999:357). Robbins (2001:514) argues that a strong culture in an organisation (i.e. where the core values are “intensely held and widely shared”) increases consistent behaviour, and decreases the need for formal rules and regulations to guide employee behaviour. Shared values in excellent organisations include “being the best at what we do”, holding people in high regard, hands-on management, and sound communication (Sashkin & Morris, 1984:22). Culture is part of an organisation (such as a community newspaper) as a system and interacts with other components in the system (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:25). Quoting Tagiuri (1968:27), Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:25) state that the members of an organisation's experience of the climate or quality of the internal organisational environment, influences their behaviour. Culture is thus a facet of organisational behaviour (Nickels & Kwun, 2008:278), a field of study that investigates how the behaviour of people in an organisation affects the organisation's performance (Robbins, 2001:6). For example, Foley (2001:xx) states that Deming's 14 Points of Management are guidelines for appropriate quality management behaviour and practice (see 2.4.4).

A salient point within the focus of this study is that organisational culture is one of the core concepts of TQM (Lenka & Suar, 2008:56), which could be the ideal framework for managing quality in community newspaper organisations (see 1.1, 1.5.3 and 2.8). In fact, Powell (1995:28) argued that the key to TQM performance lies in the intangible, behavioural aspects such as leadership, organisational skill and culture and not in (tangible) TQM tools and techniques. The core concepts of transformational leadership, customer orientation, human resource management and organisational culture within TQM (Lenka & Suar, 2008:56) correspond with the elements of organisational culture described in the literature. TQM “require[s] a culture receptive to change, a motivation to improve ... corporate perseverance, [and] leadership qualities such as the capacity to commit” (Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:21). In fact, Powell (2005:22, as quoted in Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:22) argues that, “Without these tacit, intangible, causally-ambiguous, difficult-to-imitate complementary resources, TQM programmes have no foundation for success.”

According to Morgan (1989:157), organisational culture (i.e. corporate and core values) is an intangible “social glue” that keeps organisations together. Mintzberg (1989:113) argued that, “Ideology [culture]

exists primarily as a force in organisations ... encouraging their members to *pull together* ...” He illustrated this view as follows (Mintzberg, 1989:89-99) (figure 6)<sup>46</sup>:

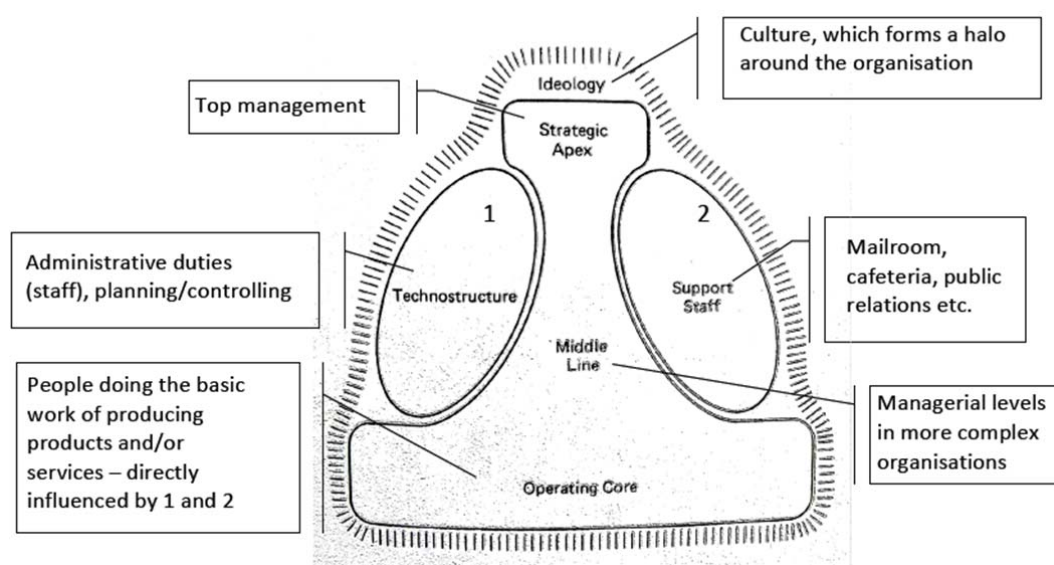


Figure 6: Mintzberg's six basic parts of an organisation (1989:98-99)

Culture thus benefits an organisation in several ways, including increasing commitment and consistent employee behaviour, and holding the organisation together by providing appropriate standards for socially acceptable worker behaviour (Robbins & Judge, 2010:217). Mobley *et al.* (2005:12) argue that it is “obvious” why management should care about organisational culture:

Bureaucratic control could only buy employees' bodies but not their hearts. A strong organisational culture, however, can be a primary generator of real motivation and commitment. In a strong and cohesive culture, the organisation's core values are both intensely held and widely shared. This high intensity of common beliefs makes it relatively easier to draw consensus among employees, to build a focus on important goals and objectives, to reduce potential conflicts, to cultivate a learning environment, and to lower staff turnover. A strong culture has a unique absorptive power to congregate people. Employees no longer need to be compelled to work hard but do so willingly. They identify themselves with their organisation, just as they do with their families and communities.

A strong culture also involves genuine concern for the customer, employee and stakeholder (Ingram, 2011). Moreover, it has been linked to organisational performance (Nickels & Kwun, 2008:276; Mobley *et al.*, 2005:12). On the contrary, weak cultures lack widely shared values and management commitment. They tend to lead to the development of subcultures, and makes management strategy difficult to implement (Ingram, 2011). Internal politics, arrogance and hostility to change characterise unhealthy cultures. However, a strong culture could also cause an organisation to lose contact with its context (i.e. environment) and “to close in on itself” (Mintzberg, 1989:275). Rau (2009:12) says that organisational culture plays an important role in determining people's reactions when the status quo in an organisation is challenged.” Nickels and Kwun (2008:276) argue that organisational culture can be a limiting factor in accepting technological change, which could lead to wastage of resources (Mintzberg, 1989:277).

<sup>46</sup> The researcher added the explanatory text boxes (cf. Mintzberg, 1989:98-99).

Several different types of culture are mentioned in the literature. Nickels and Kwun (2008:278, quoting Cameron & Quinn, 1999) identify four prevailing cultures: The *clan culture* is characterised by a friendly, supportive work environment. Supervisors are mentors and concern is high for employees and customers. This type of culture emphasises teamwork. On the contrary, a *market culture* is characterised by a hard-driving, competitive environment where demanding managers work towards a major organisational goal, namely winning in the competitive marketplace. The *hierarchy culture* is a formalised, structured work environment with the major emphasis on coordinating efforts. The central focus is on achieving efficiency. Management in this type of culture is procedure-driven and predictability is valued.

On the other hand, an *adhocracy culture* welcomes risk taking (cf. Mintzberg, 1989:37). Organisations displaying this type of culture are “dynamic, entrepreneurial, creative places to work” (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, in Nickels & Kwun, 2008:279). Innovation and experience is valued and employees are encouraged to take initiative. Zaheer, Ur Rehman and Ahmad (2006:156, quoting Berg & Harral, 1998) argue that small organisations — such as community newspapers — display a more informal culture, “although not necessarily more relaxed”. Although this manifests in fewer written directions/records, it should not be interpreted as indifference (Zaheer *et al.*, 2006:156). An organisation displaying a *quality culture* values individual achievements. As a result, it focuses on the growth of its employees through problem solving and effective planning, according to Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007:36). In practice, such an organisation is more flexible and more accepting when change occurs. It is further characterised by a strong technical orientation.

Robbins (2001), Delobbe, Haccoun and Vandenberghe (2002), and Denison (2000) offered the following core or primary characteristics of culture (table 15):

**Table 15: Core characteristics of organisational culture**

<b>Robbins’ seven primary characteristics of an organisation’s personality (2001:510-511)<sup>47</sup></b>	<b>Delobbe <i>et al.</i>’s five fundamental core dimensions of culture<sup>48</sup> (2002:12-18)</b>	<b>The Denison Model: four core cultural traits and indices (Denison, 2000:369-371)<sup>49</sup></b>
<i>Innovation and risk taking</i> : The degree to which employees are encouraged to take risks and be innovative.	<i>Commitment-solidarity</i> : Teamwork, commitment, involvement and cooperation, and focused on people.	<i>Involvement</i> : Empowerment (highly involved employees, information widely shared, on-going planning, involving everyone in the process), team orientation (cooperation is encouraged, teamwork is used to get the job done, work is organised so every person can see the relationship between his/her job and organisational goals) and capability development (delegated authority, investment in skills improvement and training, capabilities are seen as important source of competitive advantage).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Robbins & Coulter, 2005:52 and Ng, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Known under the French acronym ECO (Echelles de Culture Organisationnelle) (Delobbe *et al.*, 2002:10).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Denison & Mishra, 1995.



<b>Robbins' seven primary characteristics of an organisation's personality (2001:510-511)<sup>47</sup></b>	<b>Delobbe <i>et al.</i>'s five fundamental core dimensions of culture<sup>48</sup> (2002:12-18)</b>	<b>The Denison Model: four core cultural traits and indices (Denison, 2000:369-371)<sup>49</sup></b>
<i>Attention to detail:</i> The degree to which employees are expected to exhibit precision, analysis, and attention to details.	<i>Innovation-productivity:</i> Commitment to innovation and improvement, and focused on outcomes.	<i>Consistency:</i> Core values (leaders practice what they preach, characteristic management style and distinctive set of management practices, clear/consistent set of values as well as ethical code that guide business practices), agreement (strong culture, consensus reached easily, clear agreement on the right and wrong way to do things), coordination and integration (consistent and predictable approach to doing business, organisation-wide shared perspective, coordinated projects, good alignment of goals across levels).
<i>Outcome orientation:</i> The degree to which management focuses on results or outcomes rather than on the techniques and processes used to achieve these outcomes.	<i>Control:</i> This dimension refers to how rules, formal procedures and hierarchical power govern action and behaviour.	<i>Adaptability:</i> Creating change (flexible and receptive to change, positive response to change, open to innovation, sound cooperation), customer focus (high priority on feedback, all members understand customer wants/needs, direct contact with customers is encouraged), organisational learning (failure is seen as opportunity to learn and improve, innovation and risk-taking are encouraged and rewarded, learning is important daily objective, free flow of information).
<i>People orientation:</i> The degree to which management decisions take into consideration the effect of outcomes on people within the organisation.	<i>Continuous learning:</i> Continuous development, also emphasising people and focusing on competence and training.	<i>Mission:</i> Strategic direction and intent (long-term purpose and direction, clear missions that gives meaning and direction to work, clear strategy for the future), goals and objectives (widespread agreement about ambitious, but realistic, goals, open communication about objectives, progress is tracked against goals), vision (leaders have long-term viewpoint, vision excites and motivates employees).
<i>Team orientation:</i> The degree to which work activities are organised around teams rather than individuals.		
<i>Aggressiveness:</i> The degree to which employees are aggressive and competitive rather than cooperative.		
<i>Stability:</i> Degree to which organisational decisions and actions emphasise maintaining the status quo.		

### 3.3.1 Soft factors in community newspaper organisations

Further to the above, soft factors pertinent specifically to community newspapers should be highlighted. The researcher argued in chapter 1 that the primary goal of journalism is to provide citizens with quality information to enable them to function in a free, democratic society (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:12; see 1.1 and 2.5.3). This involves intangible issues such as truth, accuracy and reliability. As stated in chapter 2, it is difficult to separate the tangible work processes from the intangible factors in a community newspaper organisation, because the soft factors (i.e. journalistic values/ethics) define *how* the work should be done (see 2.11). According to the International Standardisation and Accreditation Services (ISAS) and the Media & Society Foundation<sup>50</sup> (MSF), a media organisation's quality is subjective in many ways (ISAS-MSF, 2010:10):

It cannot be evaluated by merely relying on the data routinely used in business: distribution, revenue or profit. Moreover, determining media quality requires more than assessing the quality of individual activities such as writing, sound, photography, production, design, editing and the like. A quality media organisation must above all have integrity. It must be honest, fair and trustworthy.

Consequently, a community newspaper organisation that aspires to this standard of quality should be:

- Editorially independent;
- Transparent with regard to ownership and other connections that could impact content;
- Governed by editorial guidelines understood by the content producers, the audience/readership and its stakeholders; and
- Respectful of international standards dealing with working conditions and social dialogue.

Notably, organisational cultures overlap, especially in a newspaper organisation where journalists are members of the organisation, and profession (Schiff & Francis, 2006) and members of society at large. These authors, quoting Robert K. Merton's reference group theory (cf. Holton, 2004:514), explain that the "cross-cutting organisational identities and constraints" cause role conflict, status inconsistency and cognitive dissonance. This is indicative of how the hard and soft dimensions in a community newspaper organisation are integrated and the impact this integration has (Schiff & Francis, 2006):

The ideology of professional journalism constrains news workers in manufacturing the news, demanding that their stories be fair and balanced in terms of political bias, that they not editorialise in the news columns and that they take a middle-of-the-road stance between two sides of a story ... What becomes news is a product of publishers, editors, reporters, sources and advertisers, each of whose influence is not idiosyncratic but reflects collective constraints — profit motives, corporate expectations, professional norms, newsroom policies, political affiliations, career-interests and issues management. News items are the final product, resulting from decisions

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<sup>50</sup> The International Standardisation and Accreditation Services ([www.isas.org](http://www.isas.org)) is a private organisation specialising in standardisation and accreditation services to "private, public and governmental institutions that seek to establish and maintain quality standards and to accredit the certification bodies that verify compliance with these standards" (ISAS-MSF, 2010:4). The organisation says that companies and institutions worldwide have sought independent recognition of the quality of their management systems since the early 1980s to "benefit from unbiased, external reviews of their activities [and] to create an on-going process making sure that the highest standards of quality continue to be pursued". The Media & Society Foundation (MSF), based in Geneva, Switzerland, encourages the development of quality standards in broadcasting and print. In 2003, the MSF created the BC 9001 standard for broadcasting. The non-profit organisation is also the main impetus behind the creation of the P 9001 standard for the press in 2005. The two standards were merged into the ISAS BCP 9001:2010 standard, which covers broadcasters, the press and new media. The guidelines set requirements for quality management systems in media organisations. Notably, two prominent South African media figures were involved with the development of the standards: Joe Thloloe, Press Ombudsman, and Moegsien Williams, editor-in-chief of *The Star* (ISAS-MSF, 2010:5).

about assigning, reporting, killing, running, placing and trimming a story within the commercially available newshole.

The American scholars Kovach and Rosenstiel's extensive research (2001, 2007) has led to the distillation of clear journalistic principles ("elements"), which they claim journalists agree on and the public have a right to expect (2007:5). Their viewpoints, which informed the ISAS BC-9001:2003, P-9001:2005 and BCP 9001:2010 international accreditation standards (ISAS, 2011), capture the essence of the culture of news organisations such as community newspapers.<sup>51</sup> As such, a quality media organisation's internal culture and processes should include (ISAS-MSF, 2010:10):

- A clear mission and editorial viewpoint for each publishing or broadcasting platform within the organisation;
- An emphasis on reporting facts accurately;
- Effective mechanisms for identifying and correcting errors;
- Distinction between opinion and fact;
- Responsiveness to feedback from consumers (audience/readership) and other stakeholders;
- Widely disseminated guidelines on ethics;
- High-quality training and evaluation of staff; and
- An unambiguous separation of advertising and editorial content as well as a prohibition of interference by advertisers in influencing editorial decision-making.

The following factors are thus important in community newspaper organisations:

### **3.3.1.1 Quality journalism orientation**

An overarching factor in quality newspaper organisations in general is a strong commitment to quality journalism (cf. Fink, 1996:199). Business pressures are seen as the top threat to the newspaper industry as a strong correlation has been found between financial investment in the newsroom and quality journalism (The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008, quoted by Groves, 2009:13). When American newspaper readers began moving online in earnest in 2005, the organisations that managed to hold their own were those "that had taken a slower, more long-term approach, including fewer cuts and more newsroom investment" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:67). Journalism works best when both sides (i.e. news and business) are committed to the profession's values — and history shows it only works when the owner believes in the core journalistic values. These values include honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others (Breit, 2004:4). Roche (1996:10) adds credibility and editorial integrity to the list.

The basis for a community newspaper organisation's credibility — and thus a solid relationship with the community — is that journalists can dig for and tell the truth without obstruction, even at the expense of the owner's financial interests. This allegiance to citizens symbolises journalistic independence, which is threatened by a market-driven approach to news (Roche, 1996:46; cf. Breit, 2004:4). At first, the formation of media conglomerates eroded the relationship newspapers had with their communities. These media giants, who own scores of community newspapers globally, seem to care little about the news except for its profit value (Naughton, 2002:xi). In the 1990s, the emphasis on profits intensified as news organisations in the U.S. started cutting news budgets, invested more in marketing and wanted more

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<sup>51</sup> Many may label these beliefs "traditionalist". Nevertheless, the researcher in this study argues that they strongly apply within the community newspaper as a pillar in the local community.

accountability from editors (Morton, 1995; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:60). The public interest was seen as old-fashioned, creating a rift between journalists and news managers. Journalists were concerned that advertisers would decide what is news and what is not news (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:61, 63). According to Breit (2004:11), journalism became a commodity, effectively marginalising professional journalistic practices (Naughton, 2002:xi) by diverting the attention away from journalism towards the business activities of the press (Picard, 2004:54). Community-orientated journalism became customer-orientated journalism, which focused on soft news and entertainment in a colourful package (Underwood, 1993:xvi) and kept “troublesome” stories out of the paper (Underwood, 1993:131).

According to Naughton (2002:xi), “Journalism’s enduring value is as a medium not of commerce but of self-government. It must, yes, be profitable to succeed as an instrument of community.” But if the business side is selling out the editorial side, the integrity and credibility of a publication and reader trust suffer significant damage (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:65). Newspapers in South Africa are facing a similar situation, according to Harber (2002), who refers to “devastating cutbacks” in newsroom resources due to, among other factors, the proliferation of other media, depressed advertising markets, and the rising costs of paper and distribution (McChesney, 2000, quoted by Groves, 2009:14; see also Picard, 2004; Milne *et al.*, 2006:8). Professional journalistic norms make journalists sceptical about market-driven initiatives that often require them to do more with less, which leads to burnout and deteriorating morale (Groves, 2009:15). The strategies South African community newspapers adopt to cope range from “swimming resolutely against any current of outside control regarding editorial content — be it from readers, advertising clients or government officials”, and “not rocking the boat” (Milne *et al.*, 2006:8).

Mintzberg (1989:333) argued that economic benefits are measured more easily than social benefits (cf. Churchman, 1968:33). Efficiency in organisational terms therefore often becomes focused on the “economic morality, which can amount to a social immorality”. This holds that hard factors — tangible, measurable and demonstrable benefits — become more important due to an “obsession” with efficiency, obscuring (equally important) intangible factors. Picard (2004:54) concurs and states that market concerns determine operation and content in the newspaper industry. Overemphasising the economic benefit could diminish the social value of newspaper content and divert the attention of newspaper staffs from journalism to activities primarily related to the business interests of the press. However, “Decisions to promote commercial aspects of newspaper publishing are not inherently immoral or harmful to journalism.” (Picard, 2004:55.)

### **3.3.1.2 Meaningful, relevant, comprehensive and engaging content**

The factor of meaningful, relevant, comprehensive and engaging content relates to the question whether a community newspaper should give readers what they want (storytelling), or what they need (information). Roche (1996:44) said that a quality newspaper could create “customer delight” and serve the public trust at the same time. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:188) also argue that storytelling and information do not contradict each other, but are part of a continuum of communication. The challenge is to find information people need to live their lives and to make that information “meaningful, relevant and engaging” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:189; see also Greer, 1999:55).

Unfortunately, there are numerous threats to this type of journalism: a lack of time, inadequate skills, smaller newsrooms due to cutbacks, a lack of commitment, the unlimited space the Internet offers, pressure from the business side and the “lure of infotainment” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:190; see also Roche, 1996:12; Addison, 2006:44). Reader ignorance about what constitutes quality in newspaper products is also a threat to quality (Roche, 1996:12). Readers do not know when stories are true, fair,

important or comprehensible. Furthermore, “readers aren’t necessarily attracted to what is most useful and relevant to them” (Roche, 1996:9). Moreover, journalism needs to be complete/comprehensive and proportional (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:208-209), requiring a community newspaper to cover the whole community, not just the demographic section that might be more attractive to advertisers.

### **3.3.1.3 Truth and accuracy**

People use news to learn from and think about the world around and beyond them, and the function of news is to make people aware of this world. News should thus be usable and reliable (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:36). Journalistic truth involves “a sorting-out process that takes place between the initial story and the interaction among the public, newsmakers and journalists” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:39; see also Claassen, 2004). Journalism’s pursuit of truth is what sets it apart from other forms of communication (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:41, 42). Accuracy is closely linked to truth, and essential to quality journalism, because readers rely on an accurate, reliable account of events (Leiter, Harriss & Johnson, 2000:65; Maier, 2002:10; Addison, 2006:404). Notably, truthfulness can be tested. These factors are also included in South African journalism codes of ethics such as the South African Press Code of Professional Conduct (Retief, 2002:238-240).

The main problem, according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:46), is that a new journalism of assertion (i.e. claim, statement, merely affirming the preconceptions of the audience) is replacing the old journalism of verification (i.e. confirmation, corroboration). Furthermore, this kind of journalism as well as a journalism of aggregation (i.e. combination, clumping) may very well not distinguish between rumour, fact and speculation (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:47). Community newspapers should thus strive to get the facts right first and concentrate on synthesis and verification without rushing to add context and interpretation. This involves providing identifiable sources and important, verified information (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:48-49; see also Hausman, 1990:32).

### **3.3.1.4 Verification, balance and fairness**

This aspect is related to the concept of objectivity, which was conceived in the 1920s (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:80-81): “The call for journalists to adopt objectivity was an appeal ... to develop a consistent method of testing information — a transparent approach to evidence — precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work.” (Cf. Spira, 2003:36.) Verification means checking and rechecking in pursuit of truth and accuracy, which requires discipline and takes time and effort.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:87, 88) argue that the traditional values of fairness and balance should become techniques adding to thorough verification and a reliable version of events. Balance entails including all perspectives on an issue (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:65). However, balancing could lead to distortion if balancing two sides of an issue equally does not reflect reality (cf. Mencher, 1997:46; cf. Van Vlastuin & Froneman, 1999:83). Fairness should mean that a journalist is fair to the facts and the citizen’s understanding of the facts, not whether he/she is fair to a source. “Clarifying such common misunderstandings and improving the discipline of verification may be the most important step journalists can take to improve the quality of news and public discussion” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:88). Technology threatens the principle of verification. The Internet offers the opportunity for many more voices to be heard and a rich public debate, but lacks the discipline of verification. If newspaper organisations no longer spend the money and time “to report and verify and synthesise ...

then cyberspace chatter is all we are left with” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:184) — even in printed newspapers.

### **3.3.1.5 Independence**

The ISAS defines independence as “editorial production free from any external and any other interference or control, be it governmental, political, technical [and] economical” (ISAS-MSF, 2010:17). According to the ISAS (2007:21), the notion of independence relies on issues such as the organisation’s environments, its relations with stakeholders, and its commitment to being independent (cf. Groves, 2009:12). The affiliation of a media organisation to a specific interest group (i.e. political, religious, military, economic, etc.) must be transparent (Spira, 2003:34; ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:21; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:130). The notion of independence also clarifies the relationship between journalists and those they report on (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:111). During the course of its history, journalism moved away from loyalty to political interests (i.e. ideology) towards commitment to the public interest (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:122). This led to practices such as a clear separation of news and opinion (see section 1.3 in the South African Press Code of Professional Conduct, 2006). The value of independence is also closely linked to the traditional watchdog function of the press, which involves “protecting the public by preventing those with power from overstepping the mark” (Curran, 2002:225).

Rau (2009:7) identifies several threats to independence: competition from government media, government policies that restrict media functioning and development, barriers to access to information and the fact that the relationship between media and government is not always favourable. The latter is a significant problem in South Africa, “where the local government municipalities view the media as a threat and then criticise them, instead of seeing them as a responsible watchdog” (cf. WAN-IFRA, 2010:978, 979). However, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:57) warn against becoming so set on detachment from outside pressures that a community newspaper organisation becomes disengaged from the community.

### **3.3.1.6 Ethics**

“Every journalist, from the newsroom to the boardroom, must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility – a moral compass. What’s more, they have a responsibility to voice their personal conscience out loud and allow others around them to do so as well” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:231). This can only happen in a community newspaper organisation with an open, two-way approach to communication. Such a personal philosophy should be supplemented by an organisational code of ethics or at least adherence to a professional code such as the Press Code, which most newspaper organisations in South Africa ascribe to (Swanepoel, 2005:28). However, ethics is intrinsic in every aspect of journalism and should not be treated as an isolated topic (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:232; see also Bullard, 2003; cf. Hagg, 2006:45). From a journalism perspective, value-related (i.e. ethical) issues include privacy, newsgathering techniques and confidential sources (Jackson, 1993:225).

Ethics is not only limited to the editorial content of a newspaper, but includes the advertising content as well. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regulates the advertising industry in South Africa and requires adherence to its Code of Advertising Practice. According to De Klerk (1998:325), “The main objective of the Code is to ensure that all advertising is legal, decent and honest. It is also to ensure that advertisers do not exploit freedom of commercial speech by methods such as misleading the consumer, stealing the goodwill attached to competitive products publishing advertising in bad taste and making untruthful claims.”

### **3.3.1.7 Leadership**

Top-management leadership is necessary for quality improvement, specifically visionary leadership that inspires the workforce (Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:28; see also Morgan, 1989:163-165). The task of management in an organisation is to investigate factors, methods and principles that enable the organisation to function optimally to maximise profit, reach its goals and satisfy needs — their own as well as those of the community (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:26, 27, 38). Edmonds (2004, quoted in Groves, 2009:15) argues that sound leadership has a marked influence on quality in an organisation. Furthermore, culture is entwined in leadership, because leaders provide the organisational vision and communicate culture through their actions (Groves, 2009:16). In the print media, a variety of managers who need skills and work ethic to manage people and help the business grow can be found, e.g. general, editorial, administrative, and financial managers. A Human Sciences Research Council study into scarce and critical skills in the publishing and print media sectors found that South African media managers' roles have changed (Hagg, 2006:41). They need to be more client- and less product-focused, and should have better financial skills (cf. Addison, 2006:308). In addition, they should be systems-orientated and able to provide quality assurance.

In many community newspaper organisations in South Africa, the editor plays several managerial roles, often overseeing all the organisation's functions. In larger organisations, there might be a general manager who is responsible for the administrative functions. In community newspapers owned by large media groups, the corporations act as publisher and often makes pertinent management decisions. Many community newspaper organisations, however, are smaller enterprises. Managers are more involved with daily operations, know their employees, and understand and can perform most activities or processes (cf. Zaheer *et al.*, 2006:1561). But Rau (2009:5) reports a lack of business shrewdness and benchmarking standards, especially in media organisations serving rural areas in Southern Africa (cf. Steyn, 2006:390).

### **3.3.1.8 Management styles and roles**

Every newspaper organisation has its own management style, which is closely linked to its culture. Lauterer (2006:310) identifies styles ranging from "Psychoboss", "Zombies on the March" to "Bottom Feeders", "Cutthroats" and "Fiefdoms" to "THE 10", which he defines as "the enlightened, quality journalism-conscious community newspaper with a benevolent, nurturing management style". The most successful community newspapers are those that take the trouble to "craft a coherent mission statement of management style" (Addison, 2006:309). The guidelines should be in writing and communicated to the staff. A study by the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) at the School of Journalism and Media Studies at the Rhodes University in Grahamstown investigated the key editorial and business strategies of six successful independent community newspapers (Milne *et al.*, 2006). This study showed a general hands-on, but relaxed approach to management coupled with "a mutually beneficial flow of ideas and feedback between management and staff regarding workplace related issues" (Milne *et al.*, 2006:105; cf. Milne & Taylor, 2006).

The SPI study (Milne *et al.*, 2006) provides useful examples of the different roles managers at community newspapers in South Africa play. The results of the study confirm that these roles are influenced by the structure of the organisation. For example, the sole owner/manager at the *KZN Community News* in Durban single-handedly controls the organisation with its five full-time employees. She plays a key role in marketing the business services the organisation offers, writes the majority of editorial copy, determines the layout and design of the paper, oversees the financial management, and trains new staff members/interns (Milne *et al.*, 2006:23). In comparison, a husband (manager) and wife (owner) team

runs *The Eastern Free State Issue* in Bethlehem. The owner procures local advertising, and is responsible for editorial tasks such as writing and photography as well as layout and design. The manager on the other hand sells national advertising, also writes and takes photographs, but manages the organisation's finances and staff of three full-time and 16 part-time employees (Milne *et al.*, 2006:47, 48).

### **3.3.1.9 Teamwork**

The team approach is “one of the contemporary approaches to quality management learned from the Japanese” (Zhang, 2010:46). Several authors (cf. Roche, 1996:3; Sharma & Gadenne, 2001:433; Oakland, quoted by De Coning, 2009:29) regard teamwork throughout any organisation as an essential component of TQM. Mintzberg (1989:273) argued that culture fosters cooperation by driving people to work together. Robbins and Coulter (2005:383) define work teams as “groups whose members work intensely on a specific, common goal using their positive synergy, individual and mutual accountability, and complementary skills. In a work team, the combined individual efforts of team members result in a level of performance that is greater than the sum of those individual inputs” (cf. Senge, 1994: 239). Teams can work in the same functional area in an organisation, or across functional areas (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:384; cf. Evans, 1990:64). De Coning (2009:29) argues that, “Teamwork builds trust, improves communication and develops interdependence through an environment in which people can grow and use all the resources effectively and efficiently to make continuous improvements.”

Given more integrated newsroom approaches, it becomes increasingly important that organisations break down barriers among departments, integrate the different systems within the bigger organisational system and foster cooperation. Haksever (1996:5, quoted by Zhang, 2010:46) argued that there is greater potential for effective teamwork in small organisations. In a newspaper environment, people in the main functional areas of administration/finance, advertising, editorial, production and circulation/distribution must work as a team to foresee problems of production and other aspects of producing the final product (cf. Morgan, 1989:42; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:16;).

### **3.3.1.10 Communication**

According to Robbins and Coulter (2005:256), “Communication is the transfer of understanding and meaning.” Feedback is a key factor in the communication process, because it fosters understanding (Evans, 1990:27; cf. Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:16). Communication in organisations functions to control behaviour, motivate people to reach set goals, allow emotional expression and, notably, convey information to get the work done (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:257). A lack of communication is the root of inefficiency (cf. Mintzberg, 1989:208-209). Managers should communicate information about expectations, tasks, accountability and responsibility openly and honestly (Van Tonder, 2006:218; cf. Westcott, 2006:114). Clear standards facilitate greater understanding and appreciation for the different roles departments play within a news organisation (Milne *et al.*, 2006:11).

Communicating to the audience how a news organisation operates is one way of building trust, these authors argue. Communication is hampered in large organisations and in situations where employees are isolated from one another. Moreover, conflict hampers communication (Evans, 1990:53; cf. Kara & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2011:539, who argue that physical distance “limits real-time communication and decision making” – specifically in multi-national organisations). The fact that people interpret messages differently, can trammel communication, making feedback even more important (Sashkin & Morris, 1984:117, 118; cf. Robbins & Coulter, 2005:386). Effective communication requires a supportive organisational climate (Van Tonder, 2006:139), and continuous and consistent communication is



especially important within the context of organisational change (Van Tonder, 2006:203, 214). Sound grievance procedures should also be in place (Addison, 2006:312).

Groves (2009:108) says meetings can be used as a form of communication, but argues that the use of email instead of in-person communication can be a barrier (2009:107). Groves (2009:109, 111) found that although there is cooperation in a newsroom, subgroups do form (e.g. the sports desk, the sub-editing desk). This can lead to defensive routines. Physical separation and poor communication are among the factors leading to the formation of subgroups.

#### **3.3.1.11 Employee empowerment**

Effective staffing, equitable awards, comprehensive training and developmental appraisals contribute to the efficacy of quality management programmes (Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:472). The aim of supervision should be to help people do a better job by empowering them through, for example, training and development. Organisations should thus have systems in place through which managers give feedback and formal and informal recognition to all participants for doing their part in reaching organisational goals and objectives. This ensures that the focus stays on learning and behaviour that maintains quality. This is especially important in a creative environment (Flynn *et al.*, 1994:346), such as a community newspaper organisation. A culture conducive to employee empowerment is important in TQM (Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:22). Employee empowerment is also crucial in a team structure (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:245).

Managers are particularly responsible to drive out fear among employees, so everyone works in an environment and in relationships where they can work effectively (Flynn *et al.*, 1994:346). However, because the personality of the owner/head of a small company might dominate an organisation's culture, this could result in inflexibility and rigidity if he/she does not have adequate management training (Zhang, 2010:37). In addition to carefully recruiting and selecting suitable employees (Flynn *et al.*, 1994:348), news organisations should direct their focus towards re-instituting on-the-job training. This includes skills-based training, but more important in the context of this study, training in quality improvement. Self-improvement is therefore also important, followed by sound workforce management (cf. Sohn *et al.*, 1999:204).

#### **3.3.1.12 Diversity orientation**

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:132) state that journalists should be independent from race, ethnicity, religion and gender. This, however, means neither denying the influence of personal experience nor being hostage to it. Lauterer (2006:314) concurs and says ethnically non-diverse newsrooms can lead to (unconscious) bias in reporting. Community newspaper organisations "cannot adequately endeavour to accurately cover and fairly reflect our multiple constituencies without broader gender-racial-ethnic representation in our newsrooms" (Addison, 2006:314; see 1.2). According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:135), "The ultimate goal of newsroom diversity is to create an intellectually mixed environment where everyone holds firm to the idea of journalistic independence. Together their various experiences blend to create a reporting richer than what they would create alone ... that leads to a richer, fuller view of the world for the public." Homogenous newsrooms that do not recognise diversity thus threaten quality in community newspaper organisations.

However, diversity in itself can be problematic. De Swardt (2003:8) cautions that diversity in the leadership of an organisation can complicate the task of an editor who strives to maintain a uniform value system of a newspaper. Without a sense of direction and values, newsroom staffs become uncertain and

publications drift off course. Very often, the realities of the market in South Africa cause institutions to seek solutions in diverse publications for diverse cultural groups, published by members of these groups (cf. MDDA, 2006:53-54). In practice, this principle could become anachronistic in a society that is becoming more entwined (De Swardt, 2003:8). Furthermore, organisational culture can be a liability, e.g. by creating barriers to change and diversity. According to Robbins and Judge (2010:218), “Organisations seek to hire people of diverse backgrounds in order to increase the quality of decision-making and creativity. However, strong cultures, by their very nature, often seek to minimise diversity. Balancing the need for diversity with the need for a strong culture is an on-going managerial challenge.”

### 3.3.1.13 Customer orientation

As previously mentioned, journalism’s (and thus a community newspaper’s) first priority is the truth and its first loyalty is to citizens (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2006:5), which highlights the importance of the needs of readers and advertisers (as customers) in the quality chain (cf. ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:24; Roche, 1996:3). Therefore, it is important that a community newspaper organisation puts citizens first by ensuring they have access to quality editorial and advertising content. This requires investment in the newsroom (cf. Addison, 2006:45) by e.g. appointing quality staff members (cf. Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:70). Such an agreement implies a good relationship with the community (Breit, 2004:11), which requires constant reader awareness. The ability to secure readership relies on content that satisfies and serves readers (i.e. the usefulness of the newspaper) (Roche, 1996:10; cf. Berger, 2005:180).

An organisational culture that builds a strong and loyal customer base is generally rewarded with revenue growth and better financial performance (Flynn *et al.*, 2004:223). In a community newspaper organisation, this includes both readers and advertisers<sup>52</sup>. Stathacopoulos (2009:43), arguing from a marketing point of view, says that, “By embracing the diversity of human beings, organisations through extensive customer segmentation and understanding can increase their profitability immensely, even in a recession.” According to Lenka and Suar (2008:58), many authors (e.g. Dow *et al.*, 1999; Anderson & Sohal, 1999; Cerio, 2003; Powell 2005) indicate that the combined “soft” quality practices of employee commitment, shared vision and customer focus influence customer satisfaction.

In summary, culture is a component of organisational behaviour that could influence quality (Schroeder *et al.*, 2005:472). Westcott (2006:14) concurs, stating that culture “is shaped by the words and actions of leadership, how work systems are designed, and what gets rewarded. If the culture is not proactive, is not focused on customers, and does not use data to guide decision making, the organisation is not likely to be highly successful in the continual improvement of quality”.

In conclusion, the researcher provides a synopsis of the soft factors that are important in a community newspaper organisational setting in table 16, linked to quality variables extracted in chapter 2 (see 2.11, table 14):

<sup>52</sup> Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:64-65) strongly oppose describing the news audience, such as the readers of a community newspaper, as “customers”. They argue that the audience does not buy goods or services within the framework of journalism, like the advertiser does. News organisations build deeper relationships with their audiences “based on their values, judgment, authority, courage professionalism, and commitment to the community. Providing this service creates a bond with the public, which the news organisation then rents to advertisers. The news audience is a consumer, but it is an oversimplification and a confusion to call it a customer” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:64). The researcher agrees with the authors. However, within quality management, the terms “customer” and “supplier” refer to anyone who provides input and receives output in the system. The term is thus appropriate in the context of this study.

**Table 16: Soft factors influencing quality in a community newspaper organisation**

Soft factors	Quality variables
Quality journalism orientation, involving adherence to the journalistic principles of verification, balance and fairness, truth and accuracy, and providing meaningful, relevant, comprehensive and engaging content (i.e. providing information and delighting the customer); and strong ethical orientation.	A culture of quality with the emphasis on organisation-wide commitment as well as responsibility for quality.
Independence from interference and control; leadership that inspires the workforce; supportive, encouraging management style/role; clear, continuous and consistent communication of <i>inter alia</i> standards and expectations.	Sound leadership and cooperation through effective communication.
Employee empowerment through training, appraisal, effective staffing, feedback; diversity orientation: reflecting diversity in the community in the newsroom; and teamwork: combining individual efforts and cultivating cooperation.	Empowerment of employees through training and skills development.
Customer orientation: serving the needs of readers and advertisers.	A strong focus on (external and internal) customer satisfaction.

In chapter 2 the researcher determined that community newspaper organisations are open systems that receive inputs from its macro-, intermediate and microenvironment, transform these through various processes and deliver the transformed inputs as outputs to the environments. In the following section, the researcher will deconstruct the macro model (A) into an intermediate model (B) against the theoretical background of a process-based approach to quality. This forms part of the tangible (“hard”) dimension of organisational quality.

### 3.4 ANALYSING PROCESSES IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ORGANISATIONS

In chapter 2, the researcher established that organisations intent on quality should manage quality proactively, following a systems- and process-based approach (see table 14 in 2.11). As recognised in chapter 1, an organisation as a system comprises a multiplicity of micro sub-processes all fitting into a macro process, and working in synergy (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3). Glans *et al.* (1968:18-20) argued that each step in a business mechanism is a process (cf. Chase, Aquilano & Jacobs, 1998:7). As such, administration, maintenance, relationships and production consist of individual processes (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:36-37; Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3). As stated in chapter 2, a process is a collection of interactive systems/components that transforms inputs into outputs towards a specific aim (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3; see 2.9.2). Within a media context, a process is defined as “any sequence of activities that the media organisation has to master (through documentation and control), in order to ensure the quality of its contents and/or of its own organisation” (ISAS-MSF, 2010:16).

Writing, for example, is a process — “a rational series of steps and decisions that can be studied and repeated” (Scanlan, 2000:59). However, this author emphasises that even though the process approach “presupposes that reporters follow a series of recognisable steps when they do their job”, a process is not a formula. Scanlan (2000:59) consequently defines a process as follows:

A process is a description, rather than a prescription ... It describes the way reporters work. The process approach gives reporters and their editors a common language to discuss their craft. It also provides diagnostic tools that can help writers and editors discover the flaws in their stories and develop solutions to the problems that inevitably surface.

According to Gitlow *et al.* (2005:3), transformation in a process entails creating or adding value in time (i.e. making a product or service available *when* the user needs it), place (i.e. *where* the user needs it) or form (i.e. in the *form* the user prefers). The transformation can thus be in terms of the physical characteristics of a product in manufacturing organisations, location in transportation organisations, exchange in retail, storage in warehousing, physiological in healthcare organisations, and informational in telecommunication organisations, although these are not mutually exclusive (Chase *et al.*, 1998:7; cf. Shim & Siegel, 1999:119-120). In community newspaper organisations, the transformation would be physical when transforming information into the printed product and informational when transforming information into news. Selling newspaper advertising and distributing copies of the newspaper would involve exchange transformation.

Related sets of processes, each started by a trigger (Jacka & Keller, 2009:73), accepting some input and ending with definable output, form operations (Glans *et al.*, 1968:18-20). Related groups of operations form activities, and each activity or combination of activities form a system. Activities are logically related groups of operations directly linked to the achievement of an organisation's goals. Resources are the "means for performing an operation", and may be imposed by the user or required by the nature of inputs/outputs, e.g. personnel or finances. Operations are the principle elements of an activity, and transform inputs into outputs (i.e. products or services [Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:37]).

An activity starts with an input from the external environment and ends with an output to that environment (Glans *et al.*, 1968:18). Some activities are concerned with maintaining resources and do not have significant ties to the environments. According to Glans *et al.* (1968:18), "Each activity or combination of activities is performed by means of a system," which includes combinations of personnel, equipment, facilities etc. working together to produce outputs (cf. Churchman, 1968:37). Buckwalter (2006:12) argues that input and output resources link processes together. The author states that a process could start the moment its input resources, or enough of those resources, become available. During transformation, the input is "consumed, transformed or combined to produce output resources". These resources then become the input for one or more other processes.

Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:24-25) identify four constituents of a newspaper system: tasks, structure, resources and culture. Tasks such as writing a story or delivering a paper have time and resource constraints and influence the system as a whole. Depending on the size and goal of the organisation, the structure can be simple or complex. It consists of policy and procedures, organisational charts etc., and can be multi-hierarchical or based on teams/groups. The structure of the organisation influences task-related and social communication as well as decision-making. Resources involve people, money and materials, and a lack of these can have a profound effect on the viability of an organisation (Cronjé *et al.*, 1997:9-10; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:24-25). A system (i.e. organisation) has control over its resources and can change and use it to its advantage (Churchman, 1968:37). This includes decisions about who will perform which tasks, how money is spent and the time limits of an activity. In this context, Churchman (1968:39) argued that management should also pay attention to how resources can be increased to create better resources for the future, for example by training employees and investing in technology. Resources, also called production factors, are the basic inputs (see table 13 in 2.10) necessary for producing products

and services (outputs in the production process). Cronjé *et al.* (1997:9-10) distinguish between the following:

- **Natural resources:** fixed property such as land, as well as resources nature provides, such as trees for the production of paper.
- **Human resources:** the labour force with its physical and mental gifts and skills used to produce the output of products and services. People have to be paid and need to be trained/educated to be useful in the production process. Without human resources, natural resources and capital cannot be utilised optimally.
- **Capital:** buildings, machinery etc. utilised to produce the final product/service. These usually have a long lifespan.

To satisfy the needs of the community, the organisation has to utilise the resources in different combinations to produce products and services. According to Cronjé *et al.* (1997:10), satisfying the community's needs is vital to its wellbeing. Furthermore, man's aim to satisfy his needs with limited resources is the driving force behind economic progress. Tasks inside the organisational system are also resource dependent. Community newspapers, e.g., cannot function without reporters, paper, information, computers or telephones (i.e. tangibles). A system needs a continuous supply of resources for maintenance and growth (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:24-25).

Planning as a tangible factor is important in this context (see 2.11, table 14). Planning can be defined as a "systematic process that translates quality policy into measurable objectives and requirements, and lays down a sequence of steps for realizing them within a specified timeframe" (BusinessDictionary.com, 2010, see also Churchman, 1968:146). Planning is an activity of the organisation as a system and fits in high up in the structure of the organisation. However, it filters through all levels and is part of every process and activity in the organisation (Churchman, 1968:175). Planning includes developing and deploying policies and strategies, setting up appropriate partnerships and resources; and designing in quality (Oakland, 2005:1059). It also requires research about the target audience to determine their information and news preferences (Modoux, 2010:10). A quality plan covers various elements, such as what needs to be checked, how it should be checked, who should be involved and what materials are necessary (Turbit, 2005:6).

### 3.4.1 Documenting processes

Continuous quality improvement, a tangible quality factor (see 2.11, table 14) and a core concept of TQM (Lenka & Suar, 2008:56), requires that organisations aim to constantly improve their production and service systems, their levels of quality and productivity while decreasing costs. An organisation following a process approach in pursuit of quality thus needs to also focus on continuously improving its processes (Daunorienė & Bagdonienė, 2008:803; Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:3; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:20; cf. Roche, 1996:18; Weber & Kelly, 1993). Defining or documenting processes is a key activity in managing and improving processes, because it is vital that organisations understand processes in their entirety. It also helps to identify them and locate quality problems (DTI, 2001d:3; Fairfield-Sonn, 2001:121, 122; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21-22; Beckford, 2002:211; Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:70-71; Ntongo, 2007:138).

Beckford (2002:211) argues that process analysis and critical analysis — "focused on generating improvements" — follow definition and process mapping. According to Gitlow *et al.* (2005:70-71), processes can be analysed, and improved or innovated using the PDSA cycle (see 2.7.4). Fairfield-Sonn (2001:123, 125) suggests that organisations look to other organisations for ideas to improve processes by

using the benchmarking tool (see 2.7.2). He recommends using and adapting best practices/processes, stating that adapting the processes is better than merely copying them. Fairfield-Sonn (2001:122) further states that the fishbone (root-cause analysis – see 2.7.3) is a useful tool if processes are to be analysed in depth. Documenting or defining processes using pictorial summaries such as flowcharts (or process maps) is useful to clarify the steps and decisions in a given process (Gitlow *et al.*, 2005:70-71, 74). Page (2010:78; cf. Seath, 2006:1) defines a process map as a “visual representation of a series of connected activities that, when strung together, deliver a meaningful outcome to the client/customer”. Each rectangle in figure 7 below represents an activity (i.e. a key process) in the total process that adds value to the next step in the process. The map gives a quick overview of how the individual processes connect. The arrows linking the boxes are the inputs and outputs. The arrow (output) leaving the first box (activity 1) thus represents the input to the next (activity 2), etc. (Page, 2010:78; cf. Buckwalter, 2006:12):



**Figure 7: Process map summarising work activities.**

Process maps summarise work activities, and do not use the standard symbols for documents, decisions etc. like flowcharts do (Seath, 2006:1). Furthermore, flowcharts take up pages of space and require knowledge of a specific “language” to understand them. An advantage of process maps is that they describe only the work that is done, which prevents cluttering (Seath, 2006:3). Both Seath (2006:2) and Page (2010:81) describe low- and high-level process maps, indicating the extent of the detail included. In this study, processes will be mapped using mainly the input-process-output approach. Low-level process maps will be used where further identification is necessary.

Before the documentation process can begin, however, factors such as work descriptions and standards, codes of conduct and guidelines should be in place (Crosby, 1995:1). Fairfield-Sonn (2001:114-115) and Ntungo (2007:138) concur, stating that an organisation should look at its mission, goals and quality objectives to identify key processes to be documented. Crosby (1995:3), who advocated conformance to requirements (see 2.4.3 and 2.4.4), warned that if these factors are not in place, non-conformance becomes the norm (1995:1), negatively affecting quality. This could lead to a custom of “patching up” and the acceptance of a level of incompetence (Crosby, 1995:3): “When the service is expected to be incomplete and the product is assumed to always require some adjustment, a situation emerges in which the employees create their own performance standards.”

Two questions arise in the context of this study, namely which processes to define, and in how much detail. McQuail (1992:10-11) described three levels (in a broadcasting context) on which quality could be managed: the whole media system, a channel and a programme. In a community newspaper organisation, “media system” could refer to the organisation itself, “channel” to a department (component, sub-system or function) and “programme” could refer to a specific process, e.g. gathering information for or writing a news story. Stenberg’s view is relevant (1997:19):

A systematic analytical approach to newspaper creation, production and distribution implies analyses of complex and heterogeneous processes. The processes involves creative work, production of digital originals in a computerised environment, followed by mass production of copies in the semi-automated printing plants and finally distribution to the readers via trucks, retailers and carriers.

The ISAS guidelines for quality management in the press require that a media organisation identify and document all the critical processes with a direct impact on (ISAS-MSF, 2010:19):

- The quality of the contents (from design to readers' feedback through content production and acquisition);
- The relationship with an independent self-regulation body (i.e. the South African Press Council and the Ombudsman, who evaluates how consistent editorial content is with the Press Code [cf. ISAS-MSF, 2010:17]);
- The relationship with public authorities;
- The relationship with the public;
- The relationship with advertisers;
- The relationship with external suppliers; and
- Measuring readership numbers and satisfaction.

The Process Classification Framework developed by the American Productivity and Quality Centre<sup>53</sup> provides 13 key process groups in two broad categories, each subdivided into a myriad of processes and tasks (DTI, 2001d:3). The APQC provides both a generic view of business processes and a few industry specific frameworks, such as the APQC framework for the broadcasting industry (APQC, 2008). The latter lists the following processes:

**Table 17: The APQC process classification framework for the broadcasting industry**

<b>Operating processes</b>	<b>Management and support processes</b>
Understand markets and customers.	Develop and manage human resources.
Develop vision and strategy.	Manage external relationships.
Design products and services.	Manage improvement and change.
Market and sell.	Manage information.
Invoice and customer services.	Manage financial and physical resources.
Produce and deliver for manufacturing organisation.	Manage financial and physical resources.
Produce and deliver for service organisation.	Execute environmental management.

Chase *et al.* (1998:7) said that in describing input-transformation-output relationships (such as the approach followed in this study), only direct resources are listed. Management and support functions would be included in descriptions that are more detailed. In addition, Case (2006:107) says that in applying the systems model, outputs (i.e. deliverables) should be identified first when a process is mapped. This holds that the organisational objectives be detailed in specific and measurable terms. Then the primary system inputs, such as people and information, should be identified (see 2.10.3, table 13). Only then can the process component be detailed (Case, 2006:111).

Beckford (2002:212) agrees that a high level of detail is not necessarily required. He states that process charting can take place on several nested levels: total process, which records the process from start to finish, supplying few details, but identifying sub-routines and exceptions; process operation/task, which details specific actions taken at each stage; and process detail/procedure, which defines a process in fine detail. Beckford says that charting the total process and the process operations are sufficient in a skills-based environment, which is the case in a community newspaper organisation. Moreover, the purpose of this study is to develop a quality management model for community newspapers. As such, it is not *evaluating* existing processes but creating a theoretical framework that community newspapers could use and adapt to improve the quality of their products.

<sup>53</sup><http://www.apqc.org/>

As previously stated, processes are linked to the functional areas of a community newspaper organisation. In the following section, the researcher will deconstruct the A (input) and B (process) components in these functional areas that were introduced in chapter 2, and select and define the key processes (see 2.10.3).

### 3.5 FUNCTIONS, INPUT AND KEY PROCESSES

A newspaper organisation relies on people and infrastructure to produce a profitable product and, according to Diederichs and De Beer (1998:111), “every publication is nothing short of a miracle” (cf. Conley & Lambie, 2006:xi). Millions of words are processed, sorted, selected, checked, evaluated, edited, rewritten, typeset, laid out, burnt onto plates, printed and distributed. At community newspapers, this process repeats itself once (or twice) every seven days.

In chapter 2 (see 2.10.3), the researcher highlighted the principle functional areas of editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution (Pollard, 1937:19-20; Scott, 1999:1; Folkerts & Lacy, 2004:153; Harrower, 2010:25; see also Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21). These functions are supported by the organisational function that handles activities such as finances, human resources, technical support and maintenance (Biagi, 2003:83; Stovall, 2005:62; see also Stenberg, 1997:52; Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:111; Faure, 2001:349; Campbell *et al.*, 2004:285-286). In larger community newspaper organisations, these functions could be formal departments, for example the news, administration, sales and production sections at the Zoutnet Group that owns the *Limpopo Mirror* and the *Zoutpansberger* (Zoutnet, 2008; see also Milne *et al.*, 2006:62). Mostly, however, these functions are integrated. At the *Eastern Free State Issue* in Bethlehem, e.g., the production function falls within the editorial section (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:47). In very small organisations, these functions are often combined and managed by only one or two people (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:22, 35, 78). Roche (1996:22) rightly argued that quality journalism requires the integration of all these functions, no matter how a community newspaper is structured.

From a systems point of view and within the framework of the model, the functional areas could be illustrated as follows (fig. 8). The sections, in which the specific functions are discussed, are indicated in each instance:

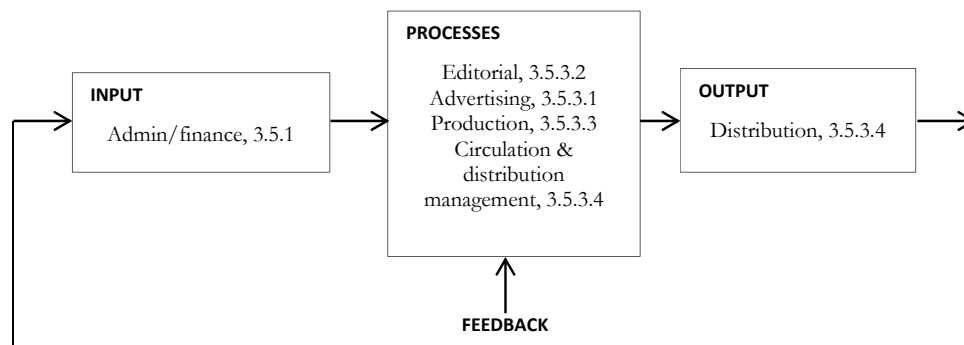


Figure 8: The main components of a newspaper organisation as a system.



### 3.5.1 Administration/finance: The organisational support function

As previously stated, the supportive administration/finance function includes activities such as financial management, human resources, maintenance and promotion/marketing (cf. Stovall, 2005:62; Biagi, 2003:83; Garrison, 1994:101). This function is important because it controls the resources an organisation needs to be successful (see 2.10.3). As such, it provides and controls capital, physical facilities, materials, training, equipment and technology. Notably, the administrative activities include establishing and directing “consistent, uniform policies” (Williams, 1978:14) and procedures. These are an important part of organisational culture (see 3.3) (Geel, 2005:19), and are vital in planning — an essential component of every process (see 3.4) (Oakland, 2005:1059). An important responsibility of the administration/finance function is “to see that efficiency is maintained and that each department understands the close relationship it has with all the others” (Williams, 1978:14).

This functional area also maintains relationships with the organisation’s environments (see 2.9). However, if the organisation were embedded in a larger organisation, as is the case with a chain-owned community newspaper, administration/finance would be subject to the control and policies of the larger system (cf. Churchman, 1968:75).

Goals must be set pertaining to achievements in the short and long term to fulfil strategic objectives. This includes what should be done to improve journalistic quality, and in advertising and circulation to improve the standing of the organisation in the market (Fink, 1996:107). Within a systems perspective, the importance of the administration/finance function lies in the fact that it is responsible for planning and assigning resources for the main constituencies to function. In this respect, administration/finance should determine the necessary capital, what the needs are in terms of human resources (i.e. personnel), “management talent, time, plant and equipment, newsprint and other supplies”, and then commit these (Fink, 1996:107). Administration/finance thus also caters for *inter alia*, “the processing of salaries and wages, personnel, debtors and creditors, and purchases” (Faure, 2001:352; see also Cushman, Millar & Anderson, 1978:125-126).

As mentioned in chapter 2, people are an important resource in the success of any organisation (see 2.7 and 2.10.3; see also 3.4). According to Rankin (1986:5), “Newspapers require large numbers of people because of the near round-the-clock deadline nature of the product.” Fink (1996:145) argued that the basic task “in personnel management is to obtain the best available talent at a cost your newspaper can afford and then establish an environment that will create and motivate staff of high morale to move the newspaper towards goals of improved quality, productivity and profitability”. In a community newsroom setting, for example, it is a challenge to recruit and retain high-quality newsroom staff (Addison, 2006:312) due to poor remuneration and government and large institutional poaching of skilled professionals/executives (Rau, 2009:8; cf. Mogel, 2000:39).

Industries and organisations, including community newspaper organisations, have to keep up with developments in technology to survive (Faure, 2001:360). Newspapers use technology such as computers and the Internet to collect, store, disseminate (Faure, 2001:361) as well as manage information, for example through content management systems (cf. Sibanda & Berger, 2006:13; Groves, 2009:97). These systems have to be operated and maintained, which is also the responsibility of administration/finance. Hedin, Fällström and Ionesco (1997) aptly explained the technological influence as follows:

Newspaper companies of today are highly computer based with many different local computerised production systems in use. Advertisements are booked and produced in one group of systems, stories and editorial material are produced in another group of systems and the final pages are produced in a third group of systems. The same structure holds for the entire process,

including circulation, printing, mailroom and distribution. The process is handled by a collection of heterogeneous local systems.

### 3.5.2 The community newspaper production process

Several researchers have produced diagrams or models depicting the newspaper production process in its entirety. These authors' contributions support the argument that editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution are the main functional areas of a community newspaper organisation as a system (see 2.10.3 and 3.5). In 1997, IFRA (the Inca-Fiej Research Association or the International Association for Newspaper and Media Technology) presented a basic model of newspaper production, illustrating newspaper production from a global view (Fällström, 1997:4). The model includes several "critical process stages: production planning, pre-press production, page output and plate making, printing, mailroom operations, and distribution operations" (Stenberg, Fällström & Enlund, 1998). The IFRA model, which details the output of each process, is seen in figure 9:

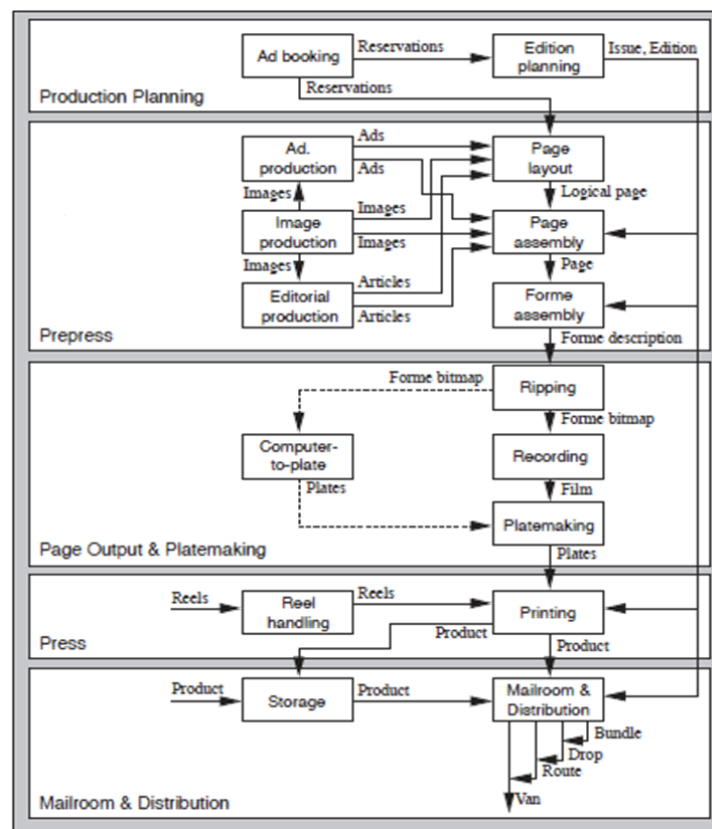


Figure 9: The IFRA model of newspaper production (Fällström, 1997:4).

Fällström *et al.* (1997) illustrated "the relationships between activities within the process", which they described in terms of "production flow and process information exchange" (fig. 10):

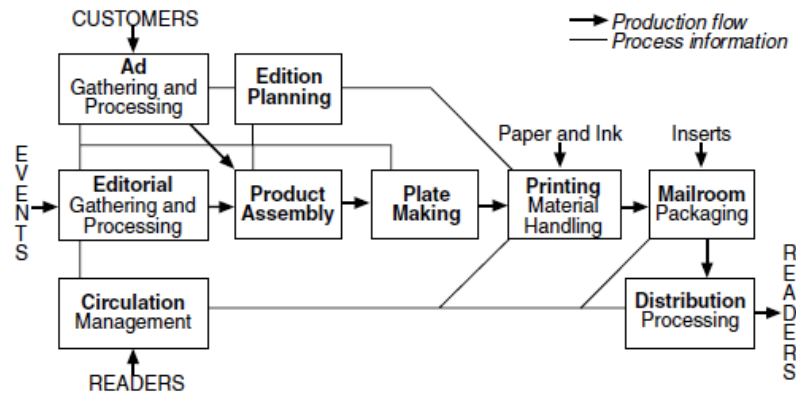


Figure 10: The newspaper production process, according to Fällström *et al.* (1997).

Scott (1999:8) provided a simpler view (cf. Butler, 2002:171), which closely resembles the processes in South African community newspapers as described by Milne *et al.* (2006). Scott (1999:6) divided the entire production process of the newspaper product into six sub-processes within two main, interconnected processes: original master production and duplication/distribution (Buckwalter, 2006:3 supports the division of the production into pre-press, press and post-press stages. On the contrary, Casanova and Cummings [2008] describe the computer-to-film and computer-to-plate phases as pre-press, and inserting, trimming and stacking as the main post-press processes.) The main processes are page and copy production process (fig. 11). According to Scott, these processes involve the four key components of a newspaper, i.e. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution:

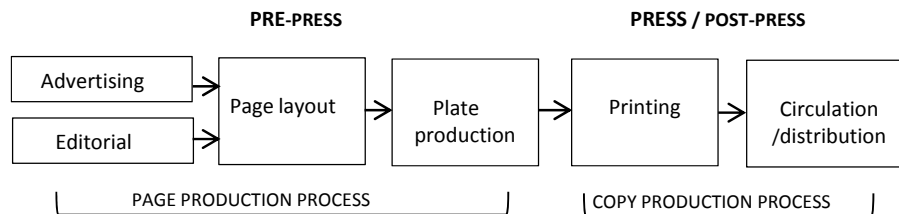


Figure 11: The newspaper production process according to Scott (1999:8).

Kipphan (2001:14-35) described a production chain of pre-press, press and post-press/finishing, which are connected by the flow of materials and data. Kipphan (2001:14) argued that, "Information and data are an essential requirement for the optimal and reliable functioning of individual production processes and equipment, and for efficient, high-quality, and economic production." This author illustrated the production flow as follows (fig. 12):

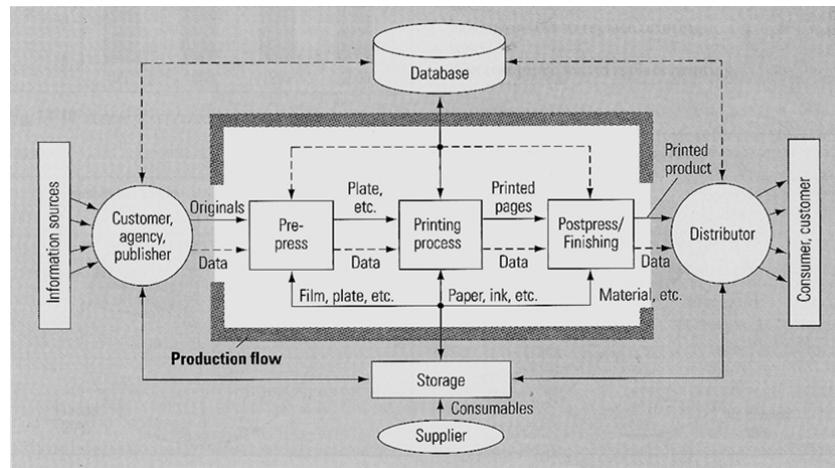


Figure 12: Kipphan's diagram of the production flow involved in producing print media.

Drawing from the above background and authors' contributions, the researcher suggests the following production process as appropriate for a community newspaper. Kipphan (2001:24) stated that pre-press includes all the steps before the actual printing of the product (cf. Scott, 1999:8), including composition (i.e. recording and formatting text, and page layout), reproduction of photographs and graphics, and assembly (i.e. page layout/make-up) and platemaking. This process thus theoretically includes the four processes Scott (1999:8) included in the pre-press stage (see fig. 10), which implies newsgathering and advertising procurement as well. Although Scott himself excluded these activities, he stated that other scholars argue they should be included (Scott, 1999:8). For the purpose of this study, all processes and activities before the actual printing of the newspaper resort under pre-press. The suggested production system thus consists of four interconnected processes — planning, pre-press, press, and post-press that act as input, process and output for one another (fig. 13). Once again, the specific paragraphs where the process or sub-process is scrutinised, are specified:

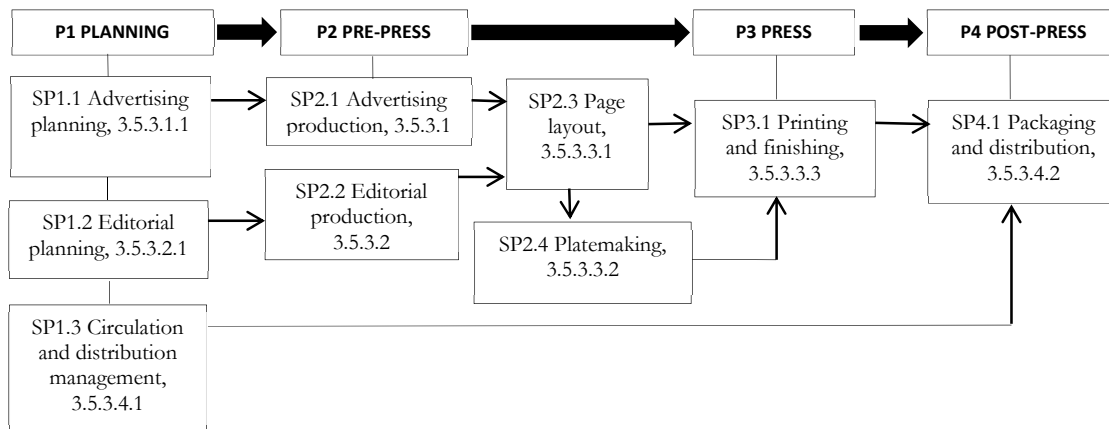


Figure 13: Suggested production system for a community newspaper.

In figure 14, the suggested production process (fig. 13) is depicted as a system:

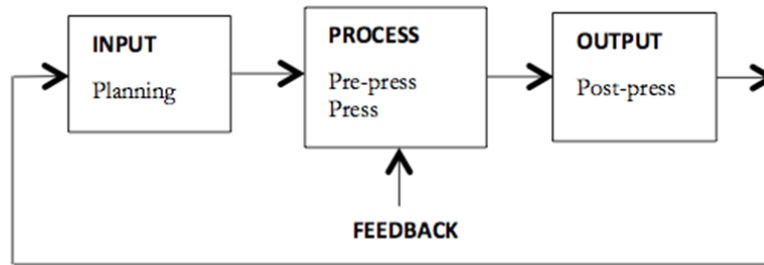


Figure 14: A suggested production system for an edition of a community newspaper.

The main functional areas of a community newspaper organisation will now be analysed. As stated previously, the content of a newspaper can be divided into two broad categories: information in the form of news, and advertising. Up till now, the researcher almost always listed the editorial function first, mainly because it is widely viewed as at the heart of a newspaper organisation (Faure, 2001:341; cf. Harrower, 2010:24; Deppa, 1982). However, because the advertising function is the important link between “the newspaper’s need for revenue and ... the competitive marketplace” (Fink, 1996:271), and its activities have a profound effect on the other functional areas in the newspaper organisation, this section will be explored first.

### 3.5.3 The operational functions: Advertising, editorial, production and circulation/distribution

To distinguish between the support and operational function, the key functions in a community newspaper organisation that are directly involved with producing the community newspaper product will be investigated in this section.

#### 3.5.3.1 The advertising function

The advertising function serves the other important customer in the newspaper market, namely the advertiser. In this section, money is generated to keep the newspaper afloat by selling advertising space to advertisers (Faure, 2001:352; Butler, 2002:189; Harrower, 2010:25). The section is responsible for the advertising content of a community newspaper by marketing the newspaper to advertisers, selling advertising space and reserving the space in the newspaper (SP1). The advertising function also provides creative services to advertisers, such as helping them to write, design and edit their advertisements (Stenberg, 1997:51; Noronha, 2004:179; Harrower, 2010:25). Advertisements provide people with information, make them aware of products, services and organisations, and help them choose between different products (De Klerk, 1998:326).

This section sells mainly two kinds of advertising: classified ads (i.e. small advertisements often published in a separate classified section) and retail and display ads (of different sizes that run under and next to news stories, frequently containing line-art or photographic illustrations) (Scott, 1999:4; Greer, 1999:11; Pattis, 2004:82; MacRury, 2009:95; Harrower, 2010:25) that co-exist with editorial content on the editorial pages (Stenberg, 1997:63). Williams (1978:37) further subdivided the latter into local display advertising and general/national advertising. Other forms of advertising include advertorials<sup>54</sup> (advertising

<sup>54</sup> Conley and Lamble (2006:399) argue that advertising features are “the most public and glaring example of journalism being influenced by commercial considerations” and results from advertising representatives selling advertising based on

features [Conley & Lamble, 2006:399]), promotional articles (Faure, 2001:352) and commercial inserts (Stenberg, 1997:82). Special supplements or focus pages, e.g. career or holiday guides that contain editorial copy as well, are also used to increase advertising revenue. According to Fink (1996:289), “Classifieds yield highest per-page profit for most newspapers.” Classified advertisements also rank high with readers as “favourite news coverage”. Notably, “The advertising in a newspaper, both in its content and its graphic quality, should reflect the good taste and the quality of the publication.” (Cushman *et al.*, 1978:102) Factors most important to advertisers are the editorial quality of the publication, its overall appearance, trends in circulation, and the newspaper’s standing among the competition (Pattis, 2004:85). Furthermore, advertisers expect their advertisements to have a positive effect on sales (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:22).

The volume of advertising space sold determines the size of the newspaper, which is influenced by the advertising/editorial ratio and extras (e.g. loose, zoned sections or entertainment sections) (Mencher, 2011:65; Faure, 2001:345; Scott, 1994:4). (In its definition of a newspaper [see 1.4], the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa [ABC] requires a minimum of 35% editorial content over a reporting period [ABC, 2011], as well as a minimum of eight pages.) The advertising section should thus have a dynamic sales strategy to reach its goals, “in consonance with strategies of other departments, particularly news and circulation” (Fink, 1996:277; cf. Swanepoel & Steyn, 2008). Such a strategy should focus on the local nature of the newspaper and the acceptance of readers not just as a news tool, but also as a shopping tool (see 2.10.3) (Fink, 1996:277). Evaluation and control in terms of whether the individual and departmental goals were met are important (Fink, 1996:297).

Because the advertising function is the important link between “the newspaper’s need for revenue and ... the competitive marketplace”, it should operate in an environment that maximises its efficiency in both the external and internal environments (Fink, 1996:271). To this end, appropriate human and financial resources and support are necessary. Appropriate equipment and technology includes a “computer-based sales and management system for advertising” (Stenberg, 1997:63). Depending on the newspaper organisation’s size, the number of sub-units and personnel in the advertising function varies (Rankin, 1986:40). However, there should at least be a manager/director, someone responsible for national/general advertising, and a person responsible for local retail advertising (cf. Fink, 1996:272). Another key person is someone who creates advertisements for customers (Fink, 1996:272). This is particularly important in a community newspaper environment, where such services are in high demand due to the kind of advertiser these newspapers serve (i.e. local retailers [cf. Bentley, 1998]). Most advertising representatives work on commission basis (cf. Cushman *et al.*, 1978:94), but some get basic remuneration as well. Fink (1996:297) argued that although commission-based remuneration is a strong incentive, it does not build employee loyalty. It could also lead to representatives neglecting administrative duties and service to existing clients.

Thus, linking to Diederichs and De Beer’s (1998:111) descriptions of human resources in the newsroom (see 3.2.2.1), one can distinguish between the following in the community newspaper advertising department: people who market the newspaper, those who sell advertising to existing clients, recruit new prospects (i.e. “prospecting” [Rajput & Vasishth, 2008:12.2]) (cf. Pattis, 2004:84), and service these clients (i.e. advertising “reps”), those who create advertisements and the person that physically maps an edition (i.e. place the advertisements on the pages). In addition to the marketing, sales and production activities, there are managerial activities such as allocating sales/service resources, developing new sources

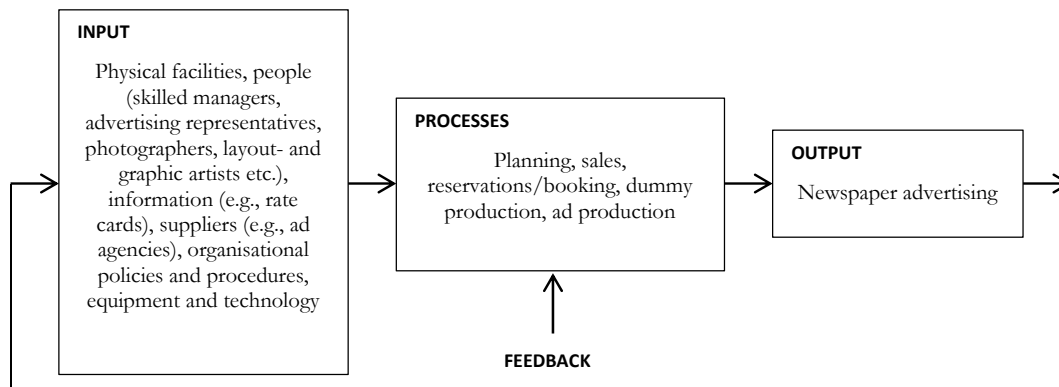
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the promise that a reporter will write a story in connection with it as well. However, stories not connected to a particular advertiser are seen as legitimate (Conley & Lamble, 2006:401).

of revenue (Rankin, 1986:42), and administrative tasks such as invoicing and record keeping that need to be performed (Stenberg, 1997:52). After-sales services include dealing with customer complaints, for example about the position of their advertisement in the newspaper, and the quality of reproduction (Rankin, 1986:42).

Bentley (1998) stated that, “The mainstay of community newspaper advertising is the retail advertiser, often a smaller business operated by the owner.” Contrary, one of the biggest challenges facing independent community newspapers in South Africa is breaking into the national advertising market (Milne *et al.*, 2006:16). Several bodies provide support, such as the MDDA, the Forum for Community Journalists, and the PMSA (Milne *et al.*, 2006:16). Capro Limited (see 1.3) has, since its inception in 1950, played an important role in the development of the community newspaper market (Capro Limited, 2011). It is “an independent representative body of media owners that specifically represents community newspapers in Southern Africa ... to advertisers and advertising agencies in South Africa” and represents 110 titles. The Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB), a division of Caxton & CTP Publishers & Printers, provides the same service to the 150 community newspapers in this stable (NAB, 2011). Organisations such as Capro Limited and the NAB would then be suppliers. To acquire materials from these suppliers for its outputs, the community newspaper organisation would need access to its environments (Glans *et al.*, 1968:65). It has been suggested locally and abroad that community papers that do not have access to suppliers such as these stand a better chance to secure national advertising if they unite their efforts (Fink, 1996:287; Mogel, 2000:35; Milne *et al.*, 2006:17).

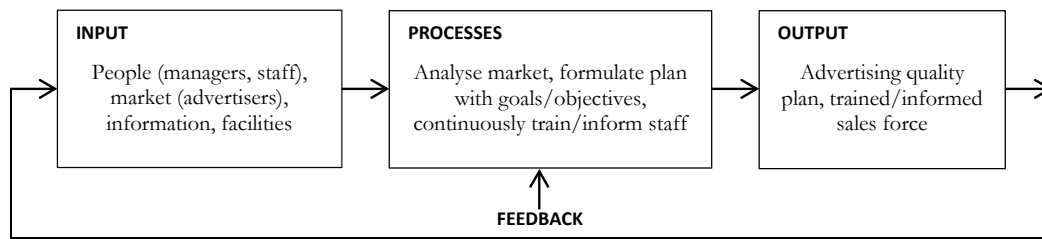
Against the above background, and taking the suggested production system (fig. 13 and 14) and the input summarised in table 13 (see 2.10.3) into account, the advertising component as a sub-system of the community newspaper organisation and its key processes are illustrated in figure 15:



**Figure 15: The advertising component as a sub-system. (See the macro model in 2.11, fig. 5.)**

The key advertising processes will subsequently be identified. The researcher will identify total processes using the input-transformation-output method, but will highlight subroutines and exceptions with more details where necessary (cf. Beckford, 2002:212), using low-level process maps (see also 3.4.1) (cf. Page, 2010:78, 81; see also Seath, 2006:1). In addition, the researcher will follow Case's (2006:107, 111) recommendation in applying the systems model by first identifying the outputs, followed by the inputs and then detailing the process component (see 3.4.1). Each diagram will be followed by a brief description of the process. The processes will be presented according to the process framework created in the suggested production system (see figure 14).

### 3.5.3.1.1 Advertising planning – SP1.1



**Figure 16: The advertising planning process (SP1.1).**

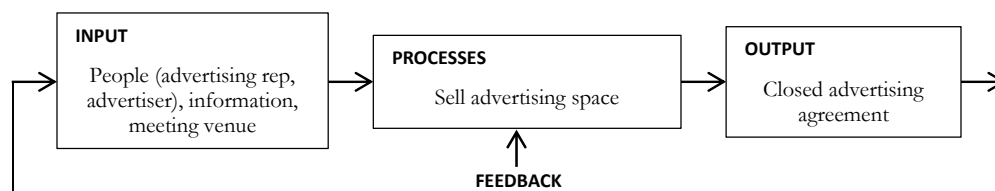
Planning entails several activities, both on a managerial and a staff level. In the planning phase, managers should analyse the market in respect of the type of advertisers, the competition, and the community newspaper's strengths and weaknesses. Managers should then formulate an advertising plan as well as goals and objectives. This phase also includes advertising marketing to raise awareness about the publication in the market (Fink, 1996:195; cf. Fällström, 1997:4). Planning also requires gathering as much information as possible about a prospective client (Rajput & Vasishth, 2008:12.9).

Fink (1996:296) included (continuous) training and recruiting the sales force in the planning stage. He argued that successful selling relies on listening carefully, understanding how the prospect is thinking and responding accordingly. Sales representatives should be ego-driven, goal-oriented and organised (Fink, 1996:296). Furthermore, the sales force has to be informed about organisational objectives and goals, *as well as* changes and improvements in editorial, and successes in circulation. It is vital that advertising representatives know the newspaper product as well as their clients (Editors of the Harvard Post, 1978:98; Pattis, 2004:84; Rajput & Vasishth, 2008:12.10).

### 3.5.3.1.2 Advertising production – SP2.1

The advertising production process (SP2.1 in fig. 13) can be broken down into four sub-processes: advertising sales (APSP1), advertising reservations/bookings (APSP2), dummy production (APSP3), and advertisement creation (APSP4).

- Advertising sales (APSP1):



**Figure 17: The advertising sales process (APSP1).**

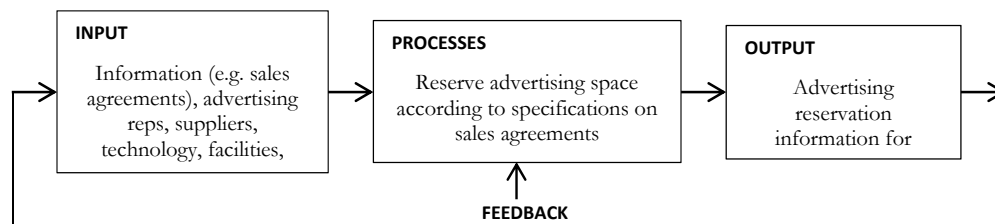
The advertising representative is the primary (and often only) contact between the (community) newspaper and the advertiser (Bentley, 1998). If it is a new client, the representative gathers as much information as possible about the advertiser, and then sets up a meeting to explain the costs/benefits of advertising (cf. Fällström *et al.*, 1997). The representative should build a personal relationship with the



client (Pattis, 2004:84). At many community newspapers, representatives still sell advertising door-to-door (i.e. “cold-canvassing” [Rajput & Vasishth, 2008:12.3-12.4]), armed with (ABC audited) circulation figures and other marketing information about the publication (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:27). Information such as advertising policy and rates, deadlines, formats, circulation and market information, and audience demographics is usually printed on a rate card (Fink, 1996:287). The representative should also be informed about issues such as frequency discounts for multiple insertions (cf. Mogel, 2000:153).

Once the advertiser has decided to buy advertising space and has agreed on size, date, frequency and perhaps position, the advertising agreement is closed. Sometimes advertisers do have suitable material that can be used, but often community newspapers assist clients in designing and creating advertisements. The advertising representative thus discusses ideas for the advertisement with the client (MacRury, 2009:61; Bentley, 1998). This includes issues such as what the advertiser wants to communicate, the general aim and style of the advertisement (MacRury, 2009:61).

- Advertising reservations/booking (APSP2):

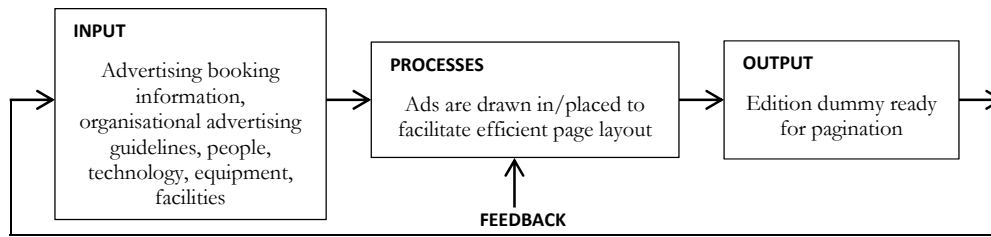


**Figure 18: The advertising reservations/booking process (APSP2).**

Once advertising space has been sold, the details (i.e. size and frequency [Mogel, 2000:153]) should be entered into the particular reservation system (e.g. advertising management system) that is in place at the newspaper (Bentley, 1998; Fällström *et al.*, 1997; Stenberg, 1997:64). If national advertising is procured through external suppliers such as Capro Limited and the NAB, the community newspaper’s advertising section will receive the external advertising material from the suppliers and enter it into the booking system before routing it forward (see 3.2.2.1) (Fällström *et al.*, 1997). The digital material could be distributed via telecommunication networks or digital storage media (Stenberg, 1997:52).

Advertising can be booked months in advance. This mainly happens when an advertiser wants large, full colour display advertisements in specific positions in the paper (Stenberg, 1997:81), or in cases where, e.g., the advertiser has agreed on a campaign of three months (Mogel, 2000:153). Every community newspaper has a specific deadline when booking for a specific edition closes, and often the bookings made during the last hours before the final closing are restricted to relatively simple classified ads (Stenberg, 1997:81). The reservation information is then forwarded for edition planning.

- Dummy production (APSP3):

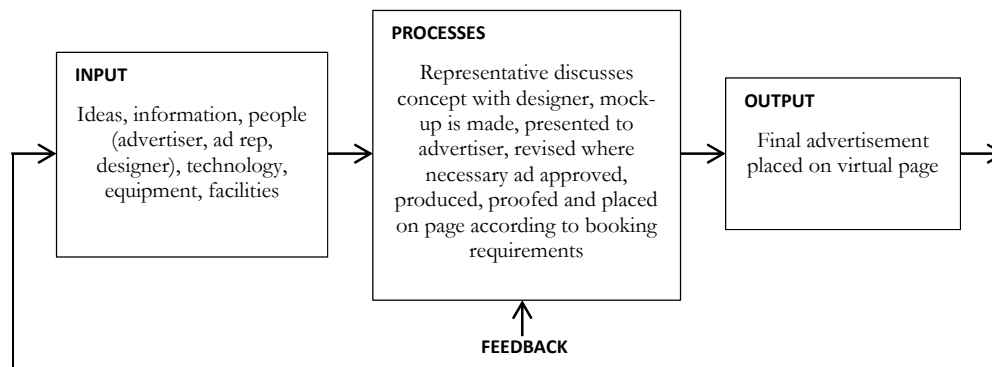


**Figure 19: The dummy production process (APSP3).**

The person responsible for physically planning the pages for a specific edition of the community newspaper uses the advertising reservation information to virtually place blocks of colour (representing the advertisements) according to the booking requirements (i.e. size and position) (Mogel, 2000:153; cf. Fällström *et al.*, 1997; cf. Borgen, 1996:97). This is the “ad dummy” that will be used for editorial planning and page layout (or pagination<sup>55</sup>) thus “dictating the shape of the newshole [editorial is] left with” (Harrower, 2008:98).

Newspaper policy/guidelines usually dictate whether the front page carries any advertising, and how much advertising is placed on the first few pages. This should direct the dummy creating process. However, ad placement inevitably limits the page designer’s freedom (Faure, 2001:537). The advertising and editorial staff should thus communicate to ensure that the advertising is stacked or dummied in a way that creates efficient newsholes — whichever format is used (Harrower, 2008:98). Once finished, the dummy can be forwarded to the editorial section (cf. Stenberg, 1997:52). If the community newspaper uses a content management system, the virtual pages could just be left on the system where they would be accessible by whoever needed to work on them (Scott, 1999:5).

- Advertisement creation (APSP4):



**Figure 20: The advertisement creation process (APSP4).**

As soon as advertising space has been sold and booked, the process of drafting and mock-up towards the final advertisement starts (MacRury, 2009:61; see also Borgen, 1996:97; Stenberg, 1997:63). The advertising representative discusses the concept with the creative person (e.g., graphic artist or other designer), who comes up with a concept. The advertisement is drafted and presented to the advertiser for approval (Bentley, 1998; Noronha, 2004:179). Once approved, the final ad is created, proofed for errors

<sup>55</sup> Pagination is defined as “the process of designing pages using computer software” (Bowles & Borden, 2011, 246).

and placed on the page (Scott, 1999:5; Fällström *et al.*, 1997). When external suppliers such as advertising agencies perform the pre-press production of advertisements, the material is forwarded for placement as soon as it is received (cf. Glans *et al.*, 1968:59; Editors of the Harvard Post, 1978:97; Stenberg, 1997:50; De Klerk, 1998:325).

### 3.5.3.2 The editorial function

Information is transformed into news by the editorial function, which is at the heart of a newspaper organisation (Deppa, 1982; Faure, 2001:341; cf. Harrower, 2010:24). Leiter *et al.* (2000:18) summarise the responsibilities of this section eloquently (cf. Fällström *et al.*, 1997; Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:111; Greer, 1999:10; Scott, 1999:4, 9; Faure, 2001:352; Harrower, 2010:24-25; Bowles & Borden, 2011:12-14):

The function of the newspaper's editorial department is to gather news from various sources and to write it into readable, interesting stories, edit them and plan how they will be displayed on the printed pages. Other functions of the editorial department are to instruct or influence the public through editorials, commentary and analysis, as well as to entertain the public through its by-lined columns, comics and other features.

The editorial function thus comprises news management (planning and selection), news creation (reporting and writing, as well as sub-/copy-editing), photography and graphic design, and news presentation (layout and design). Many community newspapers also have a Web page and the editorial section is also responsible for preparing stories for this online version (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:18).

Due to the tight deadlines that characterise the work in any newspaper environment, time is “a major production constraint” (Pearson, Brand, Archbold & Rane, 2001:141). These pressures of time and space — both the size of the newshole and actual column space — have led to established news work routines (Groves, 2009:141, quoting Graber, 1980 and Tuchman, 1978). “[Tuchman] discusses how pressures of deadlines have created rhythms of work and how past experience with the unfolding of news has led news workers to develop classifications of newsworthy occurrences, which then influence the assignment of newsworthiness to events.” (Pearson *et al.*, 2001:139-140.) The pressures of time and space thus influence how news is judged, and how the newsroom operates. Hard or breaking news, for example, is urgent, and a journalist needs to act quickly or miss the opportunity (Tuchman, 1980:51). In practice, however, printing might be delayed in the event of important breaking news.

To fulfil its mandate “to produce a profitable product”, a newspaper relies on people and “a tried and trusted infrastructure”, according to Diederichs and De Beer (1998:111). The number of people employed in a community newsroom and the positions they hold depends on the size and structure of the newspaper (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:18). Research showed that a higher staff ratio often indicates higher quality (Edmonds, 2004, quoted by Groves, 2009:15). Diederichs and De Beer (1998:111) distinguished between three groups in the editorial department: those who decide on news (news managers, e.g. editors), those who gather the news (journalists and photographers), and those who process it for publication (sub-editors and page layout editors) (cf. Faure, 2001:350; Stovall & Mullins, 2006:185). News managers, journalists, photographers and designers/page layout editors thus work together to plan the news. The journalists and photographers then gather information and transform it into news (stories, photographs and/or graphics) fit for publishing through writing, photography and editing processes. The copy/sub-editors edit the stories and write headlines, while the page layout editors design the pages (cf. Fällström *et al.*, 1997; Scott, 1999:4). Most newspapers have a unique look or identity, although newspapers that are part of a chain might look similar (e.g. a number of Media24's community

newspapers in the Free State [Smith, 2009]). This identity is determined by the newspaper's design (Faure, 2001:345; cf. Froneman, Swanepoel & Van Rooyen, 2005:162). Due to technological development, page layout (or paste-up) has migrated from the production function where it was traditionally seated to the editorial function. It is thus discussed in broad terms here, but process identification will be scrutinised in 3.5.4, in line with the suggested production process diagram (fig. 13) in 3.5.

The bigger the newspaper, the more complex its structure is, which would mean special sections for sports, entertainment etc. (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:23). However, at small community newspapers with only a handful of staff members, all the topics still have to be covered (cf. Harrower, 2010:26) — even if the sections are limited. In a community newsroom structure, staff members throw in their weight wherever they are needed (cf. Leiter *et al.*, 2000:18; Milne *et al.*, 2006:42). For example, reporters typically cover more than one beat (topic area), and could be expected to help with tasks such as sub-editing and/or proofreading or even page layout. The editor could also function as the news editor and even photographic editor, and reporters often double up as photographers (cf. Stovall, 2005:74). The copy-editor often functions as page layout editor as well (see 3.5.1) (cf. Faure, 2001:349-351). In many small newsrooms, the publisher might be owner, editor and reporter (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:21). Editors usually also write editorials. Community newspapers owned by a chain might receive editorials from the head office as well (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:22).

According to Leiter *et al.* (2000:21), the news production process has changed dramatically since the late 1970s. Computers are used to write stories, edit them and write headlines, design/compose and paste up pages — a process internationally often referred to as pagination (Bowles & Borden, 2011:10; Mogel, 2000:131). The digital pages are sent via computer from the newsroom for final production. Computerisation has made newspaper production faster and more efficient (cf. Greer, 1999:9). New technology such as high-speed cameras, scanners, laser printers, improvement in colour reproduction, and imaging and pagination software “broadened the appeal of dazzling graphics” (Bowles & Borden, 2011:217). However, to keep up with technological development requires substantial financial commitment, because a shortage of computers, for example, could seriously affect deadlines (Weza, 2006:23). Furthermore, Greer (1999:9) rightly argued that reporters’ basic tasks of newsgathering and reporting have not changed: “This work is the main function of the newspaper itself and will not change even if newspapers become entirely electronic.” Scanlan (2000:21) agreed, stating that technology changes how news is gathered and presented, “but the process of thinking about news remains the same”.

Lauterer (2006a:308) emphasises the high turnover in community newsrooms as a quality challenge. Community newsrooms are generally made up of entry-level people, because their papers are often seen as a stepping-stone towards positions at larger newspapers (Rosenstiel, 1993, quoted by Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:53). It is also not exceptional that managers reach this level very early on in their careers. This often makes it difficult to manage editorial quality (Lauterer, 2006a:340). However, the researcher argues that providing less experienced staff members with clear and logical process-based guidelines, community newspapers could maintain and improve the level of quality they strive for.

Against this background, the editorial function as a sub-system of the community newspaper organisation and its key production processes could be illustrated as follows (fig. 21):

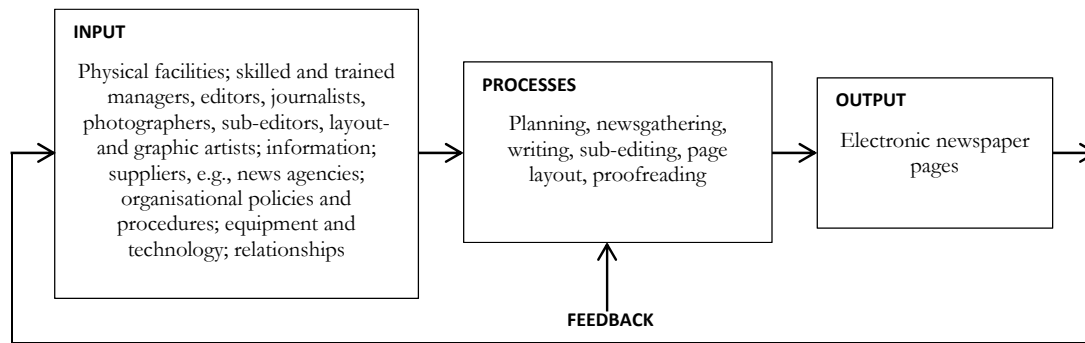


Figure 21: The editorial component as a sub-system. (See the macro model in 2.11, fig. 5.)

The key editorial processes will now be identified, following the same method as described in 3.5.2 (see also 3.4.1). Presentation will once again be consistent with the process framework in the suggested production system depicted in figure 13.

#### 3.5.3.2.1 Editorial planning – SP1.2

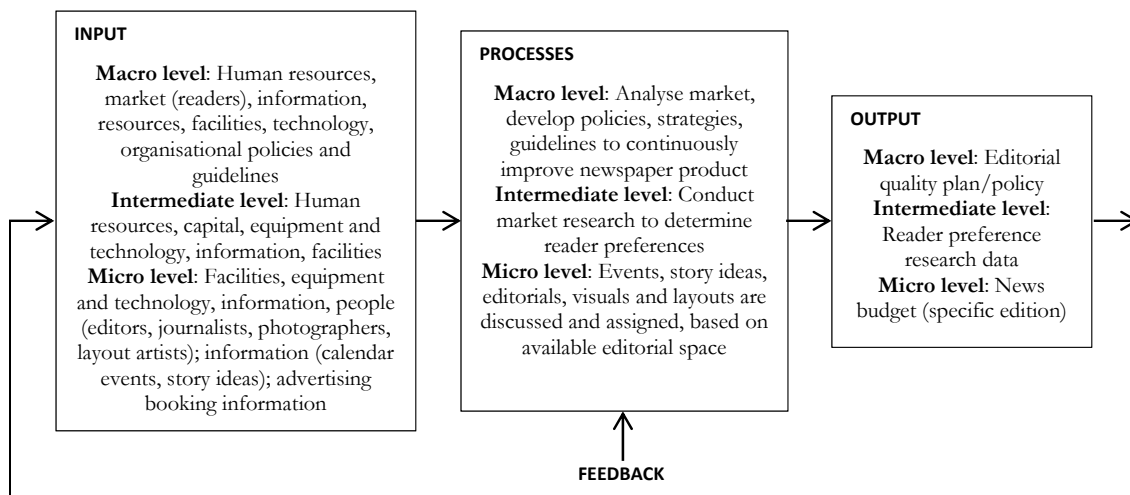


Figure 22: The editorial planning process (SP1.2).

Editorial planning in a community newspaper organisation involves decisions that affect the operations of the publication and its ultimate quality and success, as well as decisions about every edition. Planning on a macro level should thus include decisions about issues such as design, sections to accommodate new news topics, allocating more resources to, e.g., investigative journalism, reaching a younger audience, evaluating the quality of reporting in specific areas, and the use of training consultants (cf. Mogel, 2000:74-75; cf. Weza, 2006:21). In chapter 2 the researcher established that planning includes developing and deploying policies and strategies, setting up appropriate partnerships and resources and designing in quality (see table 14 in 2.11) (Oakland, 2005:1059). On an intermediate level, planning for quality includes recruiting and hiring skilled journalists and target audience research (see 2.9) (Modoux, 2010:10).

It is a challenge for community newspapers to serve a diversity of cultures and classes as part of a whole community (see also 3.3.1.14), to compete with several different information sources for the attention of

the community, and to engage younger readers who prefer news in a modern technological format (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:211). These authors (2007:216-217), supported by Blom (2004:46), argue that community newspapers should strive to understand the changing needs, tastes and trends in their communities through a new form of market research. Community newspaper organisations should gather information about how people live their lives, why and how they use the news, what they are worried about. This kind of research helps organisations make judgements and design news packages that are “comprehensive and proportionate to their communities and their needs” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007:219).

As stated previously, a community newspaper typically serves the reader as customer by creating a product that fulfils the reader’s needs and expectations. One-size-fits-all does not work anymore. Addison (2006b:30) argues that, “People are empowered, better educated and want information that is unique and relevant to them as individuals, delivered to them in a way that appeals to their personal sensibilities.” Hence, audience research is vital (Scanlan, 2000:17; ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:28). A community newspaper organisation should see the audience as citizens/consumers with a stake in the news they receive. However, an audience should be regarded not just in terms of demographics, but also in term of the different roles people play in their personal and social lives (Scanlan, 2000:17). Notably, audience research is a form of quality control, because it involves feedback from the reader.

On a micro level, the editorial function is responsible for planning page elements such as stories, images and graphics (Stenberg, 1997:52), because it is responsible for producing complete digital pages containing editorial and advertising content (cf. Stenberg, 1997:81) for a specific edition of the paper (cf. Pearson *et al.*, 2001:146; Weza, 2006:22; Groves, 2009:53). Fällström *et al.* (1997) argued that the planning function is “an iterative process, balancing advertising reservations and editorial requests within the space available”. Furthermore, the planning process needs to be flexible, because the “precise content of a newspaper is usually only determined shortly before it is printed” (Scott, 1999:10). As explained in 3.5.2, the advertising volume determines the size of a newspaper. Advertising bookings are accepted up to a specific deadline (see 3.5.2.3), and advertising and editorial managers work together to balance these reservations and editorial requests within the available space (Fällström *et al.*, 1997). However, the production of the editorial content runs parallel to this process. “Newspaper publishing thus contains numerous parallel sub-processes that must be handled with a view to an overall production plan” (Scott, 1999:10).

### 3.5.3.2.2 Editorial production – SP2.2

News (i.e. editorial) production involves newsgathering (reporting) (EPSP1), writing (EPSP2) and sub-editing (EPSP3). According to Pearson *et al.* (2001:145), “This function is a composite of story and graphics creation, image processing and editing.” Scanlan (2000:60) argued that newsgathering and writing are entwined and that a reporter often circles back and forth. According to this author (Scanlan, 2000:59), the process of reporting and writing the news comprises six steps (fig. 23):

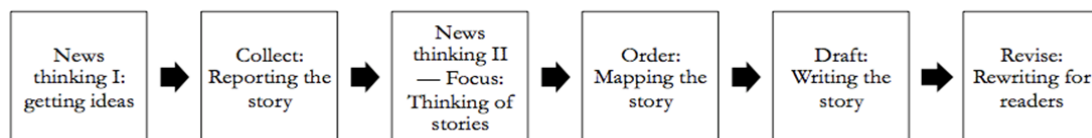


Figure 23: Scanlan's 6-step process of reporting and writing.

Reporters get ideas and information through a variety of sources, including colleagues in the newsroom, wire services, other media (including social media), the newspaper's correspondents in its circulation area, and through individuals and organisations such as local governments, the police and courts, non-governmental organisations, schools, churches, and members of the community (cf. Leiter *et al.*, 2000:25-27; Glaser, 2007; Harrower, 2010:70). Reporters are generally assigned one or more beats (i.e. topics) and have to make sure they have contact with the individuals and organisations where news on a specific beat originates. When a reporter is sent to cover an event or story, he/she gathers the facts through several methods; including research, interviewing those involved, careful note taking and observation (cf. see also Leiter *et al.*, 2000:27; Pearson *et al.*, 2001:146; Ansell, 2005:35, 55-104; Harrower, 2010:72, 74, 76, 78). Greer (1999:55) rightly said: "One of the basic rules of journalism is that the more information you uncover, the sounder your judgements will be and the more accurate your story will be, too." One important source of information is a newspaper's own archives or library, where clippings and photographs are kept — in physical and/or digital format (Jjuuko, 2006:67; see also Leiter *et al.*, 2000:24). A community newspaper's library would also include material such as reference books, dictionaries and maps to help journalists gather background information.

To be able to report and write, reporters need physical tools (tangibles) and electronic tools (software, databases, search engines). Scanlan (2000:26) calls the latter "new reporting and research tools" that give reporters access a wealth of information. He (2000:27) also identifies mental tools (i.e. intangibles): "They include your attitude and other characteristics of good journalists, such as persistence, commitment to accuracy, fairness and courage that represent the reporter's mind-set." Apart from the Internet, WWW and e-mail (Scanlan, 2000:41-45), reporters also need notebooks, computers (including laptops and modems/wireless connections), telephones, digital voice recorders and cellular phones (cf. Greer, 1999:9; Scanlan, 2000:27; Harrower, 2010:30). Vital skills include typing and shorthand/brief-hand (Scanlan, 2000:30-31, 37-38; Harrower, 2010:76-77). Scanlan (2000:40) further emphasises visual journalism skills, stating that reporters should be able to identify material for a chart/graphic that could enhance their story, as well as work with photographers. Visual skills are especially important for journalists in a community newspaper environment, because they often are their own photographers (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:23). Moreover, in an online context multi-media storytelling is becoming increasingly important.

Newsgathering does not only involve collecting information, but also images. According to Leiter *et al.* (2000:196), the moments captured by press photographers are vital to every modern newspaper. These photographs document the news and serve as a "permanent visual record of history". Photographs are generally used in connection with news, but often pictures tell their own stories. These are stand-alone pictures with only a caption (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:197). Large community newspapers might employ a chief photographer, but most often photographers would get their assignments from the editor or news editor. Photographers might accompany a reporter on a story, or cover an event on their own — once again depending on the size of the organisation. In many cases, reporters at community newspapers serve as photographers too (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:23, 196). Thanks to digital cameras, photographs as accessible almost as soon as they are taken (Mogel, 2000:58).

Once back in the office, the photographer imports the photographs into the computer system (Harrower, 2008:118). Once the news budget is finalised and the photographs selected, the page designer will import the images into the page layout programme and place them on the pages (Harrower, 2008:116). Printed photographs (or other graphic material) that are submitted to the newspaper, can be scanned and converted to digital format using appropriate technology and software (Bowles & Borden, 2011:219), and then treated in the same way as original digital photographs. The production steps (fig. 24) have been gradually reduced thanks to technology (Monni, 1996, quoted in Stenberg, 1997:66):

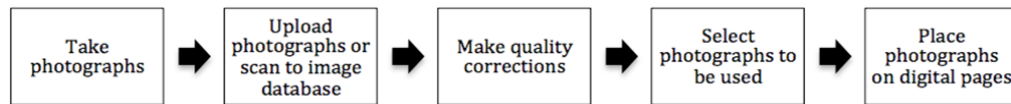


Figure 24: The image production process.

The newsgathering process (EPSP1) would then include the first two steps in figure 22 and the first two steps in figure 23. Following the input-transformation-output approach, it can be depicted as follows (fig. 25):

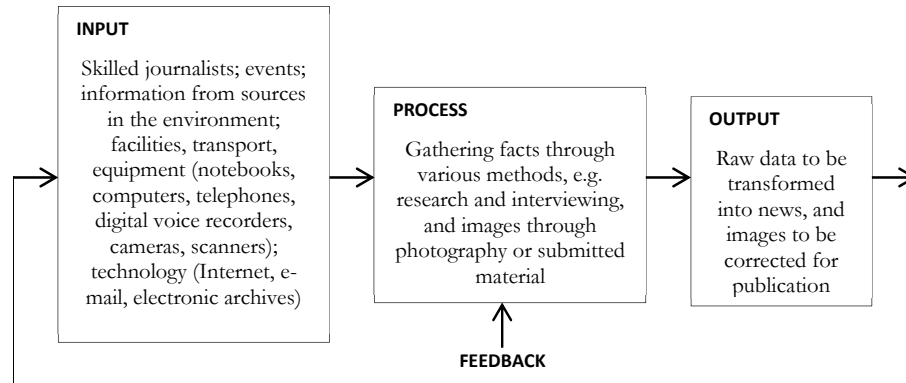


Figure 25: The newsgathering process (EPSP1).

Once a reporter has gathered the facts for the story, he/she returns to the office to start the writing process (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:27). This process (EPSP2) can be illustrated as follows (fig. 26):

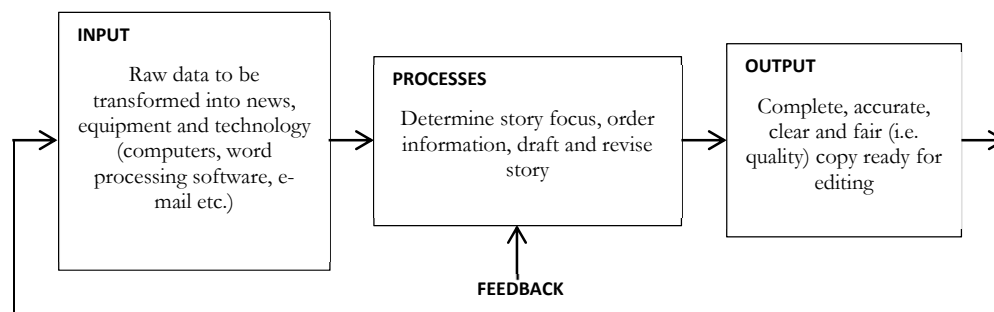


Figure 26: The writing process (EPSP2).

As stated in 3.4, writing is a process that describes the way reporters work (Scanlan, 2000:59). According to Ansell (2005:23, 34), “A story starts with the writer’s purpose and the reader’s needs, carves out a well-defined, manageable area of reality, explores it in as detailed and balanced a way as possible, and leaves readers feeling that they know more than they did before reading [but] that they are still interested.”

However, before a reporter can start writing, he/she needs to state the focus of the story (i.e. “what is the story about?”) and map/order the information gathered (steps three and four in fig. 20) to form an outline of the story structure (cf. Scanlan, 2000:87-90). The story is then drafted and revised (steps five and six)



to make sure it is complete, accurate, fair and clear (Greer, 1999:10; Scanlan, 2000:96; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:184; see also Harrower, 2010:52). The reporter then files the story in the system. The news editor retrieves the story, reads it (primarily for content and style [Bowles & Borden, 2011:13]), approves it or sends it back for rewriting. If the editor approves the story, it is filed for copy/sub-editing (Greer, 1999:10; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:28; Maher, 2006:43). Community newspapers that do not have a formal content management system often use e-mail to direct copy flow between especially reporters and editors. News editors can also save stories onto a shared network directory (cf. Maher, 2006:43).

Community newspapers could also get editorial material (stories and photographs) through subscriptions to news agencies (wire services) such as the South African Press Association, a non-governmental agency established in 1938 (SAPA, 2011), or the African Eye News Service, an independent grassroots agency in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga (LinkedIn, 2011). In the organisational systems context, the news agencies would be external suppliers of input. This material would be fed into the system for editing. However, the International Standardisation and Accreditation Services (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:35) notes that material from external sources can affect the quality of newspaper production, because these sources might not adhere to the same standards of quality.

### 3.5.3.2.3 News editing (EPSP3)

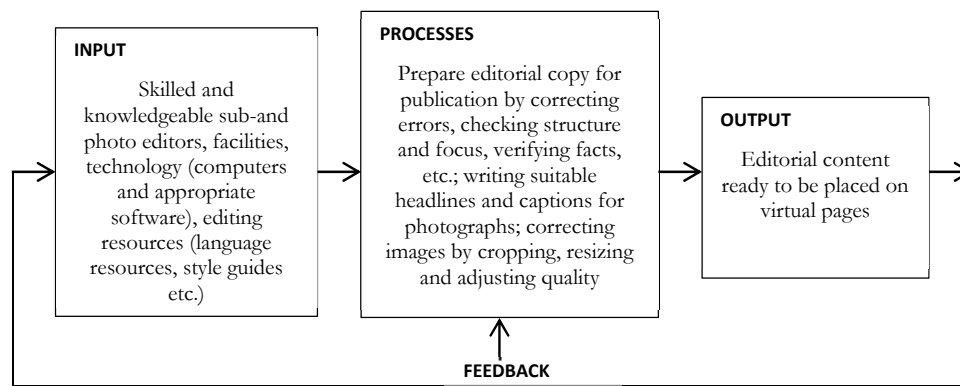


Figure 27: The news editing process (EPSP3).

Sub-editors “are the last line of defence before a newspaper goes to press” (Brooks, Pinson & Sissors, 2005:33; cf. Bowler & Borden, 2011:11). Greer (1999:139) defined sub-editing as “the assembling, preparing, modifying and condensing of written material for publication, that is, putting the material together, correcting or altering it, making it shorter where necessary”. How the copy flows, depends on the structure of the newsroom, the work routines, and the available technology.

According to Brooks *et al.* (2005:45), most experienced editors divide the sub-editing process into three steps (fig. 28):

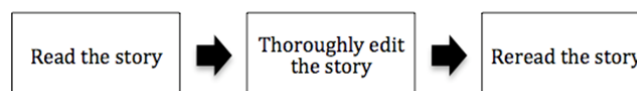


Figure 28: Sub-editing process steps.

Sub-editors thus carefully read all stories and other editorial items on the computer for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation, facts and style, as well as legal and ethical problems. Every news organisation has customised style guidelines governing issues such as the use of titles in stories, word choice, etc. Sub-editors are responsible for standardising editorial style (Harrower, 2010:56; see also Brooks *et al.*,

2005:43). They also write suitable headlines for the stories (Greer, 1999:10; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:23, 28; Harrower, 2010:54) to capture readers' attention (Bowles & Borden, 2011:6). The sub-editor also checks the story length (Greer, 1999:10), depending on the system that is used in the newsroom. Wire copy is also edited according to the style of the publication and given a headline. Once the story has been edited, it goes back to the chief sub-editor or person who is responsible for the final check (Greer, 1999:10-11).

It is evident that several people handle a single news story before it is published. This provides many opportunities for verification of the information, but also creates room for error, for example changes in meaning (Pearson *et al.*, 2001:146). However, community newsrooms are often small and may have only one sub-editor. That person may have other duties too, which could influence the quality of news copy. In addition, deadline pressures can often be blamed for these problems (cf. Brooks *et al.*, 2005:45). Pearson *et al.* (2001:147) also found that, "Newspapers, despite their reputation for a series of editing checkpoints, sometimes allowed the copy to go through to publication almost unchanged. Headlines, a powerful signal of meaning, are often only viewed by a single sub-editor."

The image editing process involves the third and fourth steps in figure 23. The photographer or photo editor selects the best images and makes quality corrections using appropriate software (Harrower, 2008:118). Mistakes such as distracting backgrounds, poor exposure or colour balance can be retouched, but "it is unethical to alter or manipulate the integrity of any data in the picture" (Harrower, 2008:116). Photographs contain visual facts. To manipulate an image in essence distorts the truth, which is unethical (Harrower, 2008:119).

### **3.5.3.3 The production function**

The production function of a community newspaper includes the highly computer-intensive pre-press processes of page layout (SP2.3) and platemaking (SP2.4), and the printing process (SP3.1) (see fig. 12), all highly computer intensive (Scott, 1999:8; cf. Bowles & Borden, 2011:246). Strict schedules, parallel pre-press production using distributed and varied production systems, sequential duplication and press reproduction of the finished product characterise the modern newspaper production system (Scott,<sup>56</sup> 1999:ii; see also Stenberg, 1997:52; Herbert, 1998:140). Computerised production techniques link the processes and systems. According to Kipphan (2001:15), "The quality of the printed product is ultimately determined by its content, effect, and benefit to the client/consumer. The visual quality is obviously affected by the high-grade processes and procedures for producing the print media."

The precise content of a community newspaper is usually only determined shortly before it is printed, and the production of the content runs parallel to the planning process (Scott, 1999:10). Technological advances, especially since the 1980s, have made it possible to manage the workflow electronically. Consequently, the production department in the pre-press phase (P2) was integrated into the editorial/advertising functions (Stenberg, 1997:49) where page layout (SP2.3) now takes place. Organisations that do not have a production section in pre-press are called integrated organisations, referring to the merging of creative work and production (Stenberg, 1997:51). By 1996, almost all dailies, weeklies and bigger local newspapers in South Africa were produced using desktop-publishing (DTP) systems (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:110). DTP involves using a computer to design and assemble pages and then output these onto paper, film or printing plate through a laser printer or image-setter (Mogel, 2000:138; Kipphan, 2001:27-28). A community newspaper page thus remains virtual until "it is pinned

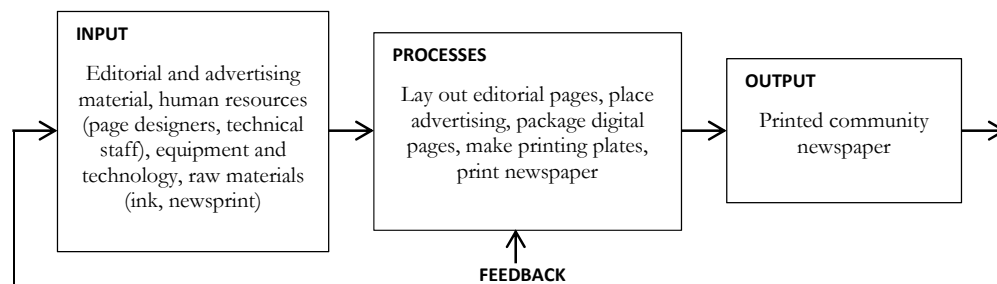
<sup>56</sup> Scott focused on daily newspapers, but these processes are also applicable within a community newspaper framework.

to the film recorders before the final production process: burning the plates and mounting them on the press” (SP2.4, fig. 12) (Scott, 1999:5). According to Stenberg (1997:49), “A single person can perform both writing, editing and page make-up. In some cases, the layout editors are even responsible for the transmission of digital pages to the printing plants.”

Kipphan (2001:28) stated that although DTP has revolutionised the newspaper production process and opened up many opportunities, it has also resulted in “an increasing flow of poor-quality printed products”. Notably, Kipphan emphasised that creating printed products by computer not only requires mastery of the software and typography/design expertise, but “above all an accurate understanding of the subsequent printing and finishing processes”. Many different printing methods are used, and in the case of community newspapers, these methods are often older (Scott, 1999:6). It is thus vital that community newspapers determine the exact requirements in the pre-press phase to ensure a quality printed product. These include limitations where colour and image resolution are concerned (Scott, 1999:ii). Advertisers who supply complete material to the community newspaper, should also take the technological restrictions of the production process in the sector into account to ensure quality in the printed product (see 3.5.3.1.3) (Scott, 1999:53).

Newspaper printing presses are expensive — Moodie (2011) names a figure of about R40 million. The presses have to be imported and require technical expertise to run and maintain. Consequently, most community newspaper organisations outsource printing to larger commercial printers — even competitors (Milne *et al.*, 2006:9; cf. Emdon, 2008). Few small newspaper organisations have their own printing presses. Many have to rely on “sometimes unreliable, inefficient outside resources” (Rau, 2009:6; see also Milne *et al.*, 2006:29). Casanova and Cummings (2008) suggest several strategies for improving the quality of production at community newspapers, e.g. by collaborating with larger papers, or sharing facilities with other papers in nearby areas. This could keep capital investment low, but ensure a quality product. Several emerging community newspapers in South Africa have ventured into a partnership of some sorts with larger community newspapers (cf. Milne *et al.*, 2006:114). Factors affecting the quality of production in community newspaper organisations include a lack of basic materials, outsourced services/products, a lack of technical infrastructure and equipment and a lack of maintenance of these resources (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007:35).

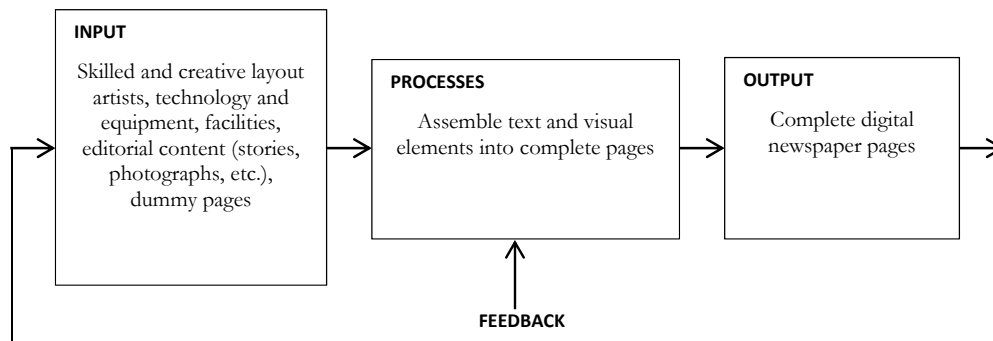
Against this background, the production function as a sub-system of the community newspaper organisation and its key production processes can be illustrated as follows (fig. 29):



**Figure 29: The production function as a system.**

The key processes in the production function of a community newspaper are page layout (SP2.3), plate making<sup>57</sup> (SP2.4) and printing (SP2.5).

### 3.5.3.3.1 Page layout – SP2.3



**Figure 30: The page-layout process (SP2.3).**

Most newspapers have a unique look or identity, but newspapers that are part of a chain might look similar (see 3.5.3.2). This identity is determined by the newspaper's design (Froneman *et al.*, 2005:162; Faure, 2001:345). However, unlike other products, newspapers have to continually change their appearance (Rankin, 1986:4): "Every day, it must look different enough to attract repeat buyers at the newsstands, but not so different that its identity is lost or blurred." Before the age of DTP, this was a "manual, labour-intensive, paper-based process", according to Butler (2002:172; cf. Mogel, 2000:110).

Once the pages have thus been planned, the advertisements, edited news stories and editorial material can be placed "into fixed and numbered pages" — an integrated part of editorial work (Fällström *et al.*, 1997; Greer, 1999:196; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:28). Today, page layout — the process of designing pages using computer software (e.g. Adobe InDesign or QuarkXPress) — is the norm in small and large newsrooms (Bowles & Borden, 2011:246). Page layout involves putting the community newspaper together, i.e. "the assembly of text, picture, and graphic elements into complete pages (page layout/make-up)" (Kipphan, 2001:24; see also Stenberg, 1997:154; Mogel, 2000:131; Pearson *et al.*, 2001:145). Although mapping pages on paper dummies are not necessary anymore, it is still recommended as a guide, because it can save time (Bowles & Borden, 2011:246; Harrower, 2008:36), especially when a layout editor is inexperienced.

The page design process thus ideally involves mapping the page on paper according to good layout principles while exercising news judgment to decide where to place stories and how much emphasis an individual story should have (Bowles & Borden, 2011:7, 246). The page is then assembled on the computer using appropriate software. Page designers work according to the specific newspaper's design style (cf. Harrower, 2008:235), which ensures that its identity is not compromised. Once the pages are complete, they are printed and proofed (by sub-editors) as a final quality check. After corrections have been made, the complete digital package is ready to be plated (Mogel, 2000:131).

<sup>57</sup> Due to developments in technology, platemaking is often viewed as part of the printing process (see 4.5).

### 3.5.3.3.2 Platemaking – SP2.4

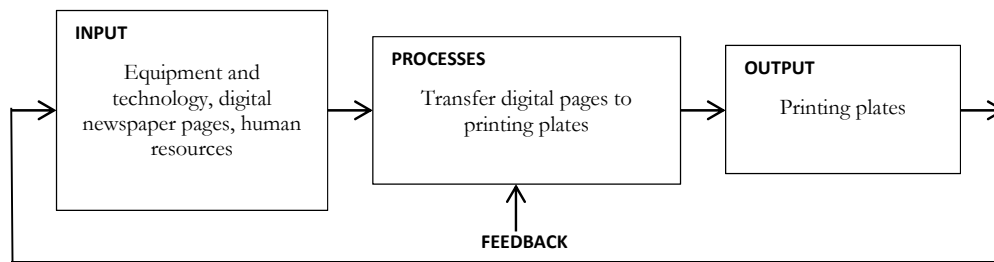


Figure 31: The platemaking process (SP2.4).

Platemaking involves the “making of the printing plate as the vehicle of information in the printing press” (Kipphan, 2001:24-25). The data on the digital newspapers thus has to be transferred onto the printing plates before a newspaper can be printed. According to Stenberg (1997:74), film or a digital file can be used to produce a printing plate, depending on the available technology. Computer-to-plate (CTP) technology eliminates the need for film, because it digitally transfers the information directly to the plate (Mogel, 2000:138). (CTP requires digital page make-up [Stenberg, 1997:74].)

### 3.5.3.3.3 Printing and finishing – SP3.1

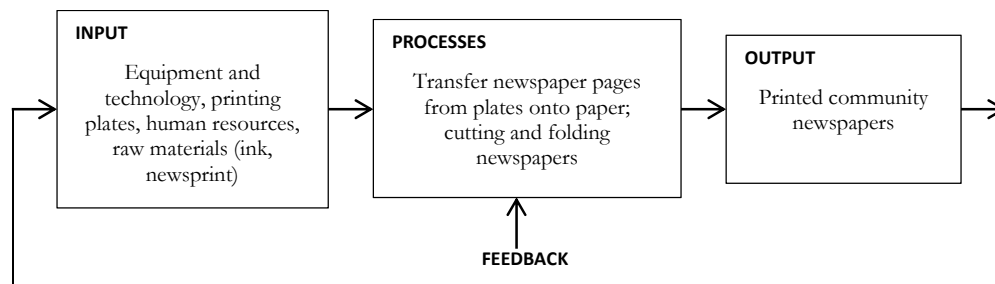


Figure 32: The printing and finishing process (SP3.1).

Printing is the process of transferring ink onto paper via a printing plate (Kipphan, 2001:29). Thanks to technology, various highly automated printing processes have developed over the years, including lithography, flexography and rotary web printing (Gradidge, 2011; Kipphan, 2011:29). Each process requires different equipment and the latter is “a high-speed process used on reels of paper — usually for newspaper printing”. According to Gradidge (2011), skilled “machine minders” are necessary to ensure the presses run smoothly. A web press is a machine that prints on rolls of paper, which are cut into sheets after printing (Mogel, 2000:138). Web offset printing, which is the major process in newspaper printing (Kipphan, 2001:206), is a technique “that transfers ink from a plate to a blanket to paper instead of directly from plate to paper” (Mogel, 2000:138). During the finishing process, the paper is cut into sheets and folded (Kipphan, 2001:33).

### 3.5.3.4 The circulation/distribution function

Newspaper circulation — the number of newspaper sold and thus “the distribution of the newspaper to its readers” (Rankin, 1986:11) — is the barometer of newspaper vitality (Roche, 1996:4). The ability to secure readership relies on content that satisfies and serves readers (i.e. the usefulness of the paper)

(Roche, 1996:10). There is no sense in producing a quality community newspaper if it does not reach its final destination — the readers (cf. Cummings, Cummings & LeMaire, 2007:4). Quality thus also involves the “consistent availability of the newspaper at newsstands and few delivery errors” (Picard, 2004:62). Moreover, newspapers that cut down on content quality might pay the price when it comes to circulation (Lacy & Fico, 1991:46; cf. Groves, 2009:8). Moreover, if the newspaper is not sold and read, its advertising revenue and, consequently, its market value, will be limited or non-existent (Scott, 1999:19; Rankin, 1986:11).

Distribution is a key component of a community newspaper organisation. It entails refining operations by, for example, improving trucks and delivery services. It further entails building relationships in the distribution network (Marketing Mix, 2009). The distribution timing is also important. According to Bowles (Marketing Mix, 2011), community newspapers (free or sold) usually are distributed late in the week when people plan their weekend shopping. This means that the message is disseminated at the right time for readers as well as advertisers. Rehn (2001:1) noted potential conflict where timing is concerned. He stated that the management of a newspaper organisation aims to start the production and distribution process as late as possible to include the latest news. However, the reader depends on getting his/her copy of the newspaper at the designated time. To avoid conflict, careful planning and efficient flow of information is vital.

The circulation/distribution function of a community newspaper organisation is thus responsible for marketing, selling and distributing the newspaper product to retailers and subscribers (Garrison, 1994:101; Stenberg, 1997:52; Cummings *et al.*, 2006:7; Harrower, 2010:25). Three main methods of distribution are described in the literature: single-copy sales, mail distribution and home delivery (cf. Rankin, 1986:13; cf. Mogel, 2001:143). A community newspaper’s primary circulation base is the area in which it is published and distributed (Mwangi, 2007:10). According to Bakker (Newspaper10, 2008:12), “Growth in print is easy (print more papers), growth in readership is more difficult, but almost always has to do with better distribution: finding the right reader at the right time.”

Several dimensions of service quality are thus relevant in this function: time and timeliness, consistency, accessibility and convenience (Evans & Lindsay, 1999, quoted by Scott, 1999:29). Circulation divisions at large organisations are often divided into mailroom circulation, city circulation, regional circulation, and single-copy sales department circulation, according to Garrison (1994:101). Other areas include carrier insurance, bonding, the loading dock operation, mail binding, insertions, subscriptions operations, and transportation.

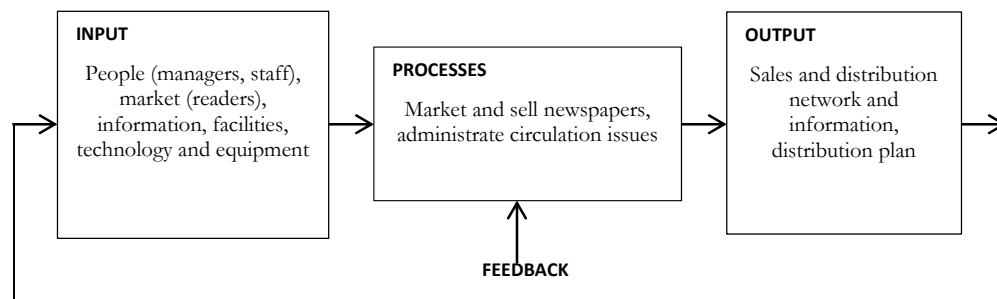
However, at community newspapers, this function is a much smaller operation, and distribution often relies on informal channels. For example, at the *KZN Community News*, distribution is the responsibility of the messenger — a taxi driver, who manages two casual distributors (Milne *et al.*, 2006:23, 29). Although the *Limpopo Mirror* prints in-house, its distribution is outsourced to Far North Media Distributors, who distributes the newspaper via retail outlets and street vendors. This supports Stenberg’s (1997:36) statement that distribution is often outsourced. Distant subscribers receive their copies by mail (Milne *et al.*, 2006:72).

The distribution/circulation function also manages the circulation data of community newspapers. Circulation figures represent the number of copies of the newspaper distributed per distribution day (cf. Stenberg, 1997:46). The ABC administers the publication of audited circulation of media that sell advertising space (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998:100). These audited figures are published every six months and represent the actual number of copies distributed. The ABC thus monitors and verifies the

circulation claims of member organisations, including free community newspapers (cf. ABC, 2011). The advertising department uses the circulation data when marketing the publication to potential advertisers (cf. Rankin, 1986:19). According to Milne *et al.* (2006:9), “Small independent community newspapers should be encouraged to become members of the ABC so that their distribution numbers are verified ... case studies show that the controls and documentation attending formal audit help newspapers to target their distribution more effectively.”

The circulation/distribution function faces several quality challenges. Apart from delays, problems can arise from adverse weather conditions causing damage to the newspapers, problems with packaging, and subscription cancellation information that was not processed in a timely fashion (Nkume-Kwene & Besong, 2009:53-54). Quality further involves sound administrative and management procedures, including collecting money from vendors and carriers (i.e. people — often school children — delivering newspapers to subscribers) (Rankin, 1986:18; cf. Mogel, 2001:142). Another challenge is coordinating delivery vehicles and carriers in the distribution area (Nkume-Kwene & Besong, 2009:47).

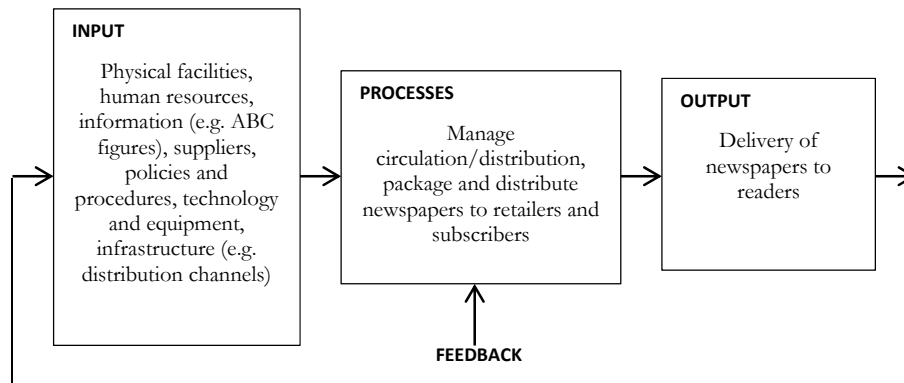
Following the systems approach, the circulation/distribution function can be illustrated as follows (fig. 33; see also the macro model in 2.11, fig. 5):



**Figure 33: The circulation/distribution function as a sub-system.**

The key processes in the circulation/distribution function are circulation management (SP1.3), and packaging and distribution (SP4.1).

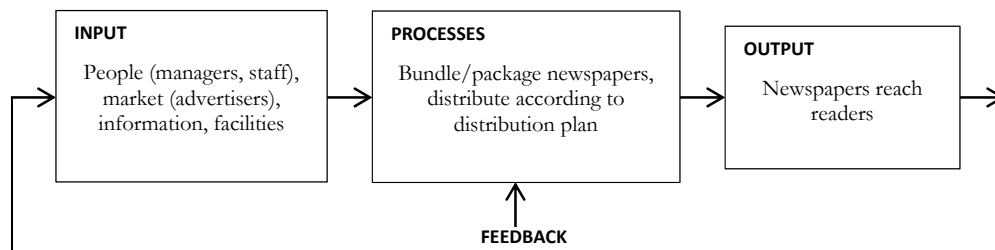
#### 3.5.3.4.1 Circulation/distribution management – SP1.3



**Figure 34: The circulation/distribution management process (SP1.3).**

Planning and organising the efficient weekly distribution of community newspapers from the printers to retailers/vendors and subscribers is vital to quality in the circulation/distribution function (cf. Stenberg, 1997:52). All processes need to be planned according to the delivery deadline (Rehn, 2001:11). Fixed plans ensure that the process run smoothly (cf. Stenberg, 1997:iv). Stenberg (1997:94) said information exchange involves subscriber and retailer information and customer complaints. Subscriber databases need to be updated continuously, and changes and complaints taken into account promptly and transferred to the distributor. Planning is also important to avoid over or undersupplying the distribution network and, consequently, the market (Butler, 2002:174).

Where circulation is concerned, the address and order information of the retailers/vendors and subscribers have to be gathered, processed and forwarded to the printing plant and distribution organisation or section within the community newspaper organisation (Stenberg, 1997:83). Stenberg (1997:60) said that in Europe, many newspapers have large subscription bases and rely less on street sales. In the community newspaper sector in South Africa, the situation is the opposite (see 4.3.5.3).



#### 3.5.3.4.2 Packaging and distribution – SP4.1

**Figure 35: The packaging and distribution process (SP4.1).**

After printing and finishing, the newspapers are packaged/bundled (Stenberg, 1997:74; cf. Cummings *et al.*, 2006:9) and transported to the distributor (if this service is outsourced) or newspaper organisation, where the bundles are sorted according to the requirements of retailers and carriers in the distribution area (Stenberg, 1997:19). Drivers transport the bundles to vendors and designated delivery points where carriers collect their bundles for distribution (cf. (Nkume-Kwene & Besong, 2009:51). According to Butler (2002:173), the distribution process can be either simple or complex, depending on the size of the newspaper's geographical market. Subscribers can get their copies of the newspaper through the postal service, or delivered directly to their door through a network of carriers (Stenberg, 1997:83; Mogel, 2001:142). A continuous flow of information is vital. Rehn (2001:iv, 9) suggested that devices such as cellular phones could improve communication in the distribution network.

### 3.5 THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER: AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM

It was established in chapter 2 that the components of a community newspaper organisation are interdependent (see 2.9.3), and several examples were given above to illustrate this. Nkume-Kwene and Besong (2009:48), supported by Rehn (2001:15), rightly said:

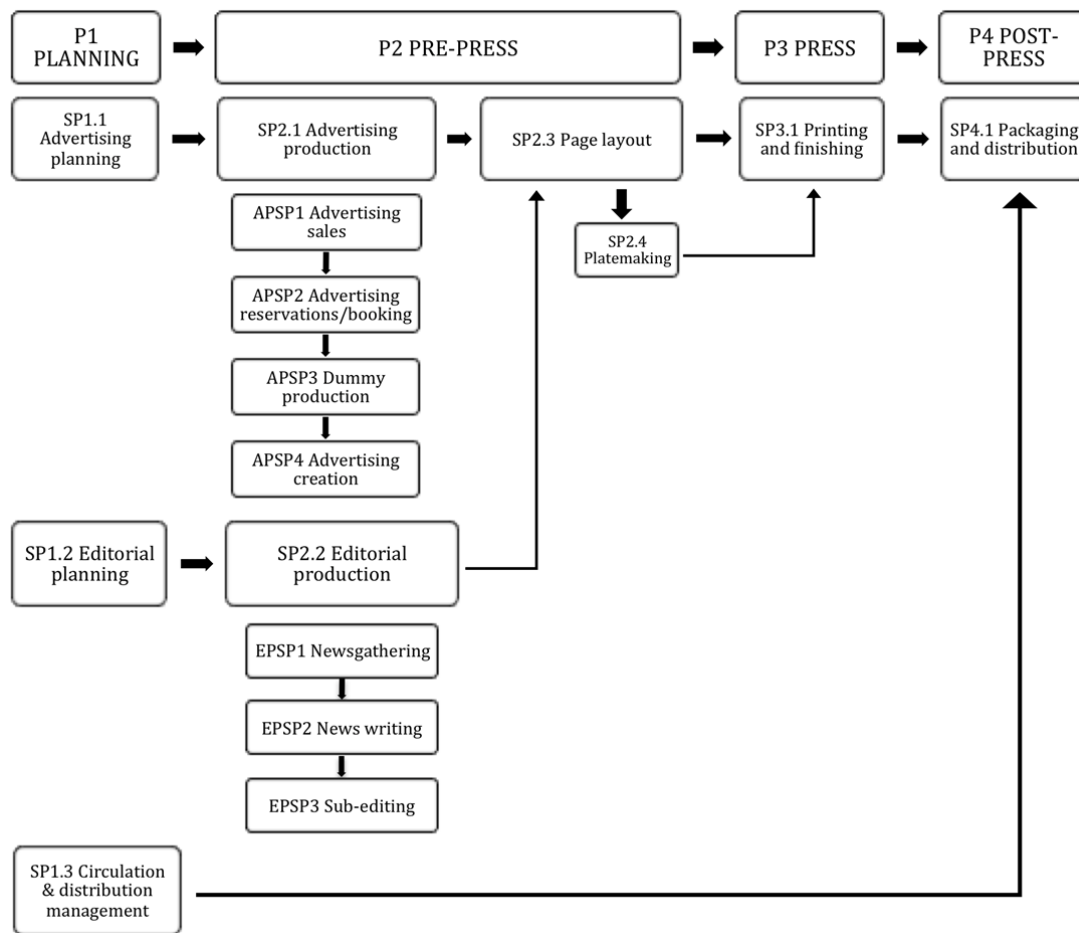
In order to ensure quality production and flexibility (agility) for timely delivery, there is the need for intense communication and collaboration between the different tiers of the supply chain—that is the editorial department, the suppliers of raw materials, the printers, the publishing department, the mailroom department and the distribution company.



Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002:21-22) elaborate further by saying reporters depend on sub-editors (in the editorial department) to make sure their stories are ready for publication. Both groups depend on the advertising department to sell enough ads to keep the paper viable. In turn, staff members in both the editorial and advertising departments depend on the production staff to produce pages by placing the stories and advertisements. If the production personnel do not have stories and advertisements to work with, they cannot produce the pages. Furthermore, due to the interdependence of the components, the system can reach its goals along several routes. For example, a series of in-depth articles can appear because reporters were given more time and resources to work on stories; and/or because the publisher supports this even though it might mean the loss of advertising revenue; and/or because the reporters had access to sources because the issue is in the interest of the community. Moreover, the walls of the organisation are permeable. Reporters, editors and readers, among others, bring information into the organisation. The same individuals talk to people outside the system (i.e. the external environment) about the newspaper. The system is thus dependent on feedback for maintenance and growth (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:21-22): “As organisational components communicate, new information continually flows into the organisation from the environment: Letters to the editor, comments to reporters about their stories, and advertisers’ assessments of the placement or success of their ads.” Feedback via email, the community newspaper organisation’s website and social media is also becoming increasingly popular.

Organisations should strive towards eliminating the need for mass inspection by building quality into product design. To this end, it is important that they determine where the current or potential quality problems are – an area where the quality chain reaction can come in useful. For example, it is vital that a newspaper reaches the readers and advertisers. However, if the quality of the content is not satisfactory, customers will not be satisfied either and will stop buying the product, or advertising space in the product. Journalists should therefore be encouraged to pay attention to quality where newsgathering and writing is concerned to ensure a more effective and efficient sub-editing and design process. Success in this area will eventually enable staff to reach deadlines more effectively, resulting in less pressure on the production and distribution departments. The end result will be a quality product, which reaches the customer on time and satisfies their expectations for quality news and entertainment. This will contribute to the overall role the community newspaper plays in society, i.e. providing credible, reliable information so people can make decisions in a timely fashion.

The community newspaper organisation as an integrated system is subsequently presented (fig. 36):



**Figure 36: The community newspaper as an integrated system.**

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the functional processes in a community newspaper organisation from the point of view that the organisation as a whole should be investigated within a framework of quality management. As such, the chapter provided the theoretical framework to operationalise the second and third specific research objectives of this study. This entailed investigating and analysing organisational functional processes as described in the literature, and identifying/mapping key processes in the main functional areas in a community newspaper organisation to deconstruct the macro model (A) into an intermediate model (B) (see 2.11), which also focuses on the content of the comprehensive quality management model the researcher is developing. In the process, several authors' production models were used to construct a production system for community newspapers (see fig. 13 in 3.5.2).

The deconstruction of the processes and sub-processes in this system were presented in a framework consisting of each of the main functions in the community newspaper organisation. To create a broader context, the researcher discussed the "hard" and "soft" dimensions of organisations and organisational culture. The chapter ended with a brief discussion of the interconnected nature of the community newspaper organisation, which tied the functions and processes together as an integrated system.

In chapter 4, the researcher will present the results of the empirical part of this study, which involves the verification and refinement of the quality management model.

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## CHAPTER 4:

# TOWARDS A QUALITY MODEL FOR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

*Owners determine newsroom budgets, amount of space allotted to news and advertising. They set standards of quality by the quality of the people they choose and the news policies they embrace. Owners decide how much profit they should produce from their media properties. Owners decide what quality levels they are willing to support by how well or how poorly they pay their journalists ... Corporations assume an obligation broader than that of their shareholders when they incorporate journalism in their portfolios. The key is that they begin to realize and articulate their responsibility to citizens, and take steps to protect it.*

— Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:70)

*Loyal newspaper customers maintain their subscriptions, buy more from advertisers, and promote the newspaper through conversations in the public sphere.*

— Roche (1996:3)

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 the researcher focused on the content of the comprehensive quality management model by conceptualising quality and quality management, investigating the role of quality in organisational excellence and placing community newspapers in an organisational systems framework, which culminated in a schematic illustration of the macro level (A) of the model. Chapter 3 investigated and analysed organisational functional processes in the literature in order to deconstruct the key processes in the main functional areas of a community newspaper. Following the systems approach as main theoretical construct in this study (see chapter 2), mapping the processes served as the deconstruction of the macro model (A) into the intermediate model (B) of the quality management model this study is developing (see 2.11). The researcher concluded the chapter by tying the functions and processes together in an integrated system, thereby illustrating the interconnectedness of the community newspaper organisation (see 3.5 and fig. 35).

This chapter focuses on the empirical part of the study and describes the verification and refinement of the model by means of selected cases. As stated in chapter 1, the researcher used the Delphi method to this end. This technique involved compiling a panel of key participants and getting their feedback on the content of the model. As a starting point, the researcher describes the application of the methodology and research method (see chapter 1). In the final part of the chapter, the researcher refines the model by incorporating the results of the post-test (refinement phase).

## 4.2 RESEARCH METHOD

During the course of 2010, the researcher contacted the editors/owners/managers at the selected cases via email to (a) explain the research, (b) obtain permission to include the case in the research study, and (c) verify basic information regarding the structure of the newspaper organisation. With the help of the editors/owners/managers, the researcher identified participants to be interviewed in line with the organisational functions. Determining factors in selecting participants were experience and representation across all functional areas of the organisation, including the supporting administration/finance function. The researcher sought out participants with enough experience in the community newspaper sector to know how the production process operates. The researcher assumed that skilled and experienced participants would have a firm grasp on what constitutes a quality community newspaper and how to achieve, manage and maintain that quality. Experience across two or more functional areas was seen as an added benefit because it enhanced participants' knowledge of and perspective on quality in community newspapers. During the interviews, however, the researcher focused primarily on the function(s) each participant fulfilled at the time and how that function(s) operates within the system as a whole (see 2.10.3 for a discussion about the community newspaper as a system).

Face-to-face interviews were arranged for the week of 23-30 May 2011. A total of 13 interviews ranging from 36 minutes to approximately 2.5 hours long were conducted at the respective media outlets. Each interview was recorded with the permission of the participant. The researcher also took detailed notes. Table 18 summarises information about the cases. Table 19 provides an overview of the participants and includes information about their training and experience, as well as the interview date:

**Table 18: Cases**

Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Independent English/Afrikaans weekly, print order 3 500, circulation 2 800-2 900, readership 12 000-15 000 (all population groups)	Independent English weekly, print order 11 000-11 500, circulation 9 000, readership 45 000-50 000 (mainly black)	Chain-owned English/Afrikaans weekly, print order 11 000, circulation approx. 11 000; readership 44 000 (all population groups)	Chain-owned English/Afrikaans weekly, print order 7 000, circulation 5 000; readership approx. 35 000 (all population groups)

**Table 19: Participants**

Participant	Details
Participant 1	Owner, manager, editor, degree in communication, approx. 20 years' experience across all functional areas and administration/finance. Interview date: 30 May 2011
Participant 2	News editor, journalist, photographer, page layout editor (IA2): no formal training, approx. 10 years' experience in editorial and production. Interview date: 30 May 2011
Participant 3	Advertising manager, distribution contractor, no formal training, approx. 10 years' experience in circulation/distribution and advertising. Interview date: 30 May 2011
Participant 4	Advertising sales representative, no formal training, 6 years' experience in advertising sales. Interview date: 30 May 2011
Participant 5	Advertising sales representative, no formal training, 3 years' experience in advertising sales. Interview date: 30 May 2011
Participant 6	Editor, degree in communication, 27 years' experience in editorial. Interview date: 30 May 2011

Participant	Details
Participant 7	Manager, editor, communication degree, approx. 25 years' experience in editorial and administration/finance. Interview date: 23 May 2011
Participant 8	Advertising manager, no formal training, approx. 20 years' experience in production and advertising. Interview date: 23 May 2011
Participant 9	News editor, copy editor, journalist, page layout editor, communication degree, 33 years' experience in all functional areas, including administration/finance. Interview date: 24 May 2011
Participant 10	Page layout editor, degree in communication and graphic design, approx. 10 years' experience in editorial and production. Interview date: 24 May 2011
Participant 11	Editor, journalist, photographer, no formal training, 16 years' experience, 11 as editor. Interview date: 26 May 2011
Participant 12	Advertising sales representative, no formal training, 23 years' experience in advertising, production and editorial. Interview date: 26 May 2011

To ensure consistency, the researcher followed a set interview procedure/schedule. Before each interview started, the researcher briefly explained the purpose of the interview, i.e. that it was part of the *pretesting/verification phase* during which the researcher wanted to gain insight into the organisational functions and processes in practice at the newspaper. This phase also served as verification of the theoretical principles. The researcher showed each participant a diagram (fig. 4 in chapter 2) depicting the preliminary quality management model and explained how it works, as well as other diagrams (fig. 2 and 3 in chapter 2) to explain the theoretical framework of the study. The researcher explained that the data was to be collated after completing all the interviews, and that the synthesis would be returned for further revision with the aim to refine the quality management model. All the participants consented to participate in the refinement stage.

A number of key issues to be addressed in the interviews were identified in advance, in line with the semi-structured nature of the interviews as well as to further ensure consistency. These are:

- Characteristics of a quality community newspaper.
- Organisational structure, management and support.
- Production processes in the specific functional areas, i.e. input, process and output.
- Maintaining quality in the functional areas.
- Factors influencing quality.
- Suggestions for change to improve quality.

#### 4.3 RESULTS OF THE VERIFICATION PHASE (PRETESTING)

At the start of the interview, the researcher verified the experience and employment details before asking each participant to define a quality community newspaper from his or her specific functional point of view. This served to set the focus and tone of the interview. The responses were in line with the quality variables extracted in chapter 2 (see 2.11, table 14) and the intangible factors influencing quality in a community newspaper environment extracted in chapter 3 (see 3.3.1.14, table 16). This enhances the validity of the findings. The data is presented in table 20:

**Table 20: Quality in community newspapers**

<b>Soft factors</b>	<b>Quality variables</b>	<b>Participant view</b>
Quality journalism orientation, involving adherence to the journalistic principles of verification, balance and fairness, truth and accuracy, and providing meaningful, relevant, comprehensive and engaging content (i.e. providing information and delighting the customer); and strong ethical orientation	A culture of quality with the emphasis on organisation-wide commitment as well as responsibility for quality	A quality community newspaper presents information important to its audience in the most interesting way possible. A quality product attracts readers; people want to identify with such a newspaper. Support from the community is vital – especially in rural areas. A quality community newspaper has a relationship with its community
Independence from interference and control; leadership that inspires the workforce; supportive, encouraging management style/role; clear, continuous and consistent communication of <i>inter alia</i> standards and expectations	Sound leadership and cooperation through effective communication	Effective communication, teamwork and cooperation in and across all departments. Independent
Employee empowerment through training, appraisal, effective staffing, feedback; diversity orientation: reflecting community diversity in the newsroom; and teamwork: combining individual efforts and cultivating cooperation	Empowering employees through training and skills development	A quality community newspaper reflects diversity in the community
Customer orientation: serving the needs of readers and advertisers	A strong focus on (external and internal) customer satisfaction	A quality community newspaper still has a soul, cares and is sensitive to community needs, norms and values. Does not ignore complaints from readers/advertisers

Participants further described a quality community newspaper as one that strives to continuously improve quality, which includes staying abreast of technological development and opportunities, e.g., exploring new media avenues and platforms improves quality. This is in line with the tangible/hard factor *continuous quality improvement* (see table 14 in 2.11).

Notably, the participants concurred with one another and the literature that quality is a relative term, complex and difficult to define (see 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6). In this regard, participant 1 said he has seen amateurish community newspapers that are exceptionally popular. One could easily assume that popularity then equals quality, or at least regard it as a characteristic of quality. However, research has shown that a decrease in quality is linked to a decrease in readership (see 2.10.2). Moreover, to educate readers about quality by setting an example of excellence is part of the responsibility of a community newspaper (see 2.3.3). (Quality characteristics of community newspapers are discussed in chapter 5.)

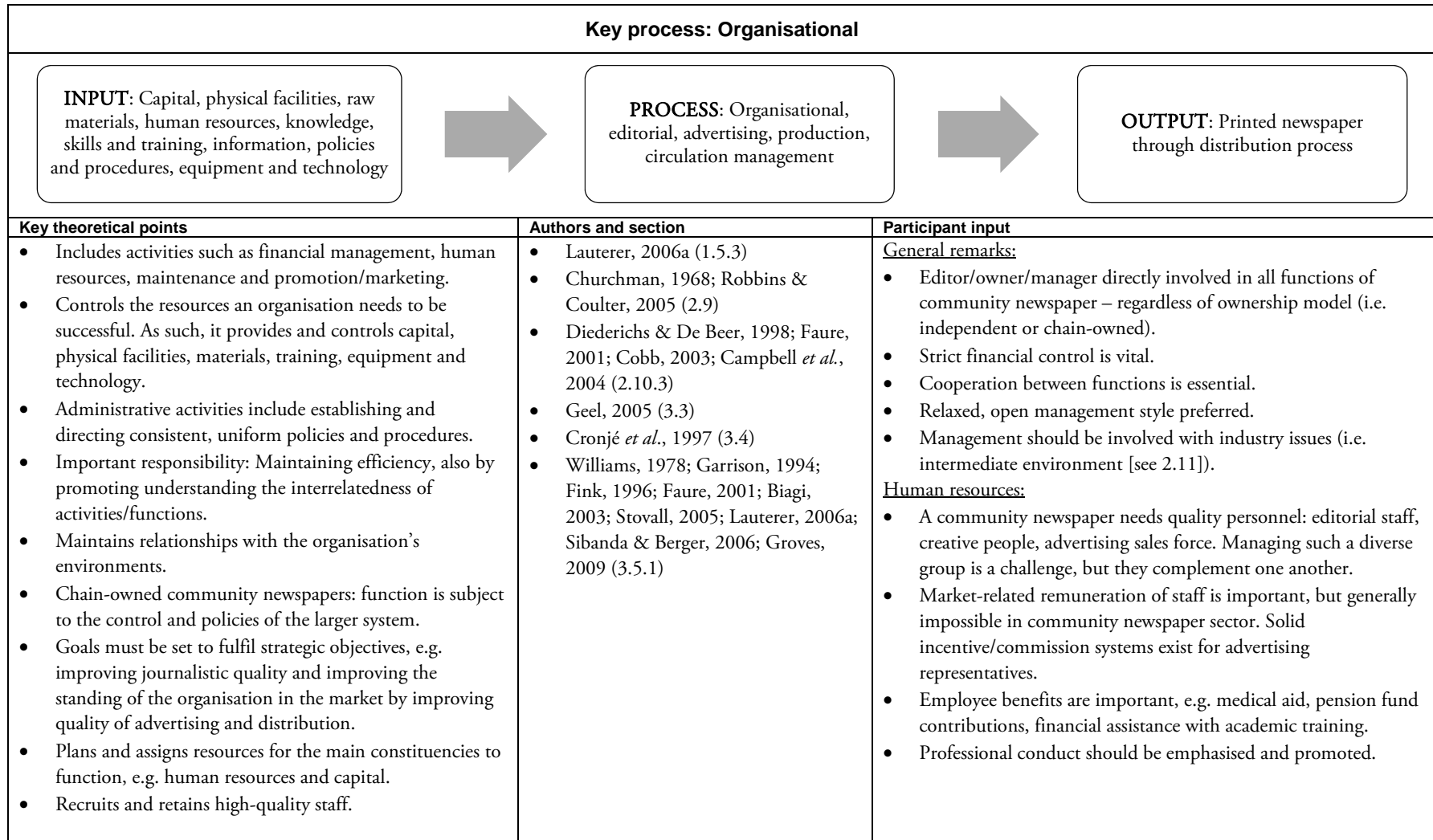
In the following sections, the researcher presents the pretesting/verification results in table form. Each table contains a simple process chart depicting the input, transformation and output of the specific key process, a summary of the key theoretical points and the collated results of the data collected through the depth interviews. Each functional area is dealt with separately and a brief discussion/interpretation follows the respective tables. Sub-processes of a key functional process are presented and discussed collectively.

Notably, all the participants agreed with the key theoretical principles regarding the responsibilities of the various functions. The participants mainly expanded on the literature by providing clarification about

how the functions operate at the respective cases, how the newspaper organisations are structured and the challenges they face. This is important, because it firstly provides source triangulation, and secondly provides a South African perspective on the general theoretical principles. The discussion paragraphs highlight the most important points that could influence quality, and are thus relevant to the quality management model. Cross-references to the sections where the theoretical issues are discussed in this study are also provided throughout.



### 4.3.1 The administration/finance function



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps up with developments in technology, e.g. information and content management systems.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance appraisals are important, conducted mostly informally at independent community newspapers, but more formal in chain-owned organisations. Emphasis on encouragement of employees in all cases.</li> <li>Training/coaching opportunities (in-house and external) are important to empower employees, although resources are not always available.</li> </ul> <p><u>Policies, procedures and guidelines:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often informal and assumed rather than rigid written editorial procedures; formal where advertising and circulation/distribution are concerned, because control (especially fiscal control) is seen as very important in general. Guidelines are flexible, though.</li> <li>Firm credit control guidelines in place.</li> <li>All cases adhere to some form of ethical code, e.g. the Press Code and/or a specific institutional code (chain-owned and independent), and the code of the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa.</li> <li>Party politics and sensation is avoided (as a matter of policy).</li> </ul> <p><u>Infrastructure and equipment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases have established infrastructure and the equipment needed to do the work in all functions, including computers, camera equipment and content management systems ranging from basic (email, central server, FTP [file transfer protocol] system – chain-owned newspapers) to sophisticated, tailor-made content management systems (independent newspapers). In some cases software programmes are somewhat out-dated and not standardised on all computers, which causes some problems.</li> <li>All newspapers have an Internet presence.</li> <li>Chain-owned cases have the benefit of technical support and equipment from head office.</li> </ul> <p><u>Key challenge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiting and retaining skilled editorial staff.</li> </ul>
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#### **4.3.1.1 Discussion**

- In general, the structure in community newspaper organisations that participated in this study is less formal, characterised by an open and participative management style (see 1.4, 2.8, 3.3.1.7 and 3.3.1.8). This is in line with Tom Peters' view that leadership is paramount to quality improvement, based on the principle of, among others, "managing by walking around" (see 2.4.3). Moreover, such a management style promotes active involvement of managers in the organisation's activities, which is essential to TQM (Garvin, 1988:26 – see 2.8).
- Chain-owned (see 2.10.3) community newspaper cases (C and D) have less control over issues of policy than the independent cases (A and B), because they are bound to policies formulated by the controlling organisation. This illustrates the constraints open systems face when imbedded in larger, controlling systems (see 2.9). Policies include decisions such as where the newspaper will be printed (case C), or produced and printed (case D), and the rule that political parties have to pay cash for an advertisement (Participant 8). The more formal policies and procedures in the advertising and circulation/distribution functions at all cases, e.g. effective billing systems and credit control policies, can be interpreted as essential for survival. Participants placed particular emphasis on fiscal discipline and control in the independent cases A and B – especially during the current economic climate. All cases further adhere to legal constraints placed on them by, for example, the Consumer Protection Act (68/2008)<sup>58</sup> that came into effect on 1 April 2011 (South Africa, 2009). Newsroom policies provide more freedom and are generally informal. The theoretical view that a strong organisational culture (which is conducive to quality) decreases the need for formal rules and regulations (see 3.3), is evident at all cases.
- The main concern/challenge in the organisational process is recruiting and retaining skilled workers needed to produce a quality product, especially in the editorial and advertising function (see 2.10 and 3.5.3.2). This problem seems to be more pronounced in the chain-owned than in the independent context. Managers at cases C and D are frustrated by the lack of flexibility the ownership structure causes, such as budgetary constraints concerning attractive remuneration packages. This is further complicated by headhunting (also within the chain) and the turnover where journalists and designers/page layout editors are concerned, is significant (Participant 7 and 11). This is less of a problem in the independent cases that have full control over their finances and recruitment/staffing policies (Participant 1 and 6). Due to the inability to offer market-related salaries, community newspapers are often forced to employ entry-level journalism graduates. While they may have the necessary qualifications, they still need extensive training and practical experience. Unfortunately, many journalism graduates view community newspapers as inferior and use them merely as stepping-stones to mainstream media positions (Participant 7 and 9). Although community newspapers need to embrace their role as educators (see 1.4), a high turnover in the newsroom places pressure on remaining staff members and has a detrimental effect on quality.

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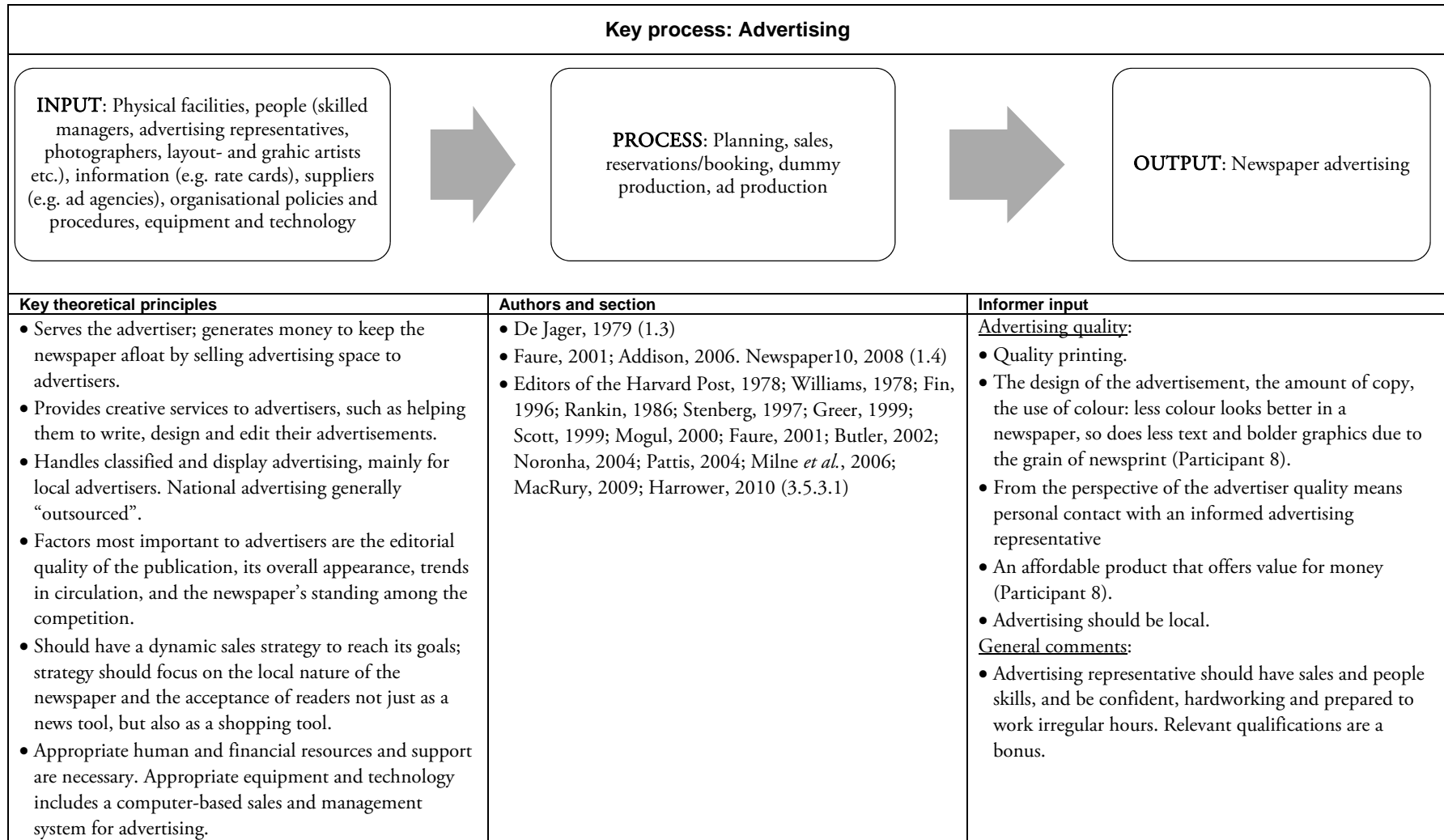
<sup>58</sup> The act protects consumers to ensure they "receive goods that are reasonably suitable for the purpose for which they are generally intended, are of good quality, in good working order and free of any defects" (Mahlangu, 2012). It is as yet uncertain how this would affect the media, community newspapers in particular. One would assume that community newspapers should make sure that they accept only advertisements that are in line with the provisions of the act. Marketing campaigns will be affected (Michalsons, 2011), which could also have an effect on how community newspapers market themselves.

- All participants agreed that they experience a need for especially journalists with strong ties to the community who can make a long-term commitment to the publication (see 1.4). This, however, poses another problem, according to participant 9: It is difficult to find someone *in the community* with the necessary journalistic training and experience. Case B exclusively uses editorial correspondents (i.e. freelance writers). According to participant 1, this is cheaper, but significantly affects editorial quality, because most stories have to be rewritten. Many of the correspondents have been involved with the newspaper for years, though, which points to a long-term commitment.
- All cases recognise the importance of training and invest in this to a greater (A and C) or lesser extent (B and D). Examples include providing financial assistance for academic education, sending staff members to attend courses offered by professional organisations such as the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) in Johannesburg, and inviting experts to conduct in-house workshops. Chain-owned cases also have access to training opportunities offered by the respective holding companies. Because cases A and B are situated about 500 km away from the training hubs of Johannesburg and Pretoria, time and staff constraints make this option a rare possibility. However, to ensure regular training takes place, experienced staff members conduct weekly workshops on a rotation basis. All cases also take advantage of the opportunities the Forum for Community Journalists' annual seminars offer. Case C further offers in-house training and coaching specifically for advertising representatives.

The above points on recruiting and training are in line with TQM's proactive approach to quality: identify factors that can influence quality early on. In this context, it means employing skilled staff and/or providing ample training opportunities (see 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). Workshops where employees learn from one another are in line with the TQM principle of "learning through example" (see 2.8).

- Community newspapers are indeed close-knit organisations characterised by strong relationships. One could therefore assume that the scholarly view that an organisation with a strong and cohesive culture cultivates employee loyalty, thus lowering staff turnover (Mobley *et al.*, 2005:12 – see 3.3) should pertain to community newspapers. However, a financial reality such as low remuneration has a marked effect on staff retention. Although training endeavours and the use of correspondents prove how community newspapers can adapt to economic restrictions in their quest for quality, it treats the symptoms and not the cause. From the above it is thus clear that, due to financial realities and the need for staff members who are committed to and proud of the community newspaper as an organisation and product, organisations need to adapt their recruitment methods to ensure quality.

### 4.3.2 The advertising function



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of sub-units and personnel in the advertising function varies according to size. Should include a manager/director, someone responsible for national/general advertising, and a person responsible for local retail advertising; creative person(s).</li> <li>• Most advertising representatives work on commission basis, but some get basic remuneration as well. Commission-based remuneration is a strong incentive but it does not build employee loyalty. It could also lead to representatives neglecting administrative duties and service to existing clients.</li> <li>• Managerial activities: allocating sales/service resources, developing new sources of revenue.</li> <li>• Administrative tasks such as invoicing and record keeping need to be performed.</li> <li>• After-sales services include dealing with customer complaints.</li> <li>• Breaking into national advertising is problematic. Several bodies provide support (Capro, NAB). It has been suggested locally and abroad that community papers that do not have access to national suppliers should consider uniting their efforts.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives have to know their own product – including the community and its needs/interests; the client's needs, environment, the particular industry. A relationship with the client is very important.</li> <li>• Commission structure exists at all cases: A, B and D offer commission only. C offers commission and basic salary. Some allowances given – e.g. cell phones.</li> <li>• Good incentives for reps making target (all cases).</li> <li>• Communities (all cases) see advertising as very important.</li> <li>• Rates: Increases determined by a specific formula according to the annual budget. Market research is important – advertisers are well informed and want value for money.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic downturn has caused a decline in advertising revenue across the board.</li> <li>• Difficult to generate new business in towns where little development takes place.</li> <li>• Dissatisfaction with existing procedures for procuring national advertising.</li> </ul> <p><u>Quality control:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case A and B have management systems in place to rule out problems such as advertisements that are not placed. Less control over technical problems such as printing. Advertiser satisfaction is important. Value will be added in some way to compensate, i.e. bigger advertisement at lower price, even free placement if need be.</li> </ul>
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#### **4.3.2.1 Discussion**

- The only guarantee an advertising representative can give an advertiser is space (Participant 8). Advertisers are sophisticated and informed about the advertising opportunities and channels available to them. However, they want the cheapest possible product and the representative has to convince them that that is not necessarily what will work for the business. That is why sales representatives should be informed about what type of advertisement would work best for a particular client and have skills to negotiate in this regard. Regular market research ensures that the advertiser has access to the best possible information about the market. Case C undertakes regular market research to make sure representatives are equipped with the best information to give advertisers the best advice. This is in line with the quality variable of customer satisfaction, as advocated by Juran (1988) (see table 19, also see 2.6).
- It is important to note that advertisers do not withdraw advertising in an economic downturn, but place smaller advertisements less often (Participant 4 and 5). Community newspapers should thus be willing to adapt during difficult economic times. This does increase pressure on the advertising sales force to meet their monthly targets, but emphasises the importance of maintaining good relationships with advertisers and increases customer satisfaction (see 2.6 and 2.7.5).
- Human resources pose a challenge in the advertising function (see 4.3.1). Participants agree that advertising sales representatives need sound sales skills to perform satisfactorily. However, not all representatives know how to “make an ad work”, according to participant 8. Regular training and coaching is thus essential. Participant 8 argued that continual training/coaching empowers employees. According to this participant, coaching sessions provide an opportunity for staff to get answers to advertisers’ questions, e.g. “Why should I advertise with you?” Armed with answers to questions such as these, advertising representatives feel more confident when dealing with advertisers. Employee empowerment, a core element of TQM, is essential to quality in an organisation (see 2.8), because it increases motivation and performance.

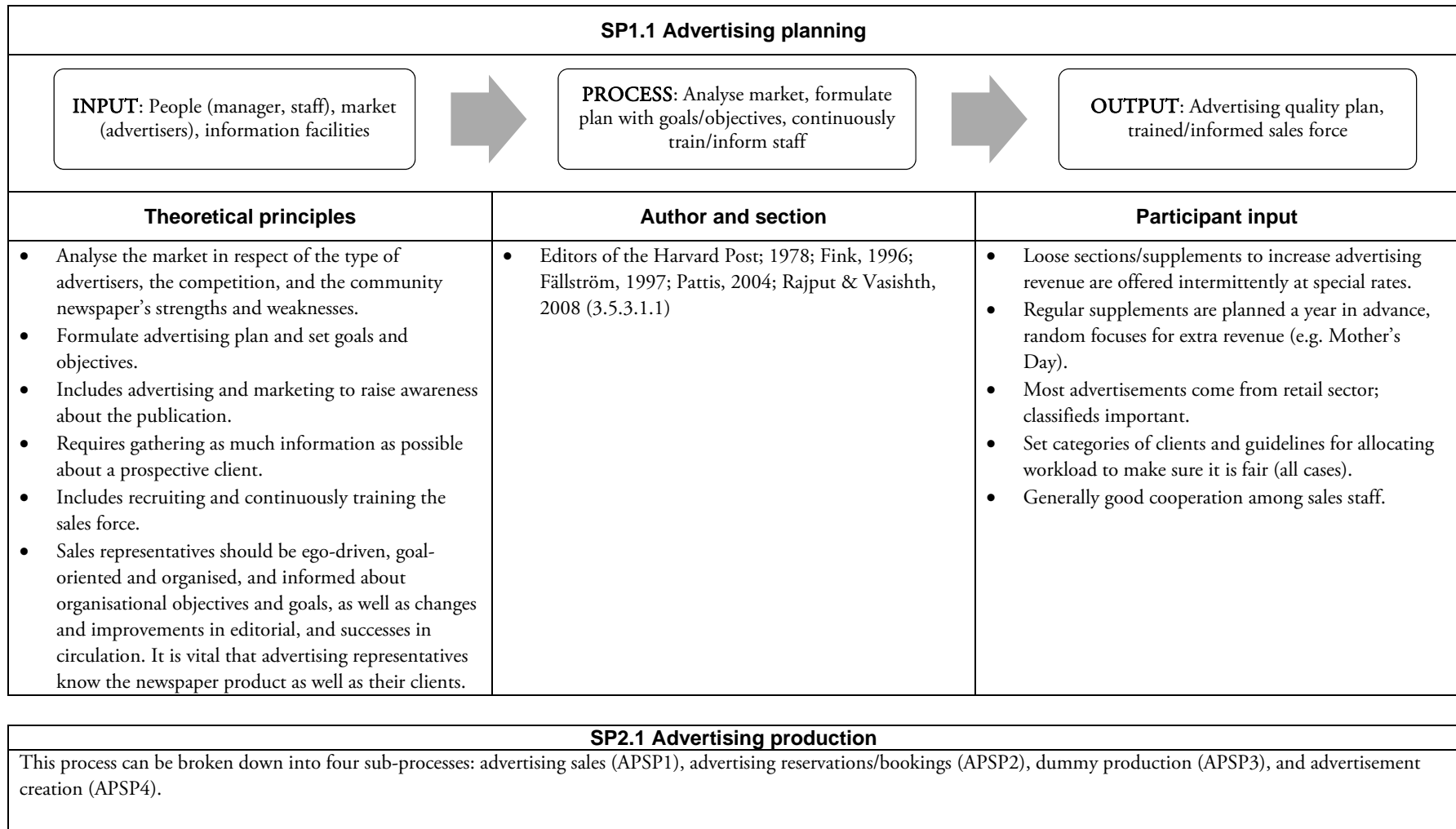
Participant 3, on the other hand, argued that the emphasis should be on people skills, not sales skills because “hard selling” does not work in his specific community. Consequently, participant 3 does not find formal training useful. Drawing from the results case C has had from continual in-house training and coaching, this type of empowerment could be beneficial in all cases because it also addresses relationships between clients and advertising representatives.

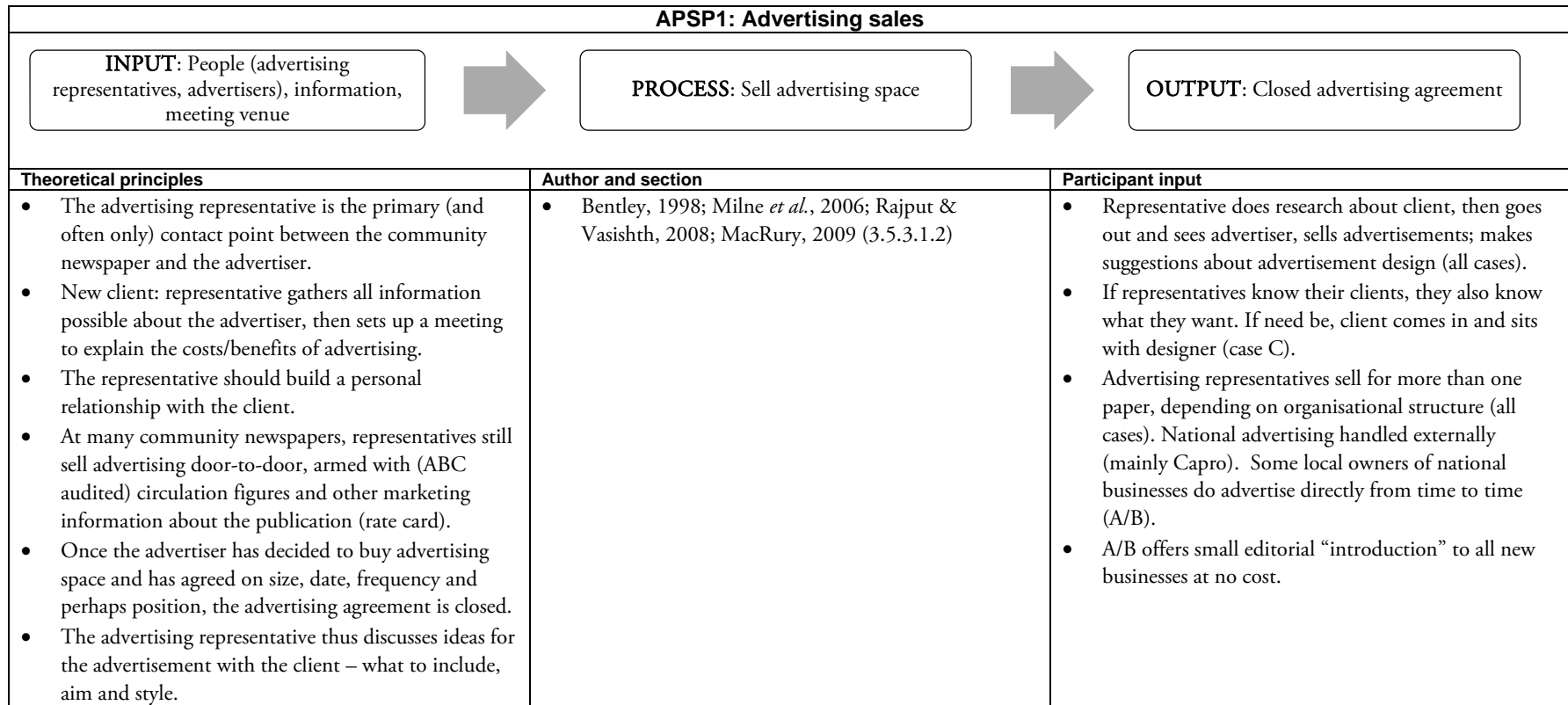
- Another problematic factor in the advertising function is remuneration. Participant 4 and 5 highlighted that commission-only earners do not have the benefit of regular salary increases. Commission increases when advertising rates increase, but advertising representatives only earn commission once they meet their targets. During tough economic times, advertising representatives earning only commission could have difficulty making ends meet. Targets should thus be realistic to not demotivate staff members. Cases A and B have a system in place where monthly targets are calculated based on the sales figures over the three months just prior to a specific month, and compared to the same period the previous year. This formula ensures a realistic target that constantly adapts to economic circumstances (Participant 1).

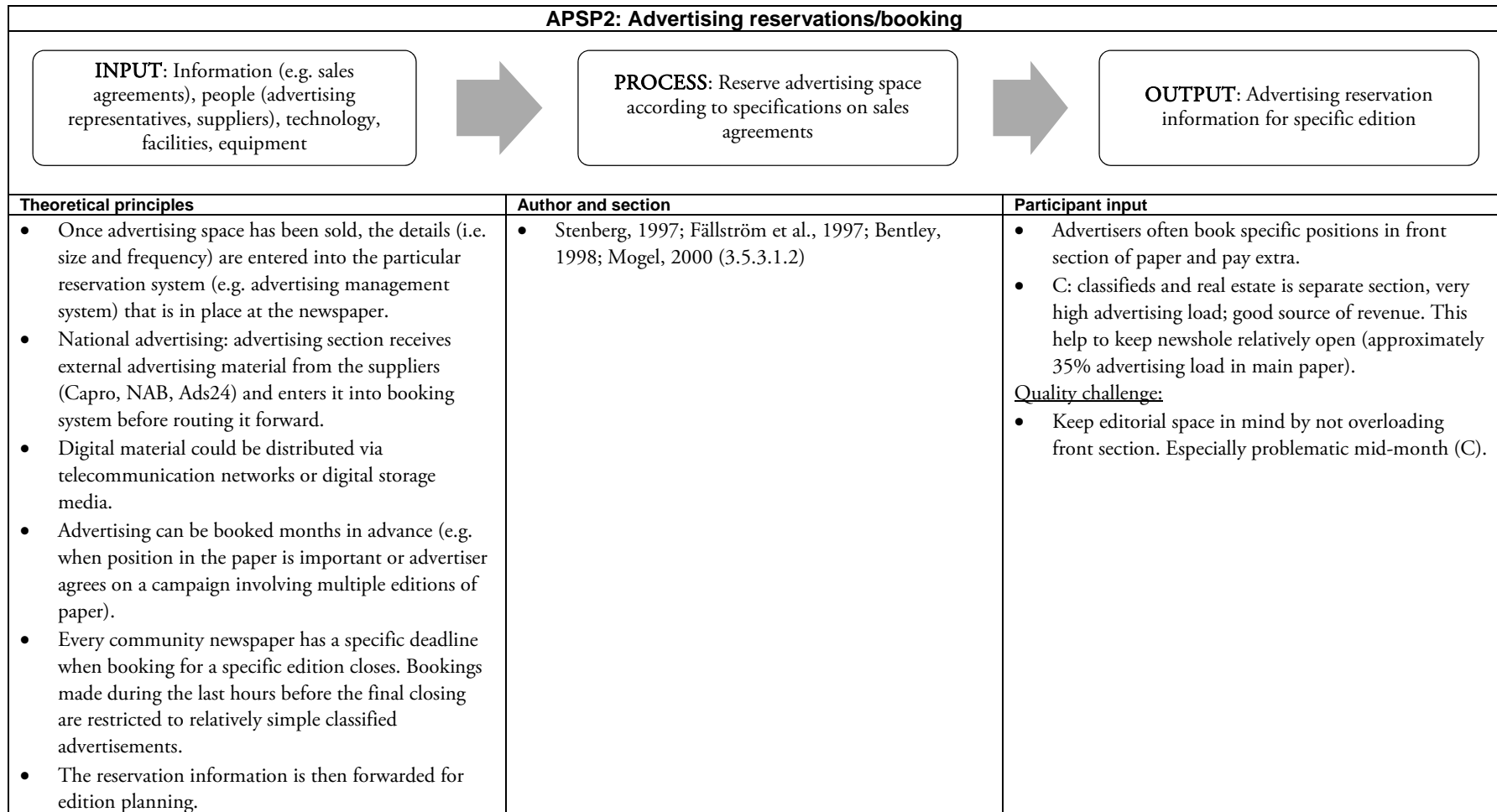
- Participant 8 emphasised that advertising representatives need to be willing to constantly work hard. At case C, representatives earn a basic salary and commission. The salaries are generally lower than that of, e.g., editorial staff members, because of the commission system. Representatives who are not committed tend to work hard for a while. When they do not meet their targets and only earn the basic salaries, they resign. Recruiting committed staff members is therefore very important (Participant 8).
- Cases A and B work in a stable advertising market, which means there is little growth in the area (Participant 1 and 3). This puts additional pressure on managers to practice fiscal discipline (see 4.3.1), and frustrates advertising representatives (Participant 4 and 5). However, it also explains the strong emphasis on maintaining good relationships with existing advertisers. Few new businesses enter the market, and when national groups do, advertising agencies manage the advertising (e.g. Capro, NAB and Ads24). National advertising is a contentious topic. Participants argued that advertising agencies do not know the newspapers and communities the way advertising representatives do and therefore do not always offer advertisers the best advice (Participant 4, 5, 7 and 12). One could argue that to increase customer satisfaction in this regard, advertising representatives at community newspapers should be free to recruit national advertisers conducting business in their areas. However, most chain-owned retailers are also bound to company policy (Participant 3 and 8), which could include working through a specific advertising agency. One way of addressing the problem is to educate representatives at the agencies about the advertising benefits community newspapers offer. This, however, would put neither the control, nor the commission, in the hands of representatives at community newspapers, because agency representatives would continue to deal with clients directly and earn the commission for their work.

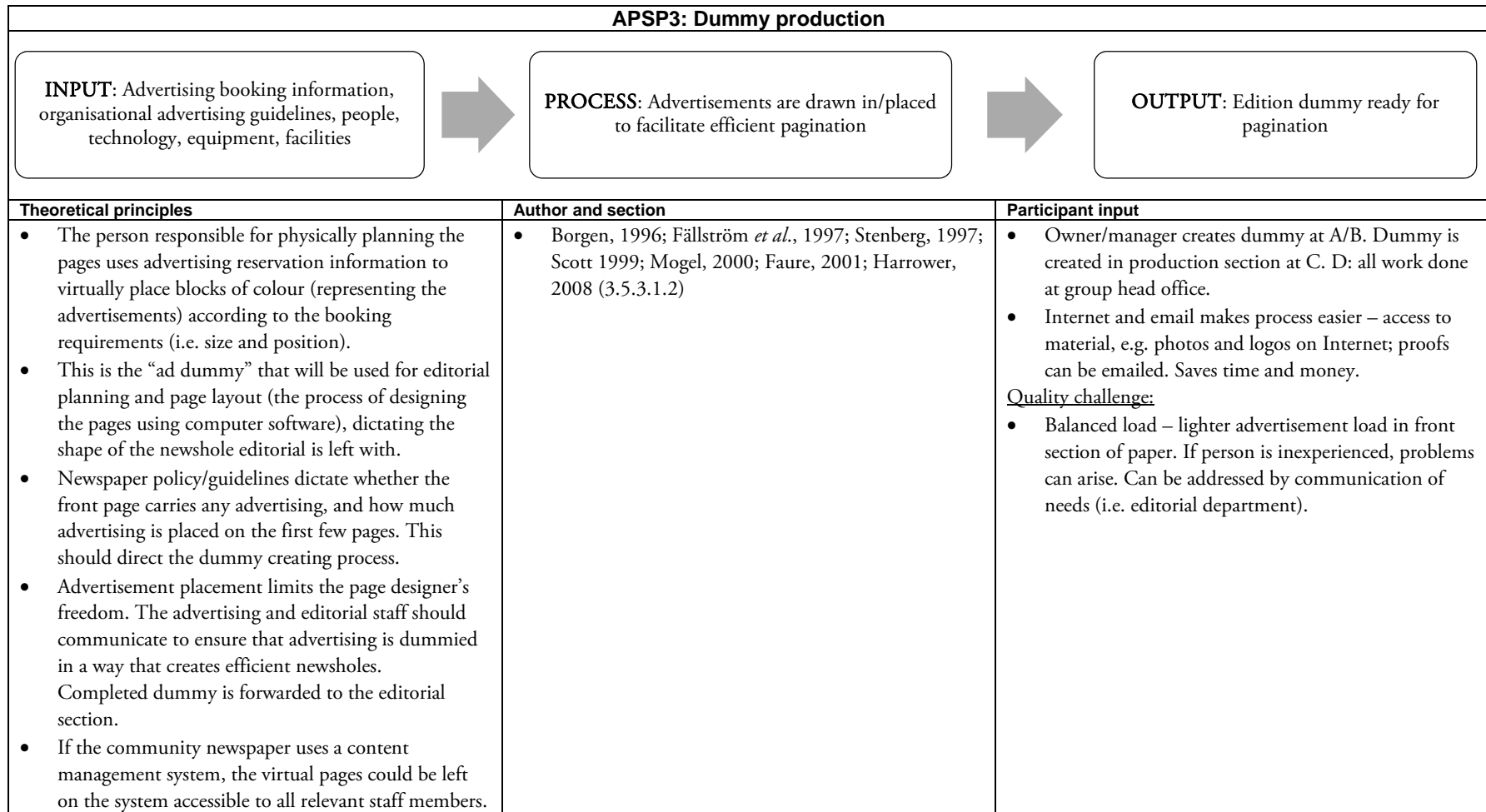


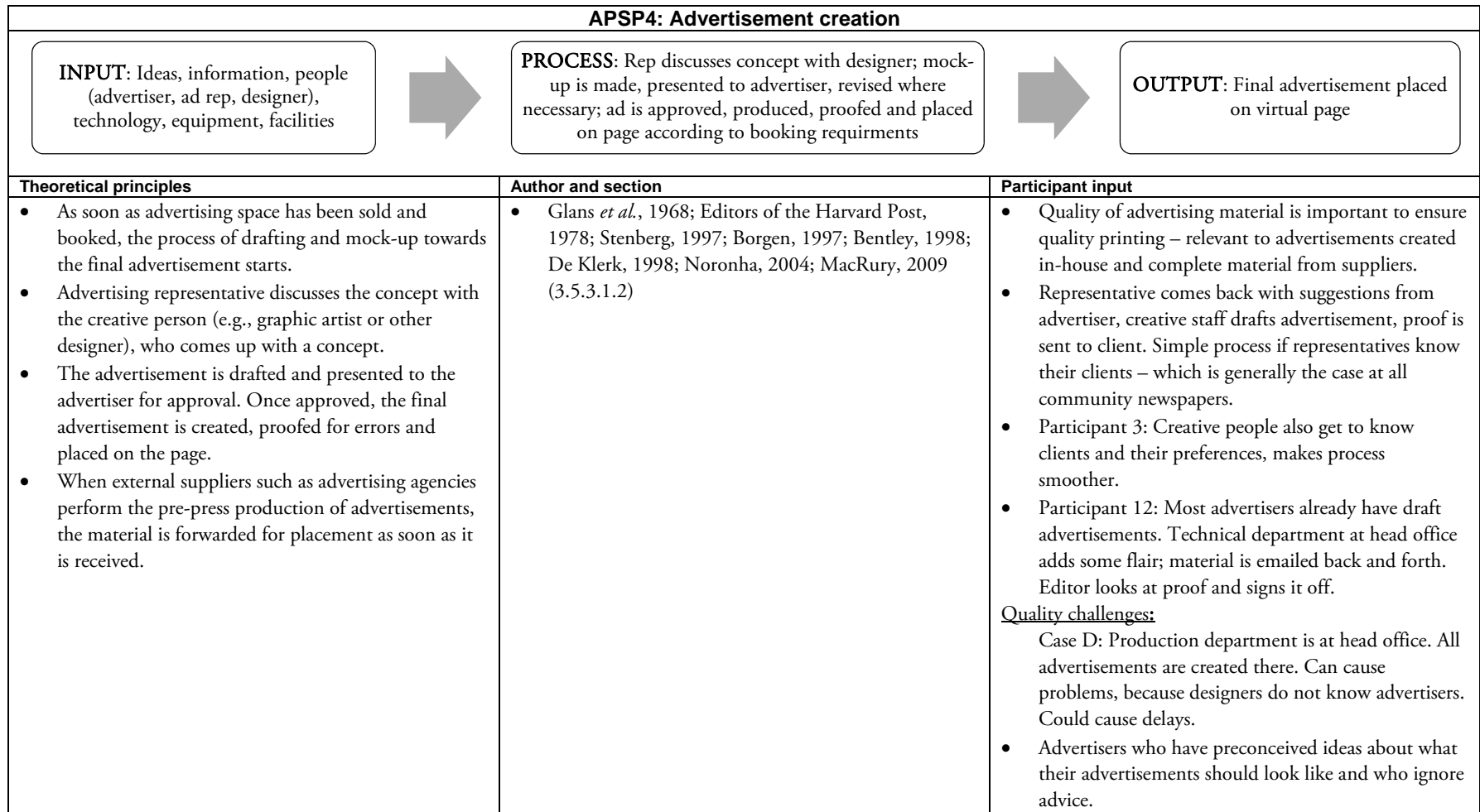
### 4.3.2.2 Advertising sub-processes











#### 4.3.2.3 Discussion

- **Advertising planning:** Planning, a key element of TQM, is essential to ensure cooperation within and across functions and to streamline interactive processes (see 2.4.1, 2.9.1). Planning in the context of advertising in a community newspaper organisation entails having guidelines in place for, e.g., discount, which is generally calculated based on volume and advance bookings (Participant 5). In addition, planning is essential to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place. Participants concur that advertising representatives need transport, a sound communication infrastructure that includes telephones and email facilities, and access to the Internet. According to participant 4 and 5, almost 80% of information and images necessary to create advertisements are sent via email. The Internet is also important to download images and photographs, e.g. logos.

Definite guidelines exist to manage advertorials, specifically in light of the principle that there should be a clear division between editorial and advertising content (see 3.5.3.1, see also 2.10.3).

Cooperation is vital to ensure advertising quality. For example, close liaison between the financial section and advertising representatives is vital to fiscal discipline (see 4.3.1). Representatives should continuously check on a client's credit standing to curb non-payment (Participant 8). In addition, an advertising representative might be skilled at selling advertising, but could lack creative flair. A good working relationship between a skilled designer and the representative ensures that quality is maintained concerning the design and creation of an advertisement (Participant 8). This underscores the importance of involvement and teamwork, two of the main characteristics of organisational culture (see table 15 in 3.3, see also 3.3.1.9) and important requirements to ensure quality products and services.

- **Advertising production – Sales:** To ensure fair distribution of clients among sales staff, all cases have specific practices in place. E.g., cases A and B divide the geographic area as well as bigger categories such as motoring and property among representatives (Participant 3). Advertising representatives at cases C and D also sell advertising for other newspapers in the chain/group.

The practice of publishing loose sections/supplements to increase organisational income is fairly common at cases C and D. Supplements generally focus on specific topics, e.g. lifestyle. Rates for advertising in these special sections are discounted and free editorial space is an added incentive. According to participant 12, the special rates are popular among advertisers and case D sees special sections as a service to the community and advertisers. It gives advertisers the opportunity to advertise at a reduced rate, often with the added benefit of editorial coverage. Case C plans supplements a year in advance and certain sections have become regulars. Each product has a budgetary target, according to participant 8. In addition to the planned special sections, cases may offer a special focus on topics such as Mother's Day to boost income. These focuses are generally a page or two in the main newspaper, depending on the advertising volume (Participant 8). According to participant 8, many advertisers who take advantage of the lower rates in supplements are regular advertisers.

In contrast, supplements seem to be hindrance rather than help at cases A and B. According to participant 4 and 5, small focus sections are generally offered when a new business opens or to celebrate a business's "birthday". In the past, a motoring supplement appeared every quarter. This has been scaled down to twice a year – in time for the Easter and December holidays, because it became

too difficult to procure advertising. The participants said advertisers feel obliged to advertise in special sections, and as a result often complain that they are being exploited. According to participant 5, a community newspaper has to take care not to exhaust the market – especially a stable market such as the one A and B function in. As incentive, new businesses are offered free editorial space in the special section for new businesses. However, advertising representatives become frustrated when journalists do not promptly follow up with the advertiser to do these brief stories (Participant 5). This is due to limited human resources in the editorial section rather than a lack of cooperation between the functions. It is important, though, that given the market cases A and B function in, the editorial section is sensitive to the efforts of advertising staff to procure business.

As part of social responsibility, cases offer discounted advertising rates to non-governmental organisations and other institutions that face monetary constraints, e.g. schools (Participant 8).

- **Advertising production – Reservations/booking:** Most advertisements in a community newspaper are retail or classified advertisements (see 3.5.3.1). The latter is very popular among advertisers and readers alike, according to all participants. According to participant 7, not many advertisers book a specific spot in the newspaper – especially not towards the back of the paper. If advertisers want their advertisements on the first few pages (pages 1-3 specifically), they pay extra. Front-page advertisements are usually booked a year in advance. It is an education process to teach advertising representatives to not oversell the first pages of a newspaper. Pages 1-7 are viewed as the main news pages and carry a lighter advertising load than the pages further towards the back. Having too many advertisements in the front section distracts from the news content of a community newspaper, which influences the overall quality.
- **Advertising production – Dummy production:** The volume of advertising and the demand for colour advertisements determine the size and number of colour pages in the community newspaper (Participant 11). A balanced advertising load throughout the paper is important to maintain quality (Participant 7). Because many advertisers do not book a specific space, the onus is on the person who produces the dummy to ensure the balanced load. At case C, this person is either the head of production (in the advertising department) or the senior page layout editor. In the past, the advertising manager was responsible for this task. According to participant 7, an inexperienced person can overload the front section of a paper. To address this problem, case C includes the issue in its list of training and coaching topics.

Apart from the issue of balance, how the advertisements are packed on a page is also important (Participant 7). This influences the shape and size left on a page for editorial content. If not packed effectively, page layout editors can struggle to design a pleasing page. This illustrates the impact activities in one area could have on another, i.e. the interrelated nature of a community newspaper organisation as a system (see 2.9.1). This may affect the quality dimension of aesthetics (see table 2 in 2.5.1), which could affect overall quality and, as a result, negatively influence customer satisfaction (see 2.10).

- **Advertising production – Advertisement creation:** All participants agreed that the final advertisement as well as the creation process is closely linked to customer satisfaction (see 2.4.1). The production teams at the various cases design the majority of advertisements. National advertisers, who book through the various agencies, usually send complete material.

Where production staff and advertising representatives work in close proximity and cooperate well, designers also get to know clients and their needs and wants (Participant 8). Although the Internet and email has made the creation process a lot simpler, several factors influence the quality of this process. For example, physical distance can hamper effective communication (see 3.3.1.10). At case D, designers in the production department at head office (approximately 150 km away from the regional office) do not have direct contact with the advertiser. Neither do they have first-hand knowledge of the business. An advertiser usually discusses his/her ideas with the advertising representative, who, in turn, communicates with the designer, who draws up a design and sends it back for proofing and approval (Participant 12). One example of miscommunication resulted in a pair of scissors in the form of a crocodile on a hairdressing salon advertisement, which did not portray the image of the business correctly, according to participant 12. This can happen when a designer does not know an advertiser. Although such an error can be rectified, it causes delays and friction, which yet again illustrates how important communication and cooperation is to quality (see 2.4.1 and 2.9.1).

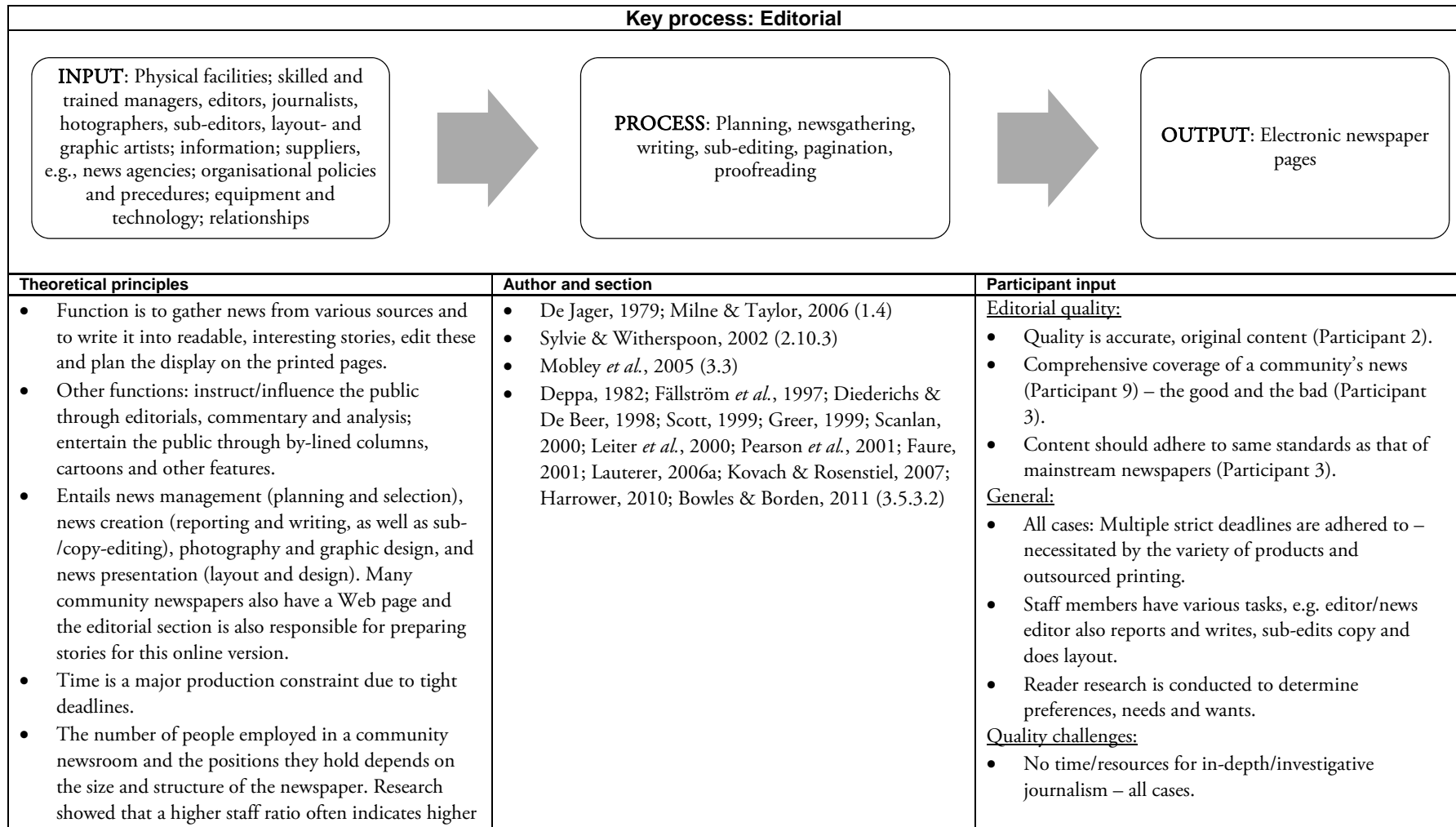
Another challenge participants highlighted is educating advertisers about designs that would work for their businesses. According to participant 8, many advertisers have fixed ideas, which often do not coincide with the principles of a quality advertisement. For example, the amount of text, the composition and colour all add to the quality – or lack thereof – in an advertisement. Because newsprint is grainy, the layout of newspaper advertisements should be simpler and contain less detail and larger graphics to ensure they print well. Participant 8 argued that “less is more” in newspaper advertising. However, many advertisers want to get as much information into an advertisement as possible, which could influence the printing quality as well as the impact the advertisement has on readers.

If the printing quality of an advertisement is substandard, or the advertisement does not appear on the reservation date, it is placed again without cost to the advertiser, or another arrangement is made to compensate the advertiser for the lack of satisfactory service. Participant 3 argued that technical problems are not the fault of advertising representatives. However, representatives are accountable. The content management system in place at cases A and B prevents many problems. Mistakes do occur, but the objective remains to keep the customer (i.e. advertiser) satisfied.

In summary, effective planning, communication and cooperation are essential to ensure quality in the various processes of the advertising function. As such, the organisation has to have a customer-oriented advertising strategy that is widely communicated, clear guidelines to ensure staff members know what is expected of them, and sound relationships internally and externally. If quality processes are in place and errors are minimised, customer satisfaction can be achieved.



### 4.3.3 The editorial function



<p>quality. Staff: news managers (editors), news gatherers (journalists and photographers), and news processors (sub-editors and page layout editors).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation and teamwork are important.</li> <li>• Due to technological development, page layout (or paste-up) has migrated from the production function, where it was traditionally seated, to the editorial function.</li> <li>• The bigger the newspaper, the more complex its structure, which would mean special sections for sports, entertainment etc. However, at small community newspapers with only a handful of staff members, all the topics still have to be covered.</li> <li>• In a community newsroom structure, staff members often share responsibilities, e.g. editor could be manager, journalist and copy-editor; journalist could be photographer and page layout editor.</li> <li>• Technology changes news production process dramatically. However, to keep up with technological development requires substantial financial commitment.</li> <li>• High staff turnover in community newsrooms is a quality challenge. Community newsrooms are generally made up of entry-level people, because these papers are often seen as a stepping-stone. A strong organisational culture could counter high turnover.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real need for more qualified and experienced journalists – would contribute to ability to do in-depth journalism. Now all the routine stories are covered (Participant 6).</li> <li>• Strict deadlines/lack of time to ensure quality reporting and writing.</li> <li>• Smaller newsrooms increase pressure and work load.</li> <li>• Economic pressures restrict editorial space.</li> <li>• Lack of resources to employ paid interns.</li> <li>• Pressure from smaller communities to not publish certain stories.</li> <li>• News correspondents with limited knowledge and other challenges such as a lack of transport (case B in particular).</li> <li>• Due to lack of human resources or time to attend an event, the temptation is high to publish stories/photos sent in by readers even if the quality is not good – (Participant 7).</li> <li>• Maintaining a balance: people want to read their stories in the paper – community newspaper has to be selective while maintaining good relations.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities are involved (all cases).</li> </ul>
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#### 4.3.3.1 Discussion

A community newspaper is a trusted source of **micro news** (see 1.4), which comes with many challenges.

- **News topics:** According to participant 9, a community newspaper cannot look down on news about, for instance, an unusually large pumpkin in someone's vegetable garden. This participant said such a story is just as important to readers as vital news such as accidents and local government news. It is thus a challenge to cover the wide spectrum of news a diverse community offers. Readers want to see "news from in and around the town" (Participant 3, researcher's translation). Furthermore, the stories have to be as good as any of those published in a mainstream newspaper (see 1.1 and 2.10.2).
- **Importance of community context:** The community does not only expect a community newspaper to provide quality journalism by focusing on a wide variety of topics, but readers also want more details than they would get elsewhere. Participant 3 provided the example of an incident in which a local couple was murdered in a hotel room while travelling outside their community. *Beeld* carried a news brief, but did not allude to the value of these people in their community. However, this aspect was an integral part of the story Case A carried. Moreover, local communities expect sensitivity (see 1.4) as well as comprehensive coverage about relevant issues (Participant 3). Case B published a photograph of a dead body on the front page. The body was covered, but the legs were visible. A newspaper such as *The Daily Sun* would have done the same without any repercussion. However, the next day the whole family came to see the editor of the newspaper in his office, complaining that the newspaper had no respect for the family. This illustrates that a community newspaper is an integral part of a community, which forms part of the community newspaper's intermediate environment (see fig. 5). Indeed, good relations with the community are important because a system relies on its environment for sustenance and growth (see 2.11).
- **Economic realities:** Economic pressures have a profound impact on the extent of coverage. According to participant 11, the economic downturn since 2008 has forced Case D to publish smaller stories in an effort to accommodate all the news readers want to see. One category that has suffered, though, is schools news – not just due to a lack of space, but also a lack of human resources to cover the stories.
- **Community diversity:** Geographically defined community newspapers have an important task to reflect the diversity of the community as a whole (see 1.2 and 3.3.1.13). According to participant 11, that means catering for black (majority), brown as well as white readers by providing relevant content and access to this content. Language is one way of including diverse groups in a community. Cases A, C and D publish news in English and Afrikaans. Decisions about language depend on who will read it, according to participant 2: "The language, in which the news comes in, is the language in which we will cover it." (Researcher's translation.) Stories about local government are published generally in English. Case B has experimented with publishing stories in the vernacular, but the mainly black readership did not welcome the effort (Participant 1).
- **Newsroom size** is also linked directly to quality. Research shows that a higher staff ratio often indicates higher quality (see 3.5.3.2). Community newspapers generally employ fewer people, but employees need to be multi-skilled, because they often perform a variety of tasks (see 2.10.3). The high staff turnover community newspapers experience, adds pressure on the organisation as a system

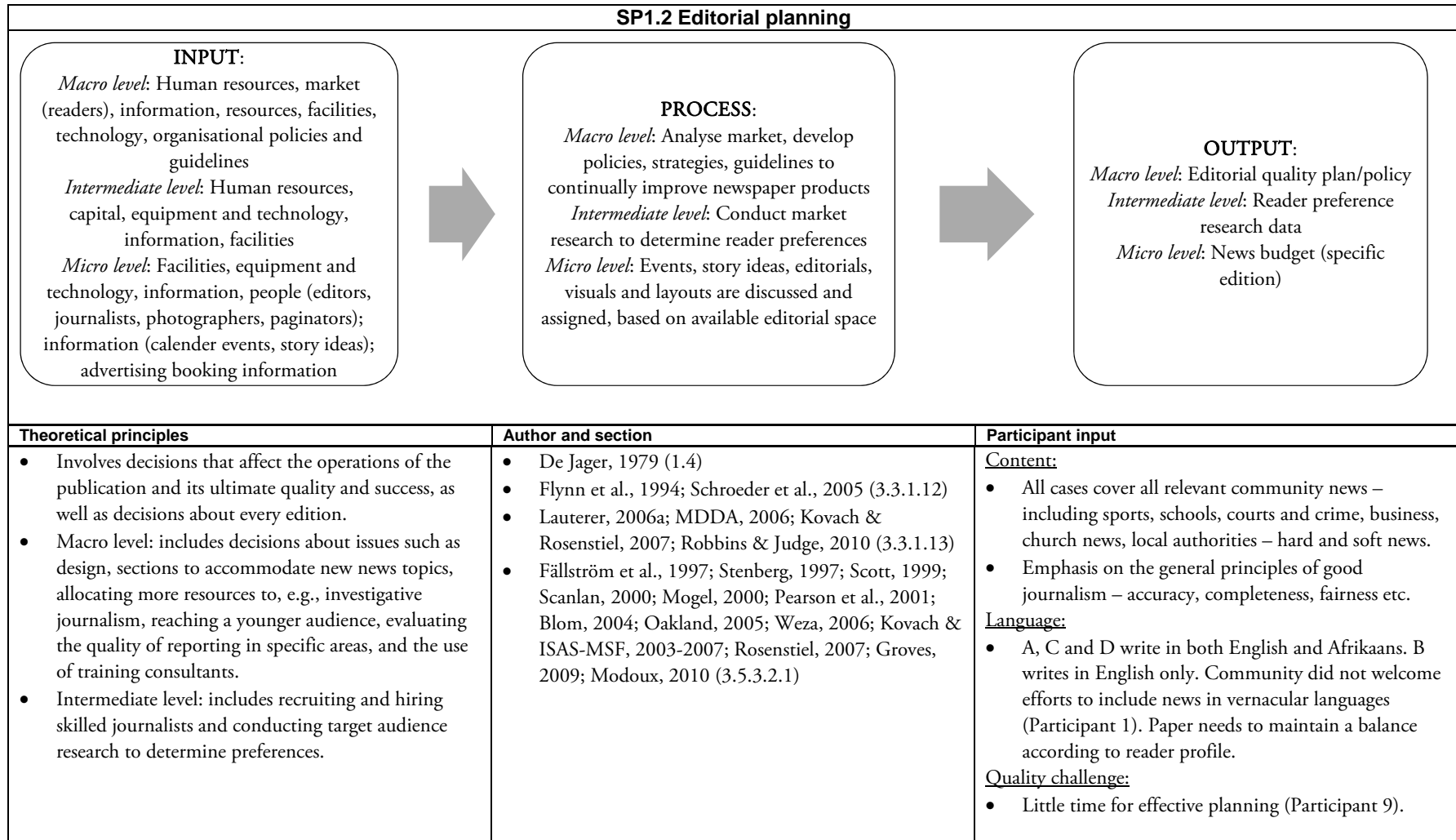
(see 1.4 and 4.3.1). The participants in general reiterated the following effects of an understaffed newsroom (see also 4.3.3.1):



- More pressure on individual staff members and a higher workload. Participant 9, for example, is the news editor at Case C. In addition to managing the journalists, photographers, as well as page layout editors, she is responsible for rewriting copy from outside sources, manages competition entries, often writes stories and functions as copy-editor. As a result, time management is vital (see 3.4 for reference to time as a resource).
  - Less time to make sure tasks are completed well.
  - Weaker news content due to inexperienced staff (linked to high turnover).
  - Lack of understanding where the tasks of other sections in the editorial function are concerned.
- **Feedback:** An open system interacts with its environments (see 2.9). Feedback is thus important in all processes, because it provides information about how effectively the organisation manages quality. Readers give feedback through letters to the editor, email, sms and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Participants also agreed that readers are keen to provide news ideas. Readers are encouraged to participate in the news creation and distribution process by contributing stories and photographs, and responding to issues via sms (Participant 9). The latter often generates news as well, which journalists will follow up.

Feedback can be positive or negative and can contribute to effective change. All participants recognised how important interaction with the community is. Complaints are dealt with promptly as a matter of policy (Participant 1) (see serviceability as a dimension of quality in 2.5.1, see also 3.5.3). Participants deal with complaints in various ways: personal discussion (Participant 1), publishing a complaint in the letters-to-the-editor column together with a response (Participant 9 and 11).

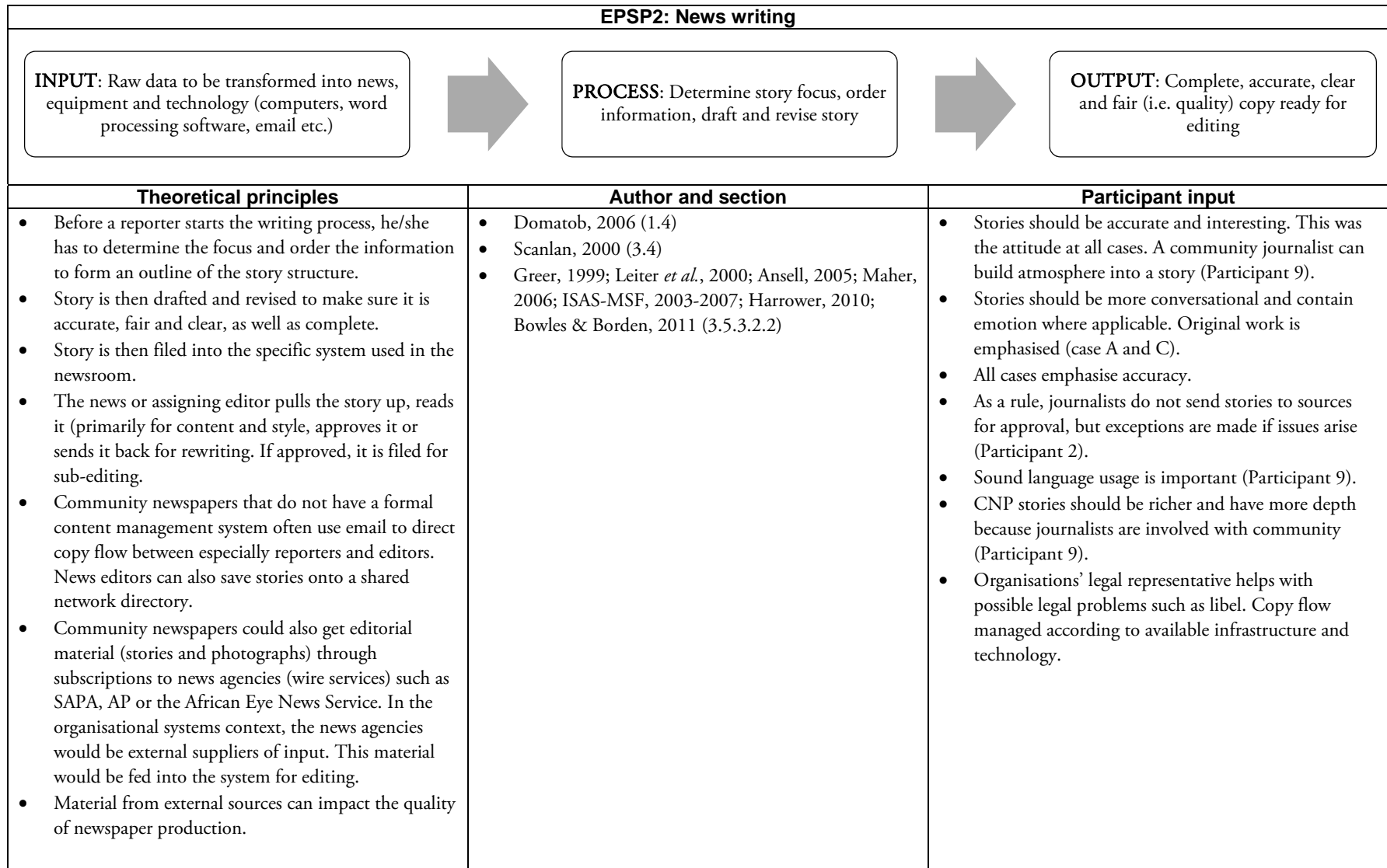
In summary, quality community newspapers provide micro news that respects the morals and values and integrates the diverse nature of the community. Newsroom size and economic realities affect quality and present community newspapers with particular challenges where quality management is concerned. Feedback, part of communication as a dimension of quality (see 2.5.3), is important to ensure quality in all processes.

#### 4.3.3.2 Editorial sub-processes

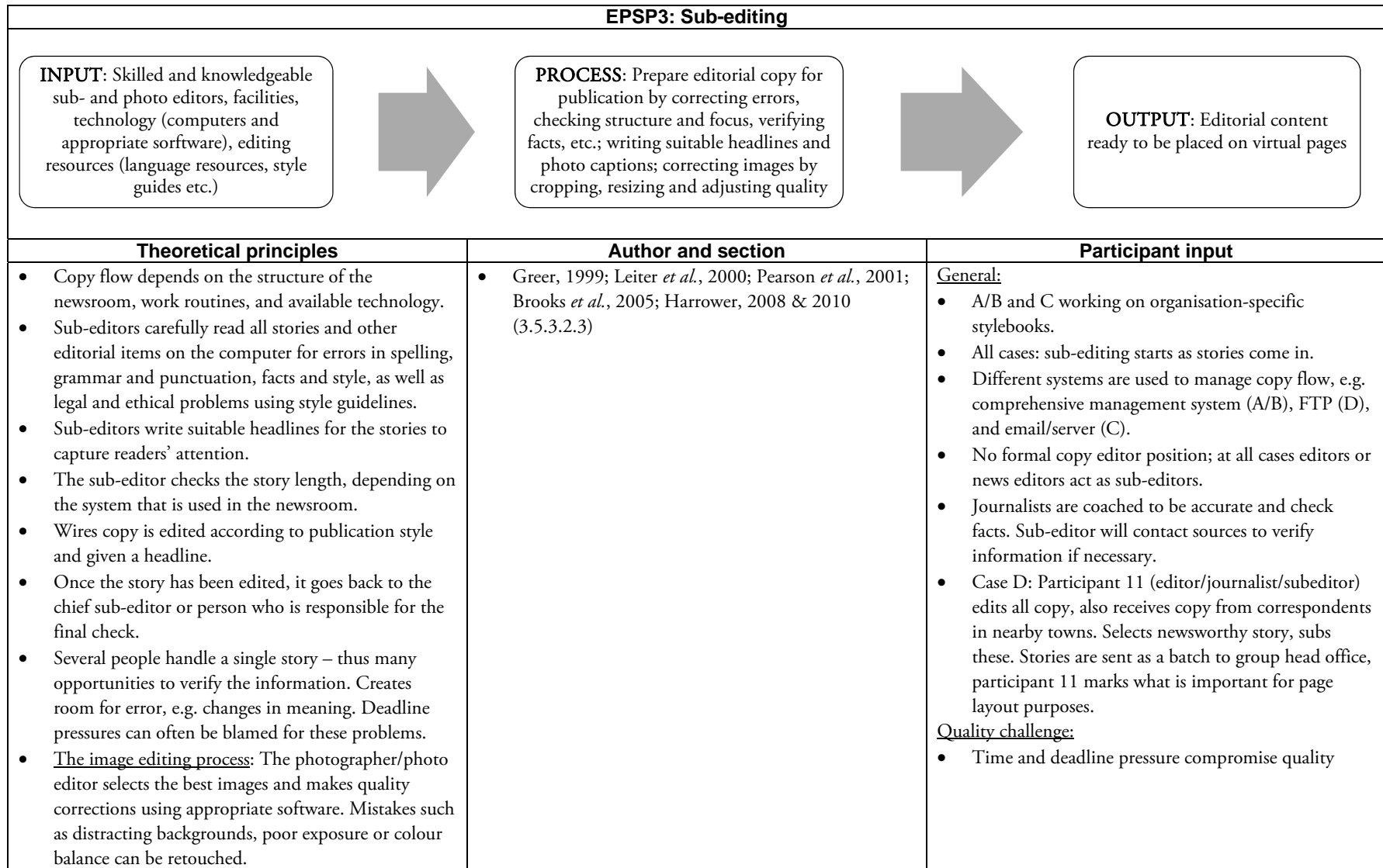


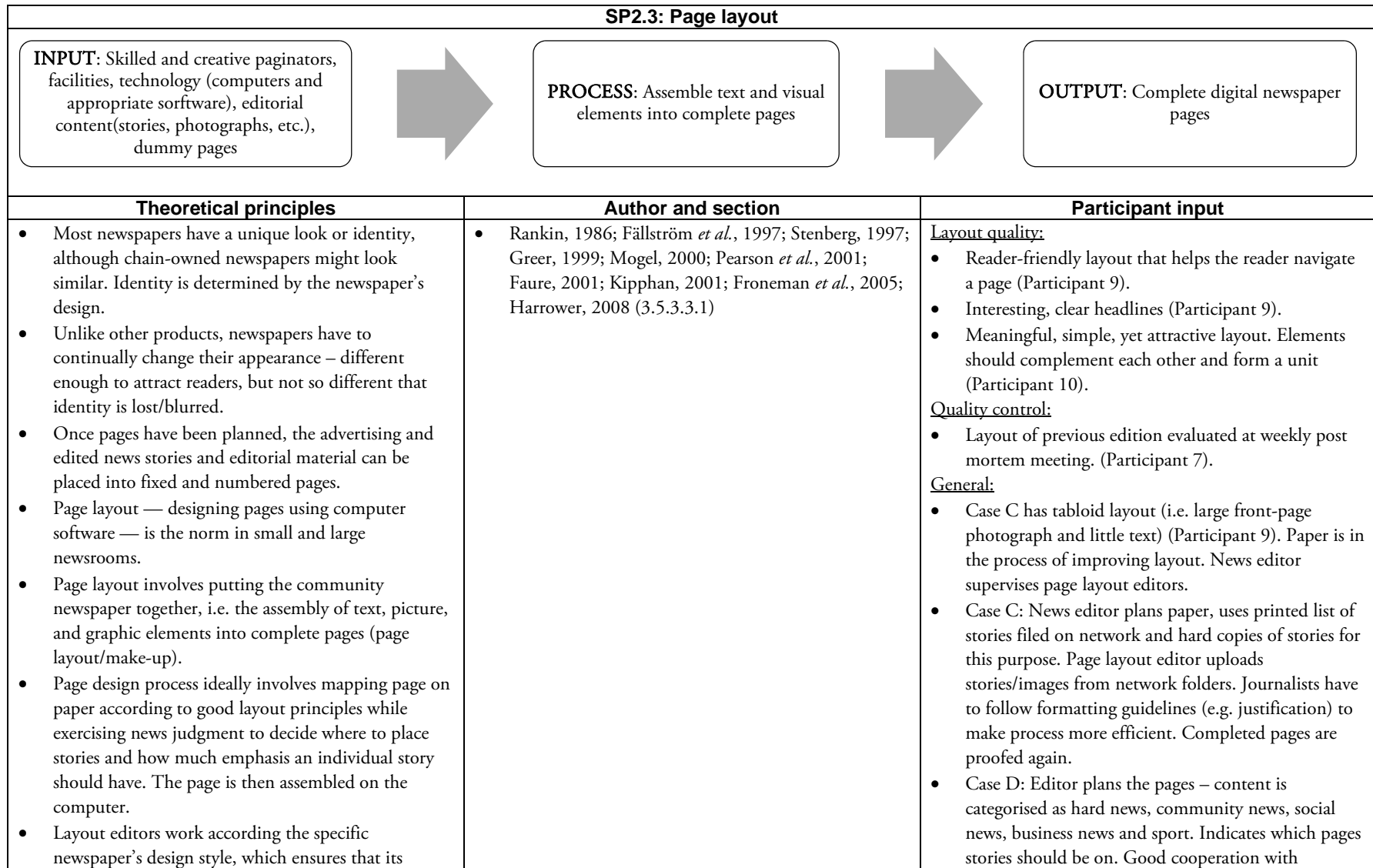
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro level: editorial function is responsible for planning page elements such as stories, images and graphics, because it is responsible for producing complete digital pages containing editorial and advertising content for a specific edition of the paper.</li> <li>• Challenges: to serve a diversity of cultures and classes as part of a whole community, to compete with several different information sources for the attention of the community, and to engage younger readers who prefer news in a modern technological format.</li> <li>• Audience research is vital – and a form of quality control, because it involves feedback from the reader.</li> </ul>		
<b>SP2.2 Editorial production, involving newsgathering (reporting) and writing</b>		
<b>EPSP1 Newsgathering</b>		
<p><b>INPUT:</b> Skilled journalists; events; information from sources in the environments; facilities, transport, equipment (notebooks, computers, telephones, digital voice recorders, cameras, scanners); technology (Internet, email, electronic archives)</p>	 <p><b>PROCESS:</b> Gathering facts through various methods, e.g. research and interviewing, and images through photography or submitted material</p>	 <p><b>OUTPUT:</b> Raw data to be transformed into news, and images to be edited for publication</p>
<b>Theoretical principles</b>	<b>Author and section</b>	<b>Participant input</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporters get ideas and information through a variety of sources, including colleagues in the newsroom, wire services, other media (including social media), the newspaper's correspondents in its circulation area, and through individuals and organisations such as local governments, the police and courts, non-governmental organisations, schools, churches, and members of the community.</li> <li>• Reporters are generally assigned one or more beats and have to make sure they have contact with the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archer, 1996; Faure, 2001 (1.4)</li> <li>• ISAS-MSF, 2010 (3.3.1)</li> <li>• Stenberg, 1997; Greer, 1999; Mogel, 2000; Leiter <i>et al.</i>, 2000; Scanlan, 2000; Mogel, 2000; Pearson <i>et al.</i>, 2001; Glaser, 2007; Ansell, 2005; Harrower, 2010; Bowles &amp; Borden, 2011 (3.5.3.2.2)</li> </ul>	<p><u>General:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting process involves covering story in the field; conducting interviews to gather information; research; taking photographs (all cases).</li> <li>• Correspondents should apply the journalistic principles, especially accuracy (Participant 2).</li> <li>• Quality of photographs is important – high resolution to ensure quality printing.</li> </ul>

<p>individuals and organisations where news on a specific beat originates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a reporter is sent to cover an event or story, he/she gathers the facts through several methods; including research, interviewing those involved, careful note taking and observation.</li> <li>• Newsgathering also includes collecting information in the form of images (photos, graphics).</li> <li>• To be able to report and write, reporters need physical tools (tangibles) and electronic tools (software, databases, search engines) and “mental tools” (characteristics such as persistence, commitment to accuracy, fairness and courage).</li> <li>• <u>Tools</u>: Internet, email, notebooks, computers, telephones, voice recorders, cell phones, digital cameras.</li> <li>• <u>Skills journalists should have</u>: Typing, shorthand/briefhand, ability to think visually – and taking photographs (important at community newspapers).</li> <li>• Large community newspapers might employ a chief photographer, but most often photographers would get their assignments from the editor or news editor.</li> <li>• Photographers might accompany a reporter on a story, or cover an event on their own — once again depending on the size of the organisation.</li> <li>• The photographer imports digital photographs into the computer system once back in the office.</li> <li>• Printed photographs (or other graphic material) submitted to the newspaper can be scanned and converted to digital format using appropriate technology and software and then treated in the same way as original digital photographs.</li> </ul>		<p><u>Quality challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of cooperation from sources, especially local authorities, hampers community newspaper’s watchdog function.</li> </ul>
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<p>identity is not compromised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the pages are complete, they are printed and proofed as a final quality check. After corrections have been made, the complete digital package is ready to be plated.</li> </ul>		<p>production section (page layout is done at group head office) – his suggestions for layout are usually followed. Proofs are not sent back, unless specifically requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case A/B: Production section responsible for page layout. Editors also help. Template is designed in such a way that staff can complete page layout quickly.</li> <li>Page layout is a team effort (Participant 10): journalists have to label text and photos correctly and copy should be edited before layout starts.</li> <li>C also uses templates to streamline process. Pages are packaged in production section after final check to see that all ads are in place. Production sends pages to printers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Quality challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy that is not ready for page layout in time, lack of variety of photographs that allows creative layout, poor quality photographs or photographs that have not been downloaded correctly cause delays a community newspaper can ill afford.</li> <li>Deadline pressures that prohibit proper “after-care” to ensure quality.</li> <li>Pressure from within the newsroom – layout is not “packing a puzzle” (Participant 10).</li> <li>Lack of space to produce more creative layout.</li> <li>A lack of consistency where software is concerned.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.3.3.3 Discussion

- **Editorial planning:** The importance of planning in quality/quality management has already been established (see 2.4.1, 2.7 and 2.8 and 3.4). One could argue that given the characteristics of community newsrooms, e.g. fewer staff with several, diverse responsibilities, planning is critical. However, several participants report that they have little time for effective planning.

Newsroom rituals differ, depending on the case. For example, the newsroom at Case C holds a weekly news meeting where they discuss ideas, brief staff members about assignments, and tentatively plan the paper. The newsroom team discusses possible front-page photos as well as where stories could be placed on news pages. The precise content of an edition of a community newspaper is determined closer to the printing deadline and depends on news events (Participant 9). According to participant 7, the news meeting also serves as a post mortem discussion of the previous edition. This includes identifying follow-up stories and items suitable for entries in competitions, e.g. the MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards. As soon as the dummy (see APSP3 in 4.3.2.2) is available, the news editor, in cooperation with the editor, continues the planning process. The newspaper is “packed” from the back (Participant 9).

- **Editorial production – Newsgathering:** The newsgathering process depends on the quality of the planning process. If a journalist is briefed thoroughly about what is expected, he/she will be more effective when gathering information for a story. However, participants agree that journalists need to be skilled in newsgathering techniques and, in the process, adhere to the general principles of quality journalism (see 3.3.1.1). Journalists do discuss stories and photographs with the news editor once they come return an assignment (Participant 9), but often errors made in the newsgathering process are identified when it is too late to send a story back to the journalist and only superficial corrections are made. This affects the quality of the story.
- **Editorial production – News writing:** The participants agreed that community journalism should adhere to the same principles as mainstream journalism (see 3.3.1.1-3.3.1.6). They are concerned about the perception that community newspaper as substandard, but agree that a lack of skills and experience among community journalists contribute to the perception. Participants emphasised original journalism (i.e. using primary sources and information gathered through interviews rather than counting on press releases and police reports). Accuracy is paramount and journalists should take care to verify facts. To control quality, participant 2 (news editor) makes sure journalists know what he expects of them. He also reads every story. He prefers to check stories with the notes at hand. Participant 2 said a relationship of trust with correspondents is vital. Participant 11 checks facts by contacting sources as soon as a story has been written.

Copy flow depends on the infrastructure and technology available (see 3.5.3.2.2). Cases A and B use a tailor-made comprehensive content management system (see 3.5.1) that streamlines the flow of copy and simplifies control. At case D, copy from news correspondents is managed through email (news items from correspondents). A file transfer protocol (FTP) system is in place to streamline data transfer between the newspaper and head office where production takes place. Case C uses email and the IT network to regulate copy flow. Once a journalist finishes a story, he/she files it in a folder on the network. Different deadlines are set for hard and soft news.

- **Sub-editing:** Staff members responsible for editing news copy start working as soon as journalists file their stories in the relevant system. Because sub-editors in many community newsrooms work with the copy of more than one newspaper, time management is vital (Participant 9). For example, participant 9 is responsible for planning the newspaper, editing all stories and planning the layout of the “main” newspaper as well as three other newspaper products the organisation publishes. Several deadlines are determined to ensure efficient workflow. At case C, soft news stories have to be finished earlier than hard news. This arrangement also leaves room for possible breaking news. Due to time restraints, participant 9 cannot pay as much attention to each story as she would like. Following all three steps Brooks *et al.* (2005:45) describe (see fig. 27 in 3.5.3.2.3), is thus virtually impossible. Editors, news editors and sub-editors traditionally write headlines for stories. Participants reported that they encourage journalists to suggest headlines and final headlines are often a team effort.
- **Page layout:** As soon as the copy has been edited, the layout editors start laying out the pages, following the plans provided. Page layout editors usually work from back to front, because the news stories for the main news pages have a later deadline. The front page is finished last. The main headline is a team effort (Participant 9).

At case A, participant 1 designs the newspaper (dummy) and the production section does the actual page layout, using Adobe InDesign. Other editorial staff members also help with the layout. Using templates saves time in the page layout process, but curbs creativity (Participant 2). However, templates do enable less experienced staff members to help with the layout. The system implemented at newspapers A and B is designed to empower staff to do a lot of work in a short amount of time.

According to participant 10, quality in the page layout process includes quick access to the content earmarked for a specific page and a choice of photographs. Quick access is ensured when stories, captions and photographs have the same ID so that a page layout editor does not have to waste time to search for the correct item. Copy should also be formatted correctly. A choice of photographs includes photographs of different orientations, i.e. portrait and landscape. Picture quality is also important. Community newspapers often work with low quality printed photographs community members supply. These have to be scanned, which further affects the quality. Other important quality factors are guidelines regarding typography and spacing (i.e. ample white space). Typography is a powerful design element, but too many fonts negatively affect quality.

Although the page layout for case D takes place at the organisation’s head office, participant 11 does make suggestions about the layout, specifically regarding the placement of specific stories. Cooperation and communication are important in this regard.

In summary, it is clear that editorial planning and production is a team effort at all cases included in this study, a major component of TQM (see 2.8) and core characteristic of organisational culture (see 3.3). Quality requires communication, understanding and cooperation (see 2.5). However, time constraints, deadline pressure and a lack of skills can hamper quality. Quality management involves emphasising in quality early in all processes (i.e. in the design phase as Genichi Taguchi advocated [see 2.4]). Figure 37 illustrates the effect this could have on the news planning and production process:



Figure 37: Designing quality in.

#### 4.3.4 The production function

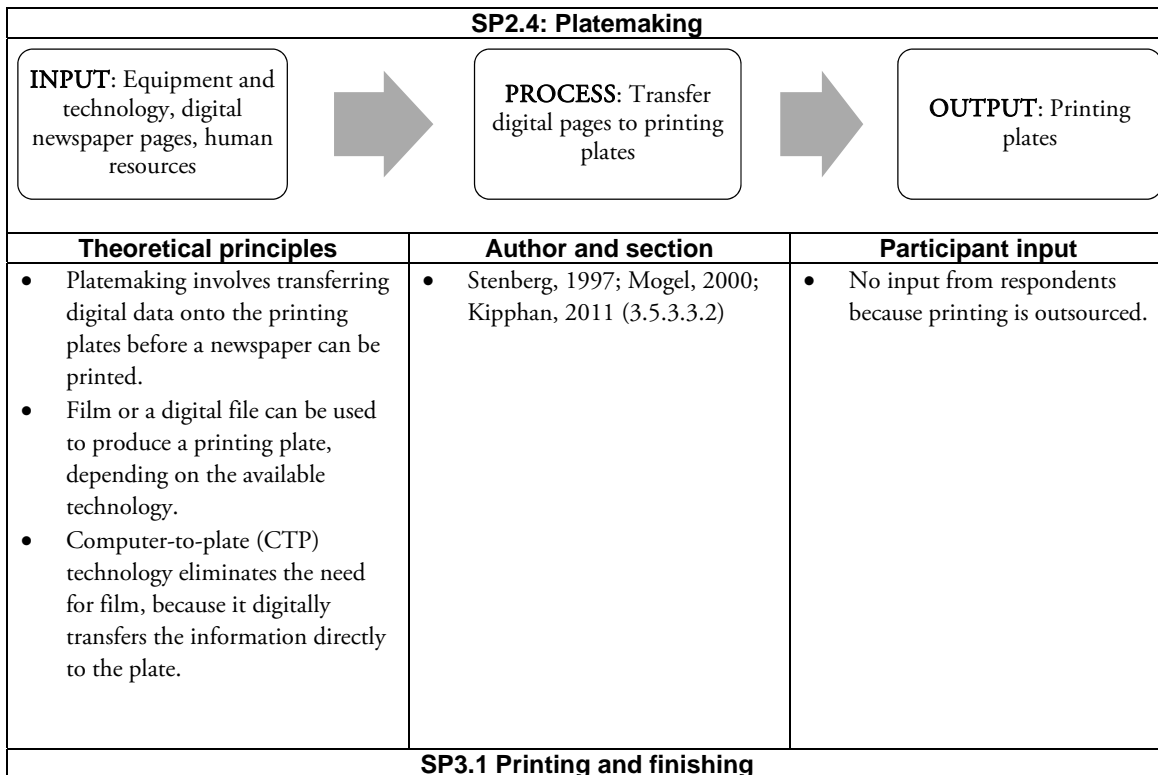
Key process: Production		
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <b>INPUT:</b> Editorial and advertising material, human resources (page designers, technical staff), equipment and technology, raw materials (ink, newsprint) </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">➔</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <b>PROCESS:</b> Place advertising, package digital pages, make printing plates, print newspaper </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">➔</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 30%;"> <b>OUTPUT:</b> Printed community newspaper </div> </div>		
Theoretical principles	Author and section	Participant input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Function includes the highly computer-intensive pre-press processes of page layout, platemaking and printing.</li> <li>Strict schedules, parallel pre-press production using distributed and varied production systems, sequential duplication and press reproduction of the finished product characterise the modern newspaper production system.</li> <li>Computerised production techniques link the processes and systems. Technological advances have made it possible to manage the workflow electronically. Consequently, the production department in P2 was integrated into the editorial/advertising functions where page layout (SP2.3) now takes place. Many different printing methods are used, and in the case of community newspapers, these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scott, 1999; Stenberg, 1997; Scott, 1999; Herbert, 1998; Diederichs &amp; De Beer, 1998; Kipphan, 2001; Milne <i>et al.</i>, 2006; ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007; Emdon, 2008; Bowles &amp; Borden, 2011 (3.5.3.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases outsource printing.</li> <li>C and D are printed at locations approximately 150 km away.</li> <li>A and B are printed in the same town. The newspaper organisation and the printer share ownership of the equipment. A sheet-fed press is used because it is more economical and is capable of printing large volumes.</li> </ul>

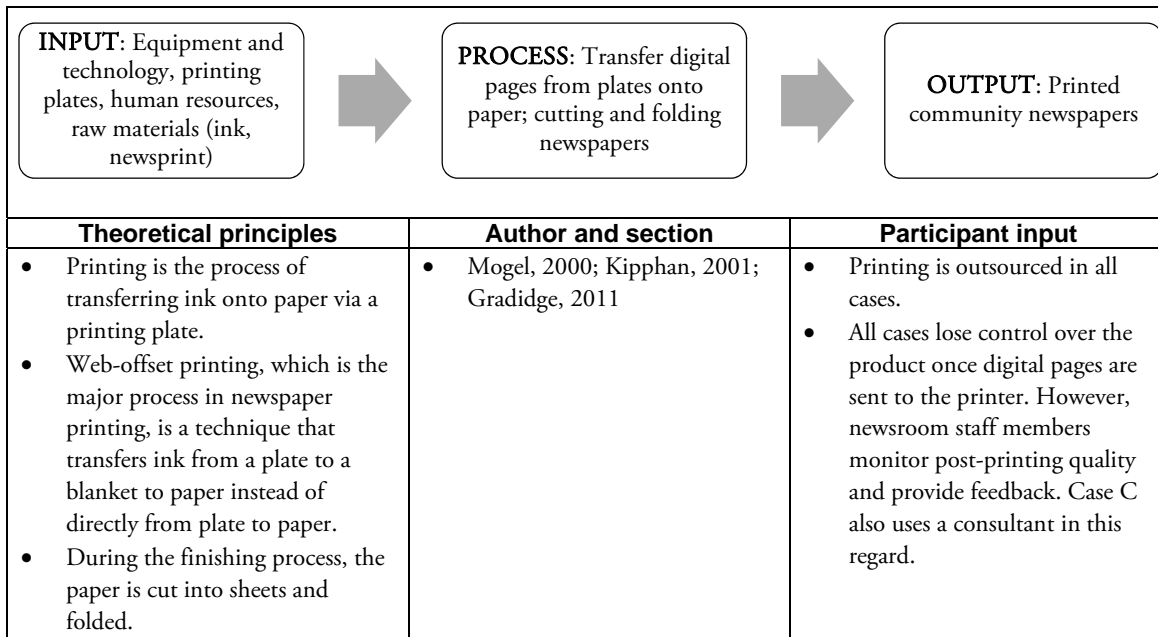
<p>methods are often older. It is thus vital that community newspapers determine the exact requirements in the pre-press phase to ensure a quality printed product. These include limitations where colour and image resolution are concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisers who supply complete material to the community newspaper should also take the technological restrictions of the sector's production process into account to ensure quality in the printed product.</li> <li>• Factors affecting production quality include a lack of basic materials, outsourced services/products, a lack of technical infrastructure and equipment and a lack of resource maintenance.</li> </ul>		
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#### 4.3.4.1 Discussion

The production process and its sub-processes are discussed in 4.3.4.3.

#### 4.3.4.2 Production sub-processes





#### 4.3.4.3 Discussion

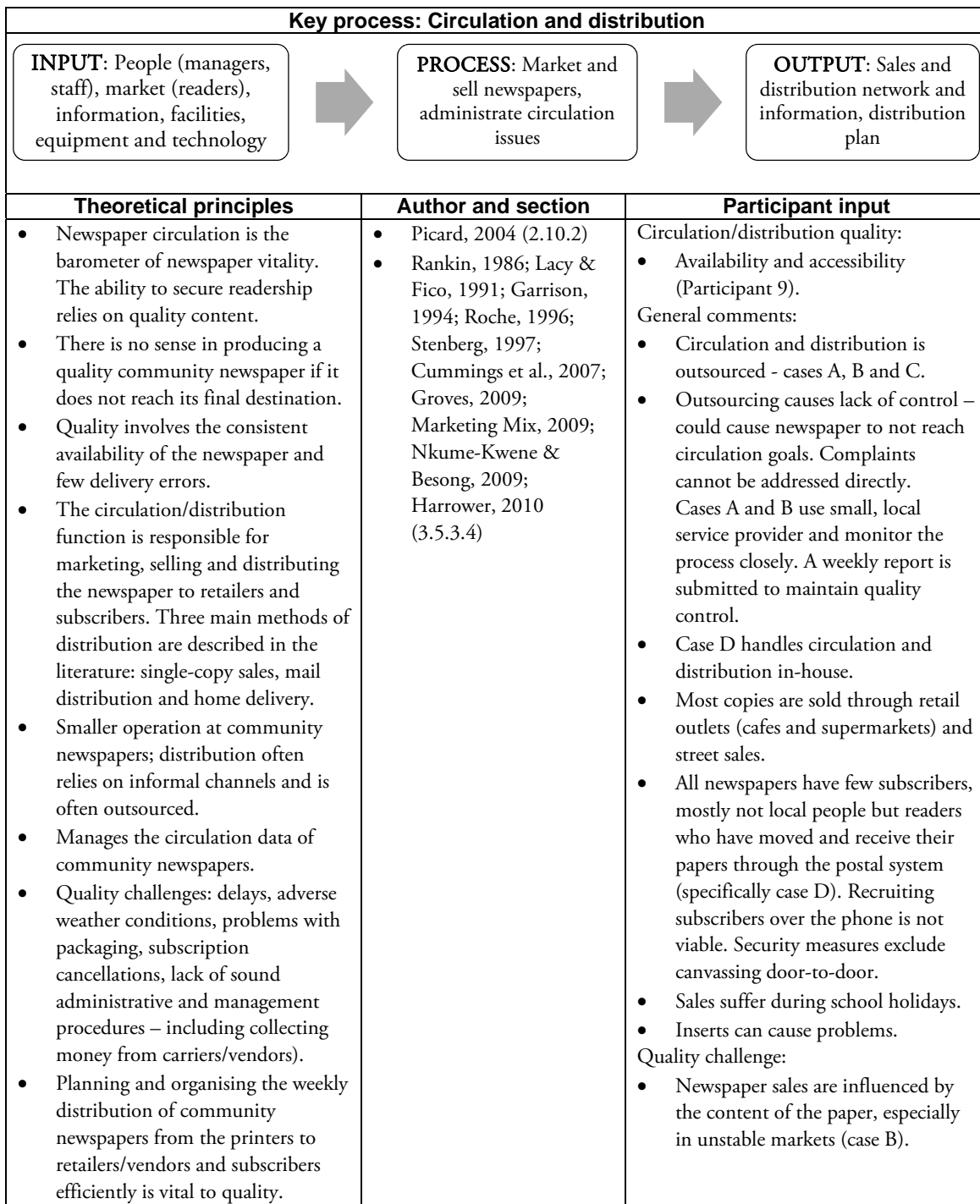
Printing is outsourced (see 3.5.3.3) in all cases, and according to the participants, the process generally runs smoothly. Deadlines are emphasised during the pre-press stages and delays rarely occur. The fact that the printing quality cannot be controlled directly is a challenge, according to participant 8. The small print-runs of community newspapers could cause problems where print quality is concerned. Participants agree that community newspaper organisations have to be proactive and manage quality early on in the processes they do control. This includes making sure that high quality photographs and graphic material (including advertising material) are used as far as possible, according to participant 10.

Case C is printed at a large printer that also prints mainstream newspapers within the group. At the weekly post-mortem meeting, staff members evaluate the previous edition of the newspaper. Case C liaises with a consultant with years of printing experience to identify problems that occurred in the printing process. The consultant then gives feedback to the printer. Cases A and B are printed at a small printing enterprise in the town where they are situated. The newspaper organisation and the printer share ownership of the printing equipment. Although more labour-intensive, a sheet-fed printer is used, because it is more economical and more suited to print small volumes, according to participant 1. Case D is printed at the group's head office about 150 km away. According to participant 11, the printing process runs smoothly and quality problems are rare, thanks to technology (see 3.5.3.2).

From the above it is clear that outsourcing printing should not affect quality, provided that a reputable printer is used and the quality of the pre-press processes is managed well.



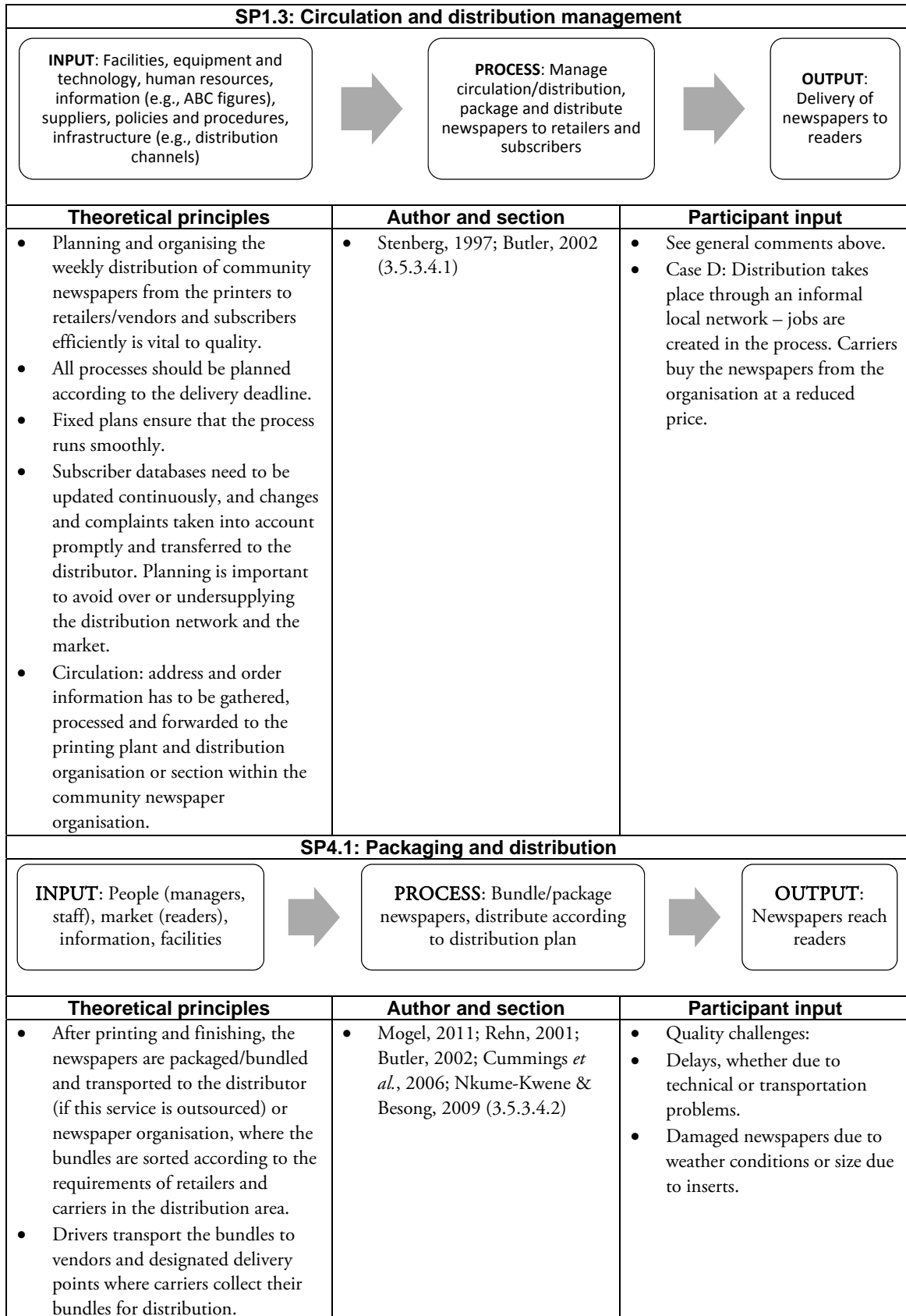
### 4.3.5 The circulation and distribution function



#### 4.3.5.1 Discussion

See 4.3.5.3.

#### 4.3.5.2 Circulation/Distribution Sub-processes



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscribers can get their copies through the postal service, or delivered directly to their door through a network of carriers. A continuous flow of information is vital - devices such as cellular phones could improve communication in the distribution network.</li> </ul>		
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#### 4.3.5.3 Discussion

Participants agreed that the most important quality issue in circulation/management is that the newspapers reach readers in a timely fashion (see 3.5.3.4).

Reasonable circulation targets are set for street sales, agents (i.e. retail outlets) and subscribers, according to participant 7. Case C is one of a few community newspapers that still offers a subscription service, participant 7 said. Recruiting subscribers is becoming increasingly difficult, because people are not interested in newspaper subscriptions. Telephone recruiting is not successful and does not warrant the time and resources spent, according to participant 7. In the past, subscribers were recruited door-to-door, but security measures make it difficult to even reach the front door. Participant 3 added that door-to-door recruitment only works in areas where a newspaper is not well known. Managing subscriptions is a labour-intensive task, which is complicated by the fact that subscribers usually pay a discounted rate (Participant 7).

Participant 7 said he receives the circulation targets from top management, but has to depend on a sub-contractor who controls the distribution and sales of the newspaper. If the contractor makes mistakes, the newspaper organisation does not reach its targets. An error in the service provider's software program forced C to contract the services of a consultant who monitors the distribution process. He drives around to check where the carriers are selling, whether they are suitably dressed, etc. When staff members buy bread and milk, they check on the newspaper copies in the retail outlet. Outsourcing did not cut costs as expected, participant 8 said, because someone had to be appointed to monitor the contractor.

Although cases A, B and D also outsource distribution, they have a measure of control, as discussed below.

**Cases A and B:** Participant 3 was contracted to manage distribution before he started working at the newspaper organisation, and still does. Most copies of the weekly newspapers are sold through retail outlets. It is important that the newspaper is available very early on a Thursday morning, because many readers buy a copy on their way to work. Popular selling points are near schools, where readers buy their copies when they drop their children off. During school holidays, street sales drop dramatically (Participant 3). Participant 3, as the distribution service provider, submits a weekly report to the newspaper organisation for monitoring purposes, as well as payment for the newspapers. He sells the newspapers to an agent who manages a network of carriers responsible for street sales. The process is strictly controlled, also because of the requirements set by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). Accredited newspapers have to submit electronic records to the ABC every three months, according to participant 3.

To maintain quality in the distribution function, strict control is vital. Other measures that contribute to quality include an efficient communication system. Rehn (2001:iv, 9) suggested the use of cell phones (see 3.5.3.4.2), a system that is used at cases A and B (Participant 3). According to participant 3, carriers also use the minibus-taxi system to distribute the newspaper to Case B's mainly black readers in the outlying rural areas.

**Case D:** A designated driver transports the newspaper bundles from head office to the newspaper organisation and distributes the newspapers through a network of street carriers. A carrier buys his copies at a discounted price and sells them at the cover price. He (or she) keeps the difference. According to participant 11, this system has existed for years and works well. Copies that have not been sold are sent back to head office. Copies of the newspaper are also available at retail outlets in town. The newspaper has no local subscribers, but the newspaper organisation mails approximately 100 copies every week to readers elsewhere in the country.

Participants agree with the challenges documented in the literature, e.g., delays related to transport and adverse weather (see 3.5.3.4). An additional problem that complicates distribution is the number and nature of inserts, according to participant 3. Inserts – especially small, glossy magazine-type booklets – can slide out, which means that those copies of the newspaper cannot be sold. Large newspapers with several inserts influence sales, because carriers cannot handle several big bundles.

In summary, participants agree that circulation and distribution is a key function in the community newspaper system, because the newspaper has to reach readers for it to have any value. Circulation figures are important to advertisers, because these tell them how widely their advertisements are potentially read. Distribution has to be timely. Readers expect their newspapers at a specific time, and might not go back to the store or selling point to buy a copy if distribution was delayed.

#### 4.3.6 Factors influencing quality

Table 21 provides a summary of the factors participants view as the most important influences on quality in the community newspaper organisation. These factors include negative as well as positive effects on quality.

**Table 21: Factors influencing quality**

Factor	Description
Time constraints	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time constraints influence effective planning.</li> <li>• Although using correspondents cuts costs, rewriting their copy is time-consuming.</li> <li>• Due to the small size of newsrooms, journalists do not have time to spend on investigative journalism.</li> <li>• Due to the heavy workload, journalists do not have time to cover all the news.</li> <li>• Stories are often short and superficial due to a lack of time for richer reporting/writing.</li> <li>• Errors occur more frequently when time is a factor, e.g. in the newsgathering, writing, sub-editing and page layout processes. A lack of time also influences the organisation's ability to correct the errors before going to print.</li> </ul> <p><u>Circulation/distribution function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays in the printing process affect the distribution process, which result in reduced sales.</li> </ul>

Size of the newshole	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower advertising volumes cause newspapers to shrink in terms of the number of pages in a specific edition. Shorter stories are thus written to ensure more comprehensive coverage of topics and issues.</li> </ul>
Human resources	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of journalists, photographers and page layout editors increases the pressure on existing staff.</li> <li>• To employ more correspondents than full-time journalists, may cut costs, but negatively influence quality. On the other hand, correspondents enable a community newspaper to cover the news more comprehensively, because more events can for example be attended.</li> <li>• Chain owners do not invest enough in editorial staffs. Participants report an attitude that community newspapers in a group have to get by as cheaply as possible.</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources to employ interns to reduce the editorial workload.</li> <li>• Lack of skills and experience has detrimental effect on quality across processes.</li> <li>• Employees who are not committed to the community newspaper affect quality negatively.</li> <li>• Staff retention is an important issue, influenced by the inability to offer market-related salaries.</li> </ul>
Understanding and cooperation	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger journalists in particular often disregard deadlines, which affects all activities and processes.</li> <li>• Staff members who do not understand or respect an activity can cause conflict. For example, an editor who wants too many items on a page and expects a page layout editor to “make it work”, causes frustration – and layout of lower quality.</li> <li>• Sources often do not understand deadlines and do not respond to requests for information timeously.</li> </ul>
Access to information	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of cooperation from local authorities affects a newspaper’s watchdog function.</li> <li>• Sound relationships with public relations officials improve cooperation and the quality of information.</li> </ul>
Economic pressures	<p><u>Advertising function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising volumes decrease during school holidays.</li> <li>• Stable markets offer limited opportunities to generate advertising income.</li> <li>• Black market offers few advertising opportunities.</li> <li>• Although chain-owned cases experience pressure to increase profitability, participants report that owners recognise that a poor product will not attract advertisers, which will negatively affect the bottom line.</li> </ul>
Environmental pressure/influences	<p><u>Editorial function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small communities are especially sensitive about certain news stories, e.g. crimes of a sexual nature, and place pressure on the newspaper to not cover certain events. However, participants value independence as a journalistic principle, but remain sensitive to their communities’ values and morals.</li> <li>• Because newsrooms are inadequately staffed, community newspapers often use information and photographs supplied by the community. When deadline looms, the temptation is big to use incomplete information and poor quality photographs.</li> <li>• Schools expect equal coverage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Advertising function:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants are adamant about distinguishing between news and advertising and to maintain credibility.</li> <li>• Some advertisers will cancel bookings if they do not approve of the editorial content.</li> <li>• Advertisers can be very prescriptive about what an advertisement should look like and many are not likely to accept advice from the advertising representative.</li> <li>• Advertisers do not want the newspaper to publish letters that criticise their businesses.</li> </ul>

In the next section, the researcher will discuss the final stage of the empirical study, i.e. refining the quality management model.

#### **4.4 RESULTS OF THE REFINEMENT PHASE (POST-TESTING)**

After the interviews were completed, the researcher summarised and collated the information for the refinement stage. The main challenge was to make sure the data was comprehensive but concise and well organised to enhance understanding. This involved compiling a table containing the diagram of each of the key processes in the preliminary quality management model as well as a summary of the main theoretical points, extracted from the literature study. This data was organised into sections for each of the functional areas, i.e. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution as well as the supporting function administration/finance.

The researcher then transcribed the interviews; collated and summarised the data and organised it into a separate column adjacent to the information from the literature. This document was emailed back to the participants with a cover letter requesting them to review the information and add or amend where necessary (see Addendum A). Participants were reminded that the aim of the quality management model is to help community newspapers evaluate, manage and improve quality. With this in mind, they were asked to:

- Verify the diagram of the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers with specific reference to the processes.
- Verify the collated input from all the participants.
- Refine the input.

##### **4.4.1 Difficulties experienced in the refinement phase**

The researcher emailed the document described in 4.4 to the participants on 18 October 2011. Feedback was slow. The researcher contacted the participants multiple times via email to remind them to respond. Because the participant pool is small, it was important that the researcher received feedback from as many participants as possible. By March 2012, 11 participants had responded. Participants IA4 and IA5 (both advertising representatives) did not respond at all, even after the researcher contacted their supervisor in this regard. Because advertising manager participants 3 and 8 and advertising representative participant 12 did respond, the researcher decided that further input from participant 4 and 5 would not make a significant difference to the study and aborted further efforts to encourage them to respond.

Approximately half of the participants had no comments or suggestions. Moreover, those who did comment mostly reiterated what had already been said or added further details to clarify information. Judging only the extent of the commentary and suggestions, the researcher could assume any of the following was a possibility:

- The information the researcher provided realistically portrayed processes in community newspaper organisations and further refinement of the model involves minor changes.
- The information provided was too complex and participants did not take the trouble to study it in order to make meaningful comments and suggestions for refinement.
- Participants reiterated information and added details because the summary the researcher provided was too concise.

In general, participants seemed satisfied with the content of the quality management model. Notably, several participants commented on the importance and relevance of the study (Participant 1, 3, 7 and 11). Judged by the general response, the researcher is satisfied that the model is a realistic portrayal of the processes involved in producing a geographically defined, printed community newspaper (see 1.4.1) in the South African context. Notably, the results of the refining phase did not differ significantly from those of the verification phase (pre-testing phase). This indicates that the model can be viewed as scientifically valid.

The results of the refining phase will subsequently be presented, discussed and interpreted.

#### 4.4.2 Results of the refinement phase

Most participants concentrated only on the processes relevant to the functional area they work in. The feedback and suggestions relevant to refining the model are summarised in table 22. The table also contains the researcher's response to the participants' feedback and suggestions pertaining to the refinement process.

**Table 22: Results of the refinement phase**

Participant comment/suggestion	Researcher's response
Participant 7 commented on what seems to be a new trend in chain-owned community newspapers: centralising layout. This will eliminate the need for page layout editors at each community newspaper, affecting the individual character of each paper (i.e. homogenisation, see 1.3). Community newspaper organisations will also have to invest in technology and content management systems to ensure effective communication.	There is already evidence of this practice. For example, many of the Media24 community newspapers in the Free State are paginated at <i>Die Volksblad</i> in Bloemfontein (Smith, 2009). Case D is also paginated at its head office together with other community newspapers in that group. In practice, this would be similar to outsourcing page layout and could complicate quality management of the layout process. Moreover, homogenisation could negatively influence the quality of a community newspaper, because it would be difficult to distinguish one newspaper from the next. (This information, however, does not directly affect the quality management model developed in this study.)
Layout style should be reviewed regularly to make sure it remains reader-friendly yet keep up with trends in newspaper layout and design. The objective is to keep readers interested in the newspaper (Participant 10).	This is an important comment in the light of the quality variable <i>continuous quality improvement</i> (see 2.11, table 14), which is already reflected in the model. This guideline could be an important criterion for evaluating quality in a community newspaper (see chapter 5).
Participant 7 suggested that the researcher place more emphasis on the role of the administrative function, because this section determines whether an advertisement can be placed based on the advertiser's credit record. Legislation such as the National Credit Act requires that organisations determine whether someone is creditworthy before credit can be allowed.	This aspect is addressed, but could feature more prominently in SP1.1 (see 3.5.3.1.1). It should also be prominent among criteria for quality evaluation (see chapter 5).
Participant 1 suggested more emphasis on financial planning, including budgeting, capital expenses, insurance, personnel management and risk management. In his experience, many small newspapers do not survive due to a lack of financial planning and management. Ample journalism and advertising experience does not compensate for a lack of financial acumen.	See above.

Participant 1 also reiterated the importance of effective administrative systems, because a community newspaper remains a business enterprise. One of the most important administrative functions is credit control. In advertising, credit facilities will remain important, because advertisers want to see their advertisements before they are willing to pay. According to participant 1, advertising agencies generally pay after 45 days. State departments and municipalities wait months before paying.	
Participant 9 reiterated the interactive nature of a community newspaper's newsroom, referring specifically to a joint decision-making process when a specific edition of the newspaper is planned.	This view is in line with Feigenbaum's argument that "quality is everybody's job" (see 2.4.1) and points to a culture of quality (see table 14). This aspect is addressed in the model.
Notably, participant 1 said that is seen as part of the press process. More specifically, it is seen as part of the printing process. According to this participant, bigger printing operations use computer-to-plate (CPT) technology or even more advanced processes, e.g. computer-to-press (CTP) (Beebe & Meyers, 2000). In the case of more advanced printing methods, organisations should focus on making sure the PDF documents of the newspaper pages are correct and that links are not broken.	The researcher included platemaking as a sub-process (SP2.3) of the pre-press process (P2) in the production function. The CPT process starts when files are prepared during the page creation stage (Beebe & Meyer, 2000) in P2. However, because it is closely linked to printing from an industry point of view, it makes sense to include it in the printing process (SP3.1). This would ensure that organisations using a CTP process would not need to amend the model.

#### 4.5 REFINING THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

In the light of the suggestions summarised in table 22, SP3.1 could then be amended as follows to include the platemaking process. This means that SP2.4 will fall away (figure 38):

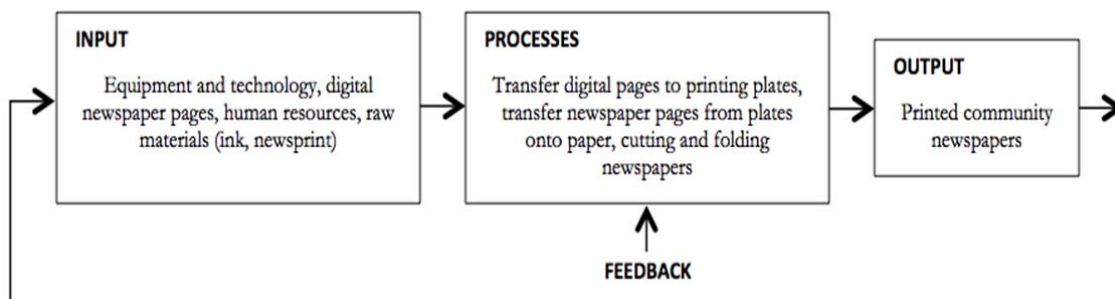


Figure 38: SP3.1 Printing and finishing, revised to include the platemaking process.



After refining the model, the community newspaper organisation as an integrated system can be illustrated as follows (figure 39):

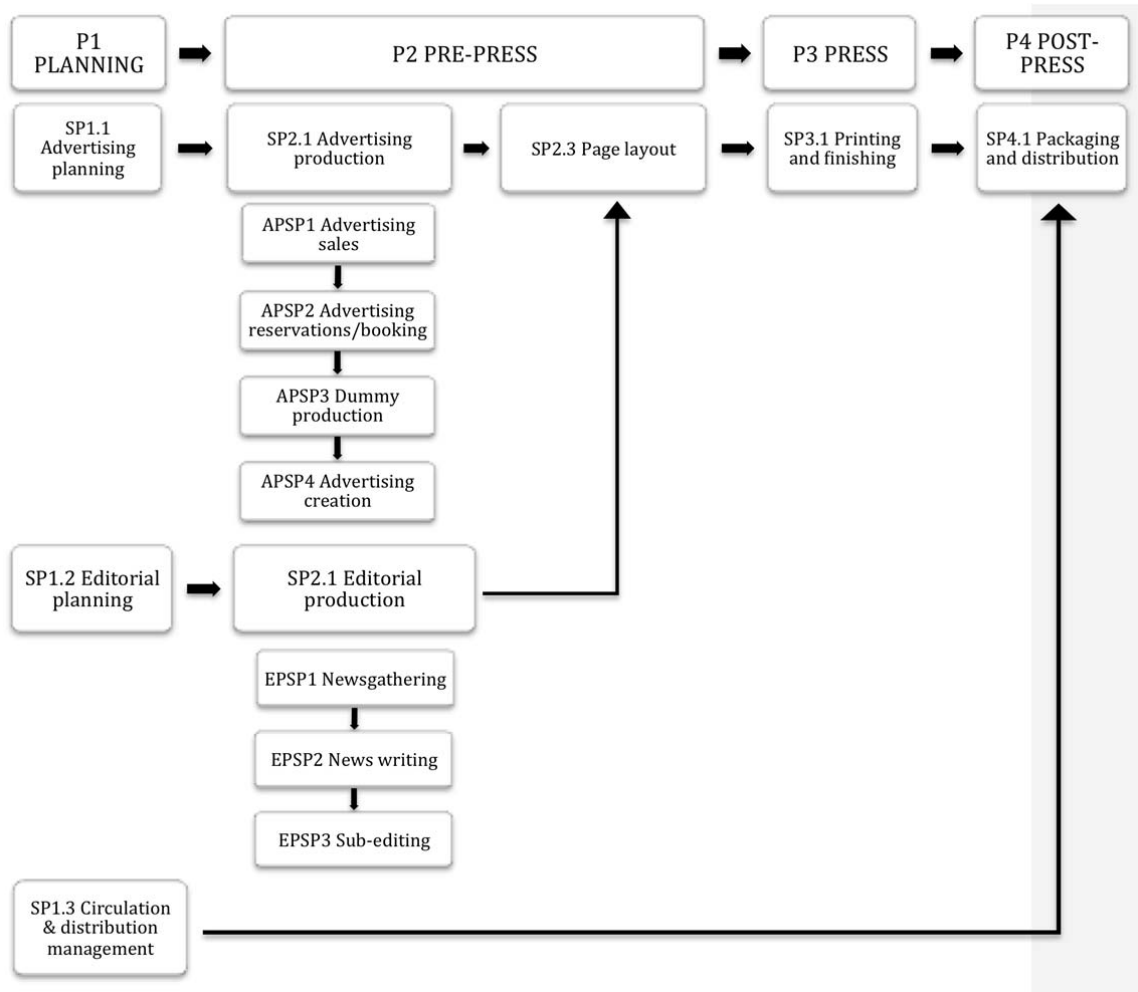


Figure 39: The community newspaper organisation as an integrated system after refinement (level B).

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher presented the results of the empirical investigation, starting with a description of the working method. Participants' input in the verification phase (pretesting) was compared to relevant theoretical principles to verify the content of the quality management model. Drawing from the verification results, the researcher then summarised the main factors participants argue could influence quality in a positive or negative way.

The researcher then summarised the findings of the refining phase and indicated how the information could be used to refine the model. SP3.1 was revised to reflect participants' suggestions and the diagram depicting the community newspaper organisation as an integrated system was amended to reflect the changes.

In chapter 5, the researcher will further increase the level of sophistication of the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers by deconstructing the intermediate model (B) presented in chapter 3 into a micro model (C). This level of the model will focus on criteria that can be used to evaluate quality in community newspaper organisations.



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## CHAPTER 5:

# MEASURING AND IMPROVING QUALITY DIMENSIONS IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

*Editors commonly use subjective criteria like [accuracy, impartiality in reporting, investigative enterprise, specialised staff skills, individuality of character, civic-mindedness and literary skill] when they look at their own papers or at others. But although such values are important in judging editorial awards, they cannot very well be used on a large scale to relate editorial excellence to trends in circulation, advertising, profitability, or other worldly criteria of success. To establish such relationships requires yardsticks that can be readily determined or actually measured.*

— Bogart (1989:259)

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2, the researcher focused on the *content* of the comprehensive quality management model by conceptualising quality and quality management, investigating the role of quality in organisational excellence and placing community newspapers in an organisational systems framework. This culminated in a diagram of the macro (A) level of the model the researcher is developing, illustrating the community newspaper organisation as a system. In chapter 3, the researcher investigated and analysed organisational functional processes in the literature to identify the key processes in the main functional areas of a community newspaper. Following the systems approach as main theoretical construct in this study (see chapter 2), mapping the processes serves as the deconstruction of the A level into the intermediate level (B) (see 2.11). The researcher concluded the chapter by tying the functions and processes together in an integrated system, thereby illustrating the interconnectedness of the community newspaper organisation (see 3.5 and fig. 35).

Chapter 4 focused on the empirical phase of this study. The researcher presented the results of the verification (pre-testing) and refining (post-testing) stages, resulting in the refined comprehensive quality management model (see figure 2).

This chapter has a *quality* focus. In chapter 1 (see 1.2), the researcher established that community newspapers<sup>59</sup> do not just have a pivotal role to play in society, but that they are also a vital part of the community (Mgibisa, 2005:49; Addison, 2006:340). Therefore managing quality in community newspapers is essential (see 1.6). However, despite changes in the South African media landscape (see 1.2), it is debatable whether community newspapers play their rightful role by providing a quality product to news consumers. Although most of the criticism is directed at the mainstream media, community media have not been excluded (cf. Ferguson & Patten, 1979:2-3; Greer, 1999:187-189; Arenstein, 2004; Harber, 2007). Pertinent points of criticism include a failure among community newspapers to properly

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<sup>59</sup> See the operational definition of the term in section 1.4.1. For a comprehensive discussion about defining community newspapers, see Swanepoel and Steyn 2008 and 2010.

respond to community interests and needs. Many community newspapers do not mirror the racial and ethnic make-up (i.e. demography and diversity) of the communities they cover, including women and minorities (cf. Addison, 2006:313). In South Africa, a large percentage of community newspapers rely heavily on advertiser and public relations information, as well as on news agency copy (cf. Louw, 2002; Maher, 2007; Mamelang, 2008). Community newspapers often do not play the traditional watchdog role of the press because they are not critical of local government; many do not carry news conducive to community building, practice investigative journalism, involve community members as reporters or cover issues relevant to minority/low-income groups (Greer, 1999:187-189; Arenstein, 2004; Harber, 2007).

Fourie (2005:148) states, “A rather gloomy picture unfolds as author after author questions the quality and value of the information and knowledge provided by the media, especially under the pressure of corporatisation, marketisation and, eventually, commercialisation.” Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007:7) concur, and strongly criticise the “self-appointed pragmatists ... in corporate settings” who view quality and public interest as unrealistic ideals. These authors emphasise that the solution to preserving the integrity of journalism is to master the fundamental principles of (quality) journalism and rigorously apply them.

Against this background, the fourth objective of this study is to investigate the nature and dimensions of quality community newspapers according to the literature, and identify quality criteria that could contribute to measuring and improving the quality dimension in community newspaper organisations (see 1.6.2). To operationalise this objective, the researcher inductively draws on the dimensions of quality community newspapers introduced in the previous chapters to further increase the sophistication and detail levels of the quality management model by deconstructing the intermediate model (B) presented in chapter 3 into a micro model (C). To populate this level, the researcher formulated specific quality characteristics from the quality dimensions. Owners, editors and other managers of community newspapers could use these criteria to measure and evaluate quality in their organisations/departments.

In the next section, the researcher explains why, in addition to a quality policy, specific quality standards need to be set in order to manage quality in a community newspaper organisation. In addition, specific resources related to quality evaluation are highlighted.

## **5.2 GUIDELINES FOR NEWSPAPER QUALITY**

News media generally subscribe to the traditional journalistic values such as truth, fairness and completeness (Picard, 2004:60; see also the South African Press Code, 2006). They also use the traditional (and other) news criteria (impact, conflict, timeliness, proximity, prominence, currency, human interest and the unusual), which are generally viewed as the key components of news, to judge the news value of information and events (Conley & Lamble, 2006:83). This leads to decisions about which events – local, national and international – are covered and how prominently.

However, news creation, selection and production do not take place within a vacuum. It is dependent on the culture of the organisation, which includes its vision, mission and news policy. Many community newspapers, for example, choose not to carry political news (cf. Faure, 2001:377). The author of this study is of the opinion that if a newspaper organisation has a culture of quality (see 3.3); this will have a positive influence on the organisation as a whole (cf. Underwood, 1993:123), as well as be reflected in its products. A positive climate (conducive to quality) in a newspaper organisation, however, depends on

factors such as well-defined job descriptions, journalistic autonomy of journalists, an editor who supports his/her staff and allows them to participate in the decision-making process, a management that is concerned about the well-being of the employees, free flow of information, as well as open communication across all functional units and levels (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002:25). This view is in line with the view of total quality management as well as the elements of quality pertaining to community newspapers that were identified (see chapter 2).

It is important that a philosophy of quality is adopted to build awareness of the need and opportunity for improvement of an organisation's products and/or services (see 2.2, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.10.3). To this end, it is necessary that an organisation formulate a quality policy with clear goals and objectives so that every employee knows exactly what is expected of him or her: "Explicit goals are crucial because people find it difficult to work as a team to achieve vague or unspecified goals." (Sohn *et al.*, 1999:250; see also Glans *et al.*, 1968:18) Moreover, an organisation-wide quality disposition should be supported by clear quality standards.

It has already been established that organisation-wide commitment to quality should start with top management and filter down to grassroots level. In a community newspaper environment, this could mean that not only the respective managers insist on quality in all aspects of newspaper production, but that this attitude is filtered down to lower organisational levels so every employee is committed to quality in his/her respective tasks (e.g. selling advertising, writing news reports, designing the newspaper or distributing the product). This should culminate in a company-wide quality disposition.

Moreover, the organisation should aim to increase quality awareness and personal concern for quality amongst all employees (i.e. individual as well as collective responsibility), which comes down to organisation-wide responsibility for quality. In its efforts to achieve this, the organisation should encourage employees to communicate to management any obstacles they face in attaining personal and organisational goals. In a creative environment such as a newspaper, staff members should have the right to pride of workmanship. However, in a community newspaper environment, sheer volume of work often causes a lack of focus on individual tasks. Consequently, quality could suffer. Journalists, for example, should be motivated to produce quality work rather than be encouraged to increase their output in terms of quantity (i.e. number of stories produced). The responsibility for quality creative output should thus be decentralised to ensure a quality chain reaction. To achieve this goal, organisations should establish and communicate clear quality guidelines to all employees.

In a community newspaper environment, a lack of clear *guidelines* and *standards* can, for example, lead to reporters relying on editors for news ideas instead of generating their own, reporters relying on sub-editors to improve sub-standard news stories, and photographers relying on layout artists to "fix" poor quality photographs. Because time is so important in newspaper production, these practices often become a habit because they are not corrected early on, causing quality to suffer. Crosby (1995:4) argued that the price of non-conformance is spending money doing things wrong and then having to redo the work: "A prevention-oriented quality management system can replace all that cost with the modest expense of an education and monitoring process." A proactive approach to quality thus demands clear process requirements, conformance to these requirements, a culture change involving commitment to quality and a management style to maintain this outlook (Crosby, 1995:11-13; cf. Garvin, 1988:49-60).

In chapter 1, the researcher emphasised that to manage and improve quality, organisations should know what quality entails (see 1.5). In chapter 2, the researcher established that quality and quality management have a significant influence on the performance of an organisation as a whole (see 2.10). *Continuous quality improvement* was identified as an important variable (see table 14 in 2.10.3). Benchmarking was described in chapter 2 (2.7.2) as a useful tool to establish operating standards that compare to the best practices in the industry.

According to The Quality Assurance Project (2008), standards may be explicit (written) or implicit (understood) and should be:

- **Realistic:** Can be followed/achieved with existing resources.
- **Reliable:** Following the standards provides a consistent outcome.
- **Valid:** Based on scientific evidence or acceptable experience.
- **Clear:** Everyone in the organisation understands the standards in the same way.
- **Measurable:** Performance according to the standards may be assessed (cf. ISAS-MSF, 2010:22).

The lack of scholarly investigation into quality and quality management in community newspapers and the lack of universal evaluative criteria for the media complicate the process of evaluating quality and establishing standards (see 1.1 and 1.6.3). The comprehensive management model for community newspapers the researcher developed in this study could assist community newspapers not just in evaluating their level of quality and quality management, but also set standards to ensure continuous quality management and improvement. However, a few specific national and international scholarly resources offer valuable guidance and the researcher will thus also draw on these to further strengthen level C of the model (see 5.3). This increases the validity of the comprehensive management model for community newspapers, because it provides further necessary evidence as described above (The Quality Assurance Project, 2008). These resources are:

- The **judging criteria** set for the **MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards**: Competing against other community newspapers in a formal setting such as the annual MDDA/Sanlam Local Media Awards (see 1.4, see also footnote 18) is a tactic community newspaper organisations can use to benchmark. In an historical overview of the Sanlam awards, Swanepoel (2008, citing Shepard, 2000) states that competitions offer organisations the opportunity to keep up with the market forces and to measure the newspaper's performance in the journalistic field. The judging criteria used in the Sanlam/MDDA competition are inspired by criteria set for other competitions such as Caxton/CTP's internal competitions and the annual Mondi Shanduka Newspaper Awards (Stander, 2008, cited in Swanepoel, 2008).

These competitions play an important role in promoting quality in journalism because the characteristics of quality journalism are reflected in the judging criteria (Swanepoel, 2008, citing Sanlam, 2008 and Stander, 2008; see also Media Management Centre, 2000:44). Moreover, Groves (2009:13) argues that journalism techniques are embedded into the organisational culture when newspaper organisations display the awards and pass down stories of success. The criteria used in the MDDA/Sanlam competition set standards of excellence in several categories, including journalist and photographer of the year, and the coveted Cronwright and Hultzer awards for general newspaper excellence (cf. MDDA/Sanlam, 2011a; Swanepoel, 2008:19-31). This is particularly important in the context of this study, because the criteria are directly relevant

in a South African community newspaper environment. Criteria extracted from this resource will be referenced in the model tables using the code *MDDA/S*.

- The **Human Science Research Council's** investigation (Hagg, 2006) into **scarce and critical skills** in the publishing and print media sectors: This study, commissioned by the Media, Advertising, Publishing, Printing and Packaging (MAPPP) SETA and part of a larger investigation into scarce and critical skills in the MAPPP SETA (Hagg, 2006:7), investigated scarce/critical skills in 11 occupations within the abovementioned sectors. The occupations relevant to this study fall within the print media sector and include managerial, editorial, technical, production and advertising sales positions (Hagg, 2006:2). The study is thus relevant specifically with regard to the characteristics a community newspaper organisation would be looking for when recruiting as well as training people. The criteria from this resource will be referenced with the code *HSRC*.
- The **Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership's** study into the key **editorial and business strategies** of six independent community newspapers (Milne *et al.*, 2006): As explained in chapter 1, this study focused on 20 small independent/grassroots newspapers the MDDA and the Association of Independent Publishers of South Africa (AIP) view as "successful ventures". It does not focus on quality or quality management as such, but offers insight into the nature and characteristics of successful papers, which enabled the researcher to extract useful quality criteria. Relevant issues include outsourcing services such as printing, and managing a community newspaper organisation with limited resources. Criteria taken from this resource will be referenced using the code *SPI*.
- The **ISAS BCP 9001-2010 International Standard** (see 2.7.2, see also footnote 50): This standard is a useful measuring instrument aimed at helping media organisations to "comply with a balanced model of their industry" (ISAS-MSF, 2010:12). It is applicable to all media organisations and their suppliers, regardless of platform, ownership status, size or editorial approach (ISAS-MSF, 2010:14). Whereas criteria for awards focus on excellence from an industry/professional point of view, the ISAS BCP 9001-2010 International Standard supports the notion that readers and advertisers also play an important role in "defining requirements as inputs" (ISAS-MSF, 2010:9). This approach is important in this study, because it is in line with the quality dimension of customer satisfaction identified in chapter 2. The ISAS BCP 9001-2010 is further highly relevant in this study, because it promotes a process approach to improving quality (ISAS-MSF, 2010:9), an important theoretical premise in this study (see chapter 3). The criteria the researcher deducted from this resource will be referenced with the code *ISAS BCP*, and the specific section number (in the International Standard), where applicable.
- **Lauterer's (2006) Template for Excellence:** This author investigated quality in American community newspapers and focused on characteristics that distinguish "good" from "truly great" papers (Addison, 2006:334). He provides a "best practices toolkit" based on interviews with seasoned community journalists, focusing on issues ranging from the role of the community newspaper in the community and leadership style to the characteristics of entry-level employees. The contents of this toolkit are in line with the soft elements of organisational culture investigated in chapter 3. Lauterer (2006:356-363) then provides a measuring instrument (the "Template for Excellence") that focuses on editorial content and issues related to the relationship



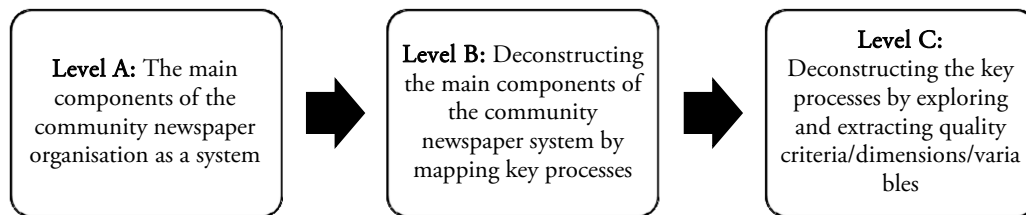
of a newspaper with its community. Criteria from this resource will be referenced using the code *LTE*.

- The **Media Management Centre's** (2000) **measurement tools for quality journalism** (*Management for Excellence*): This resource provides an Editorial Excellence Inventory (Media Management Centre, 2000:4), Credibility Inventory (2000:28) with a scorecard (2000:29) and a section on measuring performance (2000:32). It is an assessment tool/guide for editors and provides clear guidelines for managing quality in an editorial setting, based on the analysis of successful newsrooms. This resource also mainly concentrates on quality in newsrooms and offers insight into “universal characteristics of editorial quality” (2000:4). The reference code for criteria extracted from this resource is *MMC*.

The next section focuses on level C of the model.

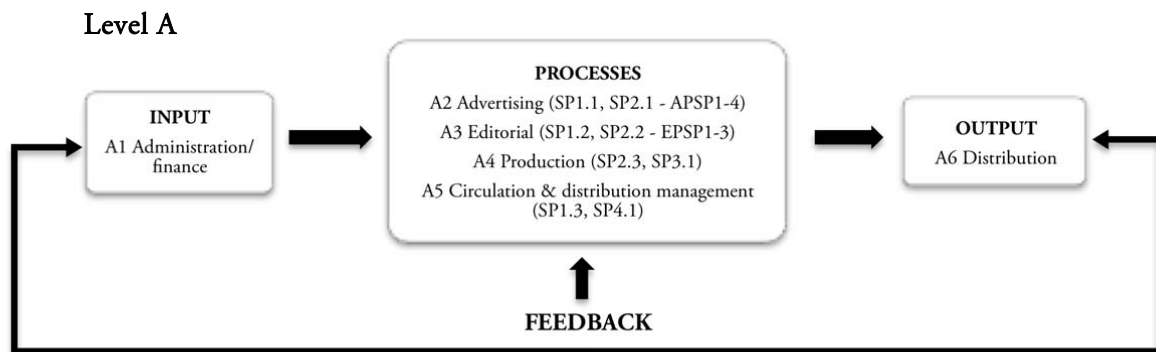
### 5.3 EVALUATING QUALITY IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

In chapter 2, the researcher identified quality variables relevant in a community newspaper context (see table 14 in 2.11). These variables constitute the broad framework for quality criteria in this section. The researcher will present the information in table format, clearly distinguishing between the different levels of sophistication (see figure 40). The deconstruction of the model into increasing levels of complexity can be illustrated as a process as follows (figure 40):



**Figure 40: The levels of sophistication in deconstructing the quality management model for community newspapers.**

For clarity purposes, the researcher provides diagrams depicting the abovementioned levels. Firstly, the researcher will deconstruct the elements in the macro level (A) by adding the micro level, i.e. characteristics that constitute quality in the respective components. A number has been allocated to each component in level A for ease of reference (fig. 41):



**Figure 41:** The elements in level A of the model to which quality characteristics will be added (level C) in table 23.

### 5.3.1 Quality characteristics of the main components of a community newspaper organisation

In table 23, the organisational components A1-A6 as well as feedback (A7, see fig. 42) are deconstructed into level C as the micro level of the quality management model by adding quality criteria relevant to the main functions in a community newspaper organisation. Each table contains the process/element number, description (name), brief clarification and the specific quality criteria. The main theoretical contributors are referenced and the chapter sections also noted. In addition, the specific resources highlighted in 5.2 are referenced using the allotted codes.

Table 23: The deconstruction of level A into level C.

Level A			Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Quality characteristics
A1	Administration/finance	The organisational or administration/finance component (fig. 7) is a support function that manages activities such as finances, human resources, technical support and maintenance. Provides and controls resources to ensure the profitability of the organisation (Williams, 1978; Stenberg, 1997; Diederichs & De Beer, 1998; Faure, 2001; Biagi, 2003; Campbell <i>et al.</i> , 2004; Stovall, 2005) (3.5; 3.5.1).	<p><b>A1-C1:</b> A culture of quality emphasising organisation-wide commitment and responsibility for quality (Garvin, 1988; Boaden, 1997; Cronjé <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Sohn <i>et al.</i>, 1999; Aucoin, 1999; Drucker, 2006; Maguad, 2006) (2.4.1; 2.7; 2.8; 2.10.3; table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C2:</b> Resources such as capital, physical facilities, materials, human resources, information, knowledge, skills and training, organisational policies and procedures, equipment and technology (Glans <i>et al.</i>, 1968; Williams, 1978; Cronjé <i>et al.</i>, 1999; Sylvie &amp; Witherspoon, 2002; Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005; Harrower, 2010:25) (2.10.2, table 13).</p> <p><b>A1-C3:</b> Manage quality pro-actively, following a systems- and process-based approach (Ishikawa, 1985; Crosby, 1995; ISO, 2001; DTI, 2001a; Cobb, 2003) (2.10.3, table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C4:</b> Continuous quality improvement (Feigenbaum, 1956; Deming, 1982 &amp; 1986; Juran, 1988; Garvin, 1988; Berry <i>et al.</i>, 1990; Anderson <i>et al.</i>, 1994; Crosby, 1995; Boaden, 1997; Gitlow <i>et al.</i>, 2005; Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005; Herbert, 2008; Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005) (2.10.3, table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C5:</b> Sound leadership and cooperation through effective communication (Feigenbaum, 1956; Deming, 1982; Peters, 1982; Juran, 1988; Parasuraman <i>et al.</i>, 1988; Prahalad &amp; Hamel, 1990; Dale &amp; Cooper, 1992; Schonberger &amp; Knod, 1994; Powell, 1995; Cronjé <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Sylvie &amp; Witherspoon, 2002; Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005; Albarran, 2006; Drucker, 2006; iso.org, 2010) (2.10.3, table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C6:</b> Empowerment of employees (Deming, 1982; Juran, 1988; Dale &amp; Cooper, 1992; Powell, 1995; Boaden, 1997; Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005; Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005; Drucker, 2006) (2.10.3, table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C7:</b> A strong focus on (external and internal) customer satisfaction (Deming, 1982; Juran, 1988; Taguchi, 1989; Jablonski, 1994; DTI, 2001c; Schneider &amp; White, 2004; 12Manage, 2008d; Hom, 2000) (2.10.3, table 14).</p> <p><b>A1-C8:</b> Firm financial control (Addison, 2006; Participant 1).</p> <p><b>A1-C9:</b> Quality journalism orientation (Roche, 1996; Breit, 2004) (3.3.1.1).</p>
A2	Advertising	The advertising component (fig. 14) is an operational function that provides information about goods and services and the means to sustain the organisation (Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002; Underwood, 1993) (2.10.3; 3.5.3.1).	<p><b>A2-C1:</b> Access to environments to acquire materials from suppliers for outputs (i.e. advertising agencies) (Glans <i>et al.</i>, 1968) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C2:</b> Input: appropriate human and financial resources and support; appropriate technology and equipment (e.g. a computer-based sales and management system) (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.1).</p>

Level A			Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Quality characteristics
			<p><b>A2-C3:</b> Managerial activities: allocating sales/service resources, developing new sources of revenue (Rankin, 1986) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C4:</b> Administrative tasks: sound invoicing and record keeping system (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C5:</b> After-sales service: dealing with complaints, e.g. quality of reproduction (Rankin, 1986) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C6:</b> Ethics: legal, decent and honest advertising. Adherence to an advertising code of conduct (De Klerk, 1998) (3.3.1.6) (ISAS BCP 4.2.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C7:</b> Evaluation and control in terms of individual/departmental goals (Fink, 1996) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>A2-C8:</b> Sound credit and risk-management skills and control measures (HSRC).</p>
A3	Editorial	The editorial component (fig. 20) is responsible for providing coverage, information and analysis that enhances reader understanding in an attractive package, as evidenced in the staff expertise. It comprises news management, creation, photography and graphic design, and news presentation (Diederichs & De Beer, 1998; Greer, 1999; Picard, 2004; Harrower, 2010) (3.5.3.2; 2.10.2).	<p><b>A3-C1:</b> Adequate investment in quality human resources and infrastructure in the newsroom (Underwood, 1993; Diederichs &amp; De Beer, 1998) (3.1; 3.5.3.1.2).</p> <p><b>A3-C2:</b> Recruit/train for versatility, initiative, tenacity, language and writing skills (MDDA/S).</p> <p><b>A3-C3:</b> Cooperation as managers, journalists, photographers and designers plan the news (3.5.3.1.2).</p> <p><b>A3-C4:</b> Consistent meaningful, relevant, comprehensive and engaging content by giving readers what they want (storytelling) and need (information, interpretation, analysis, education, persuasion) and covering the community as a whole – not just the demographic section most attractive to advertisers (Roche, 1996; Hiebert &amp; Gibbons, 2000; Picard, 2004; Conley &amp; Lamble, 2006; Kovach &amp; Rosenstiel, 2007; Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008) (1.4; 2.3.2; 2.3.5; 3.3.1.2) (ISAS BCP 7.5.1).</p> <p><b>A3-C5:</b> Independence, prohibiting interference by advertisers (ISAS-MSF, 2010) (3.3.1).</p> <p><b>A3-C6:</b> Broader gender-racial-ethnic representation in the newsroom (Addison, 2006) (3.3.1.12).</p> <p><b>A3-C7:</b> Effective time-management that ensures deadlines are met (Pearson <i>et al.</i>, 2001) (3.5.3.1.2).</p> <p><b>A3-C8:</b> Sound relationships with correspondents (i.e. freelancers) (Participant 2).</p>
A4	Production	The production component (fig. 12) comprises processes in the pre-press and press stages of newspaper production, connected by the flow of	<p><b>A4-C1:</b> Input: basic materials, reliable suppliers/service providers, technical infrastructure, equipment, and maintenance of resources (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007) (3.5.3.3).</p>

Level A			Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Quality characteristics
		materials and information (Kipphan, 2001) (3.5.2).	<b>A4-C2:</b> Sufficient information and data for optimal functioning of the processes (Kipphan, 2001) (3.5.1; 3.5.3.3). <b>A4-C3:</b> Conformance to specific process requirements (Schneider & White, 2004) (2.3.4). <b>A4-C4:</b> Technical efficacy (Picard, 2004) (2.10.2). <b>A4-C5:</b> Teamwork across functional areas to foresee problems in producing the final product (Morgan, 1989; Sylvie & Witherspoon) (3.3.1.9). <b>A4-C6:</b> Partnerships to improve production quality, i.e. sharing facilities (Casanova & Cummings, 2008) (3.5.3.3).
A5	Circulation and distribution management	The circulation and distribution management process (fig. 33) involves planning and organising the efficient distribution of the community newspapers product to the organisation's customers (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.4.1).	<b>A5-C1:</b> Circulation figures (Underwood, 1993) (3.1). <b>A5-C2:</b> Updated subscriber databases and customer information (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.4.1). <b>A5-C3:</b> Maintaining sound relationships with customers, e.g. subscribers and agents (Butler, 2002) (3.5.3.4.1). <b>A5-C4:</b> Accreditation with the Audit Bureau of Circulations (SPI). <b>A5-C5:</b> Effective complaints management system (Butler, 2002) (3.5.3.4.1). <b>A5-C6:</b> Circulation promotion skills backed by marketing knowledge (HSRC). <b>A5-C7:</b> Clear guidelines for the selection/evaluation of outside suppliers (ISAS BCP 7.4.1). <b>A5-C8:</b> Performance monitoring in terms of readership figures (ISAS BCP 7.3.4, 8.2.1).
A6	Distribution	The distribution process involves activities to deliver the community newspaper product to the readers and advertisers through an efficient and effective distribution network (Garrison, 1994; Cummings <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Marketing Mix, 2009) (3.5.3.4).	<b>A6-C1:</b> Reliable, updated information about the distribution network (Butler, 2002) (3.5.3.4.1). <b>A6-C2:</b> Sound relationships with outside service providers (Marketing Mix, 2009) (3.5.3.4). <b>A6-C3:</b> Timely distribution (Newspaper10, 2008) (2.3.5). <b>A6-C4:</b> Constant availability at the newsstand (Picard, 2004) (2.10.2). <b>A6-C5:</b> Few delivery errors (Picard, 2004) (2.10.2).
A7	Feedback	Feedback, a mutually beneficial flow of ideas, is important for system maintenance and growth. Feedback fosters understanding (Evans, 1990; Flynn <i>et al.</i> , 1994; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002; Milne <i>et al.</i> , 2006) (2.11; 3.3.1.10; 3.3.1.11).	<b>A7-C1:</b> The organisation is responsive to feedback from consumers and stakeholders (3.3.1) (ISAS BCP). <b>A7-C2:</b> The organisation addresses complaints promptly through an effective mediation and quality management system (ISAS BCP 7.2.3). <b>A7-C3:</b> An average of three letters to the editor is published per issue (LTE). <b>A7-C4:</b> Corrections are printed promptly (MMC).

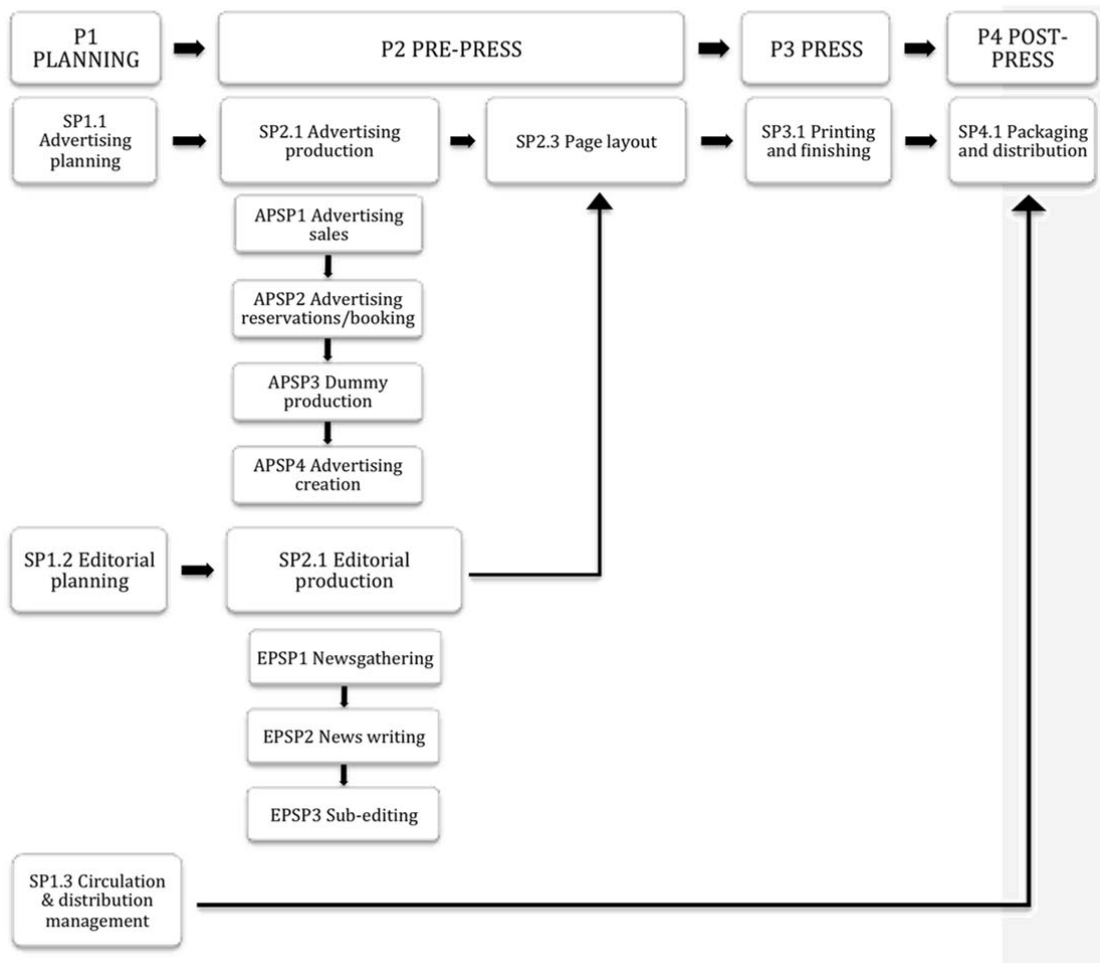
Level A			Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Quality characteristics
			<p><b>A7-C5:</b> A measurement system to evaluate performance, e.g. advertiser and reader surveys (MMC).</p> <p><b>A7-C6:</b> Open communication channels between the organisation and its internal and external environments (2.11).</p> <p><b>C7:</b> Formal/informal feedback to employees, including a recognition system (Flynn <i>et al.</i>, 1994) (3.3.1.11).</p>

The next section focuses on the deconstruction of level B.

### 5.3.2 Quality characteristics of the key processes found in a community newspaper organisation

In table 24, the researcher deconstructs the processes and sub-processes in level B (fig. 42) by adding the quality characteristics that represent the micro level of the model.

#### Level B



**Figure 42:** The processes and sub-processes in level B that will be deconstructed into the micro level by adding specific quality characteristics (see table 22).

**Table 24: The deconstruction of the processes and sub-processes in level B of the model into level C.**

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
P1	Planning	Planning is a “systematic process that translates quality policy into measurable objectives and requirements, and lays down a sequence of steps for realizing them within a specified timeframe” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2010 – table 14). A quality plan covers various elements, including questions such as what needs to be checked, how it should be checked, who should be involved and what materials are necessary (Turbit, 2005:6).	SP1.1	Advertising planning	The advertising planning process (fig. 15) involves processes and activities related to market analysis, publication promotion and recruitment and training (of the sales force) (Fink, 1996; Fällström, 1997; Rajput & Vasishth, 2008) (3.5.3.1.1).	<p><b>C1:</b> Market analysis in terms of advertisers and competition in light of the organisation’s strengths and weaknesses (Fink, 1996) (3.5.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Promotion to raise awareness of the publication in the market (Fink, 1996; Fällström, 1997) (3.5.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>C3:</b> Dynamic sales strategy to reach goals, focusing on local nature of newspaper and readers’ acceptance of newspaper as a shopping tool (Fink, 1996) (3.5.3.1).</p> <p><b>C4:</b> Continuous recruiting and training to maintain the sales force (Fink, 1996) (3.5.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>C5:</b> Information about prospective clients (Rajput &amp; Vasishth, 2008) (3.5.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>C6:</b> Managers with insight into price competition (HSRC).</p> <p><b>C7:</b> Clear guidelines about deal packaging (HSRC).</p>
			SP1.2	Editorial planning	Planning for quality in the editorial function (fig. 21) involves decisions about publication design, journalistic beats, and the allocation and management of resources, quality evaluation and issues concerning the readership, e.g. initiatives to reach a younger audience. Planning should be flexible in line with the	<p><b>C1:</b> Recruiting and hiring skilled journalists and editors using different approaches, including word-of-mouth and head-hunting/poaching (Modoux, 2010) (HSRC) (3.5.3.2.1).</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Target audience research that provides information that is unique/relevant to the audience as individuals (Scanlan, 2000; ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007; Modoux, 2010) (3.5.3.2.1).</p> <p><b>C3:</b> Cooperation with the advertising function to ensure a balance between advertising reservations and editorial needs/requests within the available space (Fällström <i>et al.</i>, 1997) (3.5.3.2.1).</p> <p><b>C4:</b> Knowledge of all aspects of the newspaper</p>



Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
					changing nature of news (Stenberg, 1997; Scott, 1999; Mogel, 2000; Weza, 2006) (3.5.3.2.1).	organisation (LTE). <b>C5:</b> Focus on retention of experienced, local people (LTE). <b>C6:</b> A strategic plan based on upcoming newsroom opportunities and challenges (MMC).
			SP1.3	Circulation and distribution management	See A5	See A5
P2	Pre-press	The pre-press process includes all processes and activities before the newspaper is printed, e.g. composition, reproduction and assembly (Scott, 1999) (3.5.2).	SP2.1	Advertising production	The advertising production process involves the processes related to selling and producing advertising (3.5.3.1.2).	<b>C1:</b> Skilled, well-informed and motivated employees (Rankin, 1986) (3.5.3.1). <b>C2:</b> Comprehensive, current information about the organisation as a whole (Pattis, 2004) (3.5.3.1). <b>C3:</b> A dynamic sales strategy focusing on the newspaper's local nature and use as a shopping tool (Fink, 1996) (3.5.3.1). <b>C4:</b> Appropriate equipment and technology (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.1).
			APSP1	Advertising sales	The advertising sales process (fig. 16) involves selling advertising space to existing and new clients and managing relationships between advertising representatives and clients (Bentley, 1998; Pattis, 2004) 3.5.3.1.2).	<b>C1:</b> Sound relationships between sales force and advertisers (Pattis, 2004) (3.5.3.1.2). <b>C2:</b> Access to suppliers of national advertising through advertising agencies and partnerships (SPI). <b>C3:</b> Sales representatives are passionate and committed and have sound human interaction skills (HSRC). <b>C4:</b> Knowledge of the business as a whole that provides confidence to deal with clients (HSRC). <b>C5:</b> Cultural diversity skills in line with changes in society (HSRC). <b>C6:</b> Networking skills to improve access to relevant information and build relationships to expand client base (HSRC). <b>C7:</b> Comprehensive, current information about rates

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
						and discounts (Participant 8).
			APSP2	Advertising reservations/ booking	The advertising reservations/booking process (fig. 17) comprises activities to document the information related to the space that has been sold (Bentley, 1998; Mogel, 2000) (3.5.3.1.2).	<b>C1:</b> Appropriate technological infrastructure to ensure error-free processes, e.g. for disseminating digital material (Stenberg, 1997) (3.5.3.1.1). <b>C2:</b> An effective information management system to ensure an error-free process (Participant 1). <b>C3:</b> Sound communication to ensure that changes are effected promptly (Participant 8). <b>C4:</b> An emphasis on accuracy (Participant 1).
			APSP3	Dummy production	Dummy production (fig. 18) involves mapping advertising in an edition of the newspaper, which dictates the shape of the newshole (Harrower, 2008) (3.5.3.1.1).	<b>C1:</b> Guidelines about advertising load, especially on the most important news pages to ensure an adequate newshole (Faure, 2001) (3.5.3.1.1). <b>C2:</b> Effective communication between the advertising and editorial function to ensure advertising is stacked in such a way that it creates a meaningful newshole (Harrower, 2008 – 3.5.3.1.1). <b>C3:</b> An effective content management system to ensure access to the digital dummy (Scott, 1999) (3.5.3.1.1).
			APSP4	Advertising creation	The advertising creation process (fig. 19) involves the initial drafting of the advertisement and revisions to the point where the client is satisfied with the final product (Borger, 1996; Stenberg, 1997; MacRury, 2009) (3.5.3.1.2).	<b>C1:</b> Advertising content and graphic quality reflecting good taste and the quality of the publication (Editors of the Harvard Post, 1978) (3.5.1). <b>C2:</b> Skilled, knowledgeable and creative graphic designers who can visualise concepts and understand the entire production process to ensure quality advertisements (HSRC) (3.5.3.1.2). <b>C3:</b> Sound communication between the advertising representative and the client, and the advertising representative and the designer to ensure the final product satisfies the customer and reflects the quality of the publication (3.5.3.1.2). <b>C4:</b> End-product orientation, i.e. knowledge of full

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
						production chain (HSRC). <b>C5:</b> Advertising with impact that conveys a clear, lasting message to the consumer (MDDA/S).
			SP2.1	Editorial production	The editorial production process involves the actual production of news content through various sub-processes, e.g. newsgathering and news writing (Scanlan, 2000; Pearson <i>et al.</i> , 2001) (3.5.3.2.2).	<b>C1:</b> Investment in up-to-date information and communication technology, experts and training to compete in a new media context (Scanlan, 2000; Rau, 2009) (3.5.3.2.2) (MMC). <b>C2:</b> Journalists with the “mental tools” (i.e. attitude, persistence, commitment to accuracy, fairness and courage) needed to produce quality content (Scanlan, 2000) (3.5.3.2.2) (HSRC) (LTE). <b>C3:</b> Visual journalism skills (Scanlan, 2000) (3.5.3.2.2) (HSRC). <b>C4:</b> Computer literate journalists who are proficient in language (HSRC). <b>C5:</b> Technical/technological support (Participant 11). <b>C6:</b> General knowledge, commitment to journalism ethics and sound legal understanding about what can be reported and how (HSRC). <b>C7:</b> Multi-skilled staffers who can work across platforms, e.g. online (HSRC). <b>C8:</b> Emphasis on local news and information (LTE) (MMC).
			EPSP1	Newsgathering	The newsgathering process (fig. 22, 23 & 24) includes gathering information and images to be transformed into news stories through a variety of tools and techniques (Greer, 1999; Scanlan, 2000; Leiter <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Harrower, 2008)	<b>C1:</b> Access to quality information. <b>C2:</b> Sound relationships with credible and reliable news sources (Certimedia.org, 2008) (2.10.2). <b>C3:</b> Clear guidelines about editorial expectations and a system of briefing/debriefing to ensure appropriate story angles and news sources (Participant 9).

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
					(3.5.3.2.2).	<p><b>C4:</b> Sense of ethics demonstrated in newsgathering techniques, e.g. respect for privacy, careful use of confidential sources and emphasis on verifying facts (Jackson, 1993; Kovach &amp; Rosenstiel, 2007) (3.3.1.6) (ISAS BCP 7.5.1).</p> <p><b>C5:</b> Cooperation between journalists, photographers and editors (Leiter <i>et al.</i>, 2000) (3.5.3.2.2).</p> <p><b>C6:</b> Critical thinking and interviewing skills, and sound online research ability (HSRC).</p> <p><b>C7:</b> Skilled photographers who can capture the spontaneity of the moment (MDDA/S).</p> <p><b>C8:</b> Skilled photographers who produce quality images that enhance reader insight into news events (MDDA/S).</p>
			EPSP2	News writing	The news writing process (fig. 22, 23 & 25) entails activities to transform the information gathered into news through several steps of drafting and revising, using intellectual skills and technological resources (Scanlan, 2000; Ansell, 2005) (3.5.3.2.2).	<p><b>C1:</b> An effective content management system that ensures effective copy flow (Participant 7).</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Accuracy (Scanlan, 2000; Leiter <i>et al.</i>, 2000; Participant 2 and 9) (3.5.3.2.2).</p> <p><b>C3:</b> Close relationship with community enables rich journalism (Participant 9).</p> <p><b>C4:</b> Adherence to deadlines to maintain the quality chain (Participant 9).</p> <p><b>C5:</b> Multiple identifiable sources and important, verified information (Hausman, 1990; Kovach &amp; Rosenstiel, 2007) (3.3.1.3) (MMC).</p> <p><b>C6:</b> Emphasis on reader impact by exploring the human side of stories (MDDA/S).</p>

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
						<b>C7:</b> News stories that provide a comprehensive, reliable account of events and distinguish between rumour, fact and speculation (Leiter <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Maier, 2002; Claassen, 2004; Huh, DeLorme, Smith & Reid, 2004; Addison, 2006; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007) (2.3.2; 3.3.1.3) (MMC).
			EPSP3	News editing	The news editing process (fig. 26) involves preparing news copy (fig. 27) and photographs (fig. 23) for publication (Greer, 1999) (3.5.3.2.3).	<b>C1:</b> Effective mechanisms for identifying and correcting errors (ISAS-MSF, 2010) (3.3.1) (ISAS BCP). <b>C2:</b> A reputable style guide as well as an institutional guide focusing on information relevant to the specific community. <b>C3:</b> Teamwork (Participant 9). <b>C4:</b> Sub-editors with legal knowledge who are aware of the moral/ethical challenges linked to press freedom (HSRC). <b>C5:</b> Solid language skills, including translation, proofreading and storytelling skills (HSRC). <b>C6:</b> Sub-editors with the ability to keep the mood/style of the writer intact (MMC). <b>C7:</b> Photo-editors with digital skills and solid knowledge of possibilities current technology offers (HSRC).
			SP2.3	Page layout	The page layout process (fig. 29) consists of the activities required to present the news in a distinctive, attractive and reader-friendly package using creative skills and technology (Faure, 2001;	<b>C1:</b> Well-edited stories and a variety of editable photographs (Participant 10). <b>C2:</b> Sound technical, IT and creative skills (HSRC). <b>C3:</b> Good news judgment for placement and emphasis (Bowles & Borden, 2011) (3.5.3.3). <b>C4:</b> Emphasis on visual impact through skilled use of typography, images and colour (MDDA/S). <b>C5:</b> Distinct, unique layout style (MDDA/S).

Level B						Level C
Element/ process	Description	Clarification	Sub- process	Description	Clarification	Quality criterion (QC)
					Froneman <i>et al.</i> , 2005) (3.5.3.3.1).	<b>C6:</b> Ample use of white space for typographical neatness and legibility (MDDA/S). <b>C7:</b> End-product orientation, i.e. knowledge of full production chain (HSRC). <b>C8:</b> An emphasis on modular layout without curbing initiative and originality (MDDA/S).
P3	Press	The press process includes processes and activities required to print the newspaper, including platemaking (where applicable) and folding (3.5.2).	SP3.1	Printing and finishing	The printing and finishing process (fig. 31) involves the activities needed to transform the digital newspaper into a tangible, printed product involving highly automated processes (Kipphan, 2001) (3.5.3.3.3).	<b>C1:</b> Raw materials, e.g. ink and paper (Kipphan, 2001) (3.5.3.3). <b>C2:</b> High quality processes and procedures to ensure visual quality (Kipphan, 2001) (3.5.3.3). <b>C3:</b> Attention to detail, good colour perception (e.g. skin tone must be natural) (HSRC). <b>C4:</b> Partnerships to ensure access to quality printing when outsourcing (SPI). <b>C5:</b> Clear guidelines for the selection/evaluation of outside suppliers/service providers (ISAS BCP 7.4.1).
P4	Post-press	The post-press phase involves the processes leading up to (e.g. packaging) and including the actual distribution of the printed community newspaper product (3.5.2).	SP4.1	Packaging and distribution	The packaging and distribution process (fig. 34) involves bundling the printed newspapers, transporting them to the external/internal distributors as well as the actual distribution of the newspaper copies through the distribution network (Stenberg, 1997; Cumming <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Nkume-Kwene & Besong, 2009) (3.5.3.4.2).	<b>C1:</b> A continuous flow of reliable and updated information to ensure error-free distribution (Rehn, 2001) (3.5.3.4.2). <b>C2:</b> Efficient communication system in the distribution network. (Rehn, 2001) (3.5.3.4.2) <b>C3:</b> Clear guidelines about inserts to ensure manageable bundles and optimal sales. (Participant 3) <b>C4:</b> An effective financial management system, given the informal nature of some distribution networks (Participant 3). <b>C5:</b> An effective monitoring system when distribution is outsourced (Participant 1).

In the next section, the researcher further refines the model by adding quality measures to one process element as an example of how the model could be further developed as a measuring instrument. This could potentially enable owners, editors and managers of community newspapers to use the model as a measuring instrument to assess quality in their organisations.

### 5.3.3 From quality evaluation to quality measurement

Although developing a measuring instrument to measure quality in community newspaper organisations is not an objective of this study, the researcher deconstructs one process element (A1) as an example of how quality criteria could be unpacked into specific measures. This step suggests how the micro model can be deconstructed into a final level of complexity (level D). This level represents a measuring instrument that a community newspaper organisation can use to evaluate the quality of this organisational component (administration/finance). The researcher chose to deconstruct level C of element A1 into level D (see table 25), because it is the support function in a community newspaper organisation and, as such, the “starting point” for quality management in this sector. The four levels of the deconstructed process can thus be illustrated as follows:

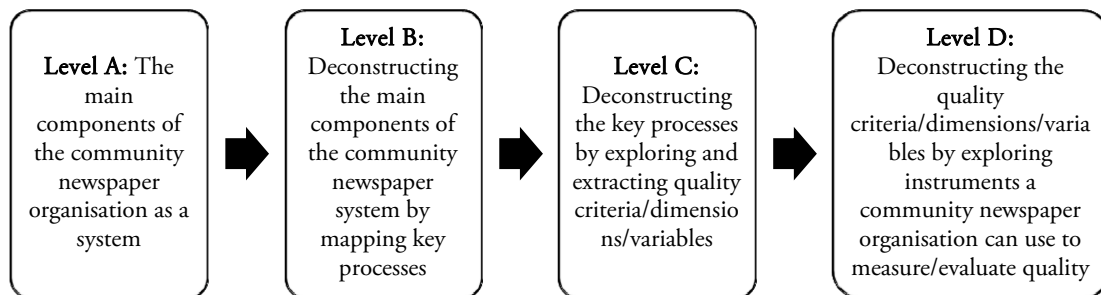


Figure 43: The four levels of complexity illustrated as a process.

Table 25: The deconstruction of element A1 into level D

Level A Element/ process	Level C Quality criterion	Level D Measuring instrument/checklist: To what extent does the organisation adhere to the following criteria? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 = not at all (less than 20%) and 5 = fully (more than 80%))
A1	<b>C1:</b> A culture of quality emphasising organisation-wide commitment to and responsibility for quality (Garvin, 1988; Boaden, 1997; Cronjé <i>et al.</i> , 1997; Sohn <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Aucoin, 1999; Drucker, 2006; Maguad, 2006) (2.4.1; 2.7; 2.8; 2.10.3; table 14).	<b>D1:</b> The organisation has a clear mission, vision and values to which all employees are committed (ISAS BCP) (MMC). <b>D2:</b> The organisation sets clear goals and objectives. <b>D3:</b> Clear quality guidelines exist so every employee knows what is expected of him/her. <b>D4:</b> Employees adhere to institutional and professional codes of conduct/ethics (ISAS BCP). <b>D5:</b> Employees are encouraged and supported towards integrated quality awareness. <b>D6:</b> Improvements are continually noted, progress reported and results communicated to motivate staff and maintain quality momentum. <b>D7:</b> Clear rules of recruitment and professional development for all employees (ISAS BCP 6.2.2). <b>D8:</b> Innovation is seen as a key responsibility of all employees; it is encouraged and rewarded (MMC).
	<b>C2:</b> Resources such as capital, physical facilities, materials, human resources, information, knowledge, skills and training, organisational policies and procedures, equipment and technology (Glans <i>et al.</i> , 1968; Williams, 1978; Cronjé <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Sylvie & Witherspoon, 2002; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Harrower, 2010:25 (2.10.2, table 13).	<b>D1:</b> The organisation has a continuous supply of adequate resources to enable transformation of inputs into outputs (ISAS BCP).
	<b>C3:</b> Manage quality pro-actively, following a systems- and process-based approach (Ishikawa, 1985; Crosby, 1995; ISO, 2001; DTI, 2001a; Cobb, 2003) (2.10.3, table 14).	<b>D1:</b> The organisation regularly evaluates processes to determine where current/potential problems lie with the aim to design in quality. <b>D2:</b> The organisation always recruits and hires the best available, affordable talent (Fink, 1996) (3.5.1). <b>D3:</b> All interrelated processes in the system are identified, understood and managed. <b>D4:</b> There are clear, logical, process-based guidelines in place to ensure that less experienced staff members can contribute to maintaining and improving the level of quality (3.5.3.2). <b>D5:</b> The organisation pays attention to the quality of equipment to ensure the technical quality of the community newspaper product (ISAS BCP 6.3).
	<b>C4:</b> Continuous quality improvement (Feigenbaum, 1956; Deming, 1982 & 1986; Juran, 1988; Garvin, 1988; Berry <i>et al.</i> , 1990; Anderson <i>et al.</i> , 1994; Crosby, 1995; Boaden, 1997; Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 2005; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Herbert, 2008; Soltani <i>et al.</i> , 2005) (2.10.3, table 14).	<b>D1:</b> The organisation improves systems through modern quality technology such as up-to-date computer equipment. <b>D2:</b> The organisation is focused on multi-media platforms (HSRC). <b>D3:</b> Management and staff members always take corrective action where necessary. <b>D4:</b> Ongoing control, i.e. understanding and meeting requirements (i.e. the set quality standards) (ISAS BCP).



Level A	Level C	Level D
Element/ process	Quality criterion	Measuring instrument/checklist: To what extent does the organisation adhere to the following criteria? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 = not at all (less than 20%) and 5 = fully (more than 80%))
		<p><b>D5:</b> Employees are encouraged to suggest quality improvements. (ISAS BCP 6.2.2)</p> <p><b>D6:</b> Standards are raised as quality improves (MMC).</p>
	<p><b>C5:</b> Sound leadership and cooperation through effective communication (Feigenbaum, 1956; Deming, 1982; Peters, 1982; Juran, 1988; Parasuraman <i>et al.</i>, 1988; Prahalad &amp; Hamel, 1990; Dale &amp; Cooper, 1992; Schonberger &amp; Knod, 1994; Powell, 1995; Cronjé <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Sylvie &amp; Witherspoon, 2002; Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005; Albarran, 2006; Drucker, 2006; ISO, 2010) (2.10.3, table 14).</p>	<p><b>D1:</b> Leadership provides organisational vision and communicates culture (Groves, 2009).</p> <p><b>D2:</b> The organisation has effective systems in place to give feedback and recognition to employees to keep the focus on learning and behaviour that maintains quality (Flynn <i>et al.</i>, 1994; Schroeder <i>et al.</i>, 2005).</p> <p><b>D3:</b> Barriers among departments are broken down in line with an integrated organisational approach.</p> <p><b>D4:</b> Employees work together in and across functional areas towards a specific common goal, contributing complementary skills, and carrying individual and shared responsibility (Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005) (3.3.1.9).</p> <p><b>D5:</b> Open and honest communication fosters understanding, controls behaviour, motivates people to reach set goals, allows emotional expression and conveys information to get the work done (Evans, 1990; Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005; Van Tonder, 2006; Addison, 2006) (3.3.1.10).</p> <p><b>D6:</b> Leadership is combined with entrepreneurship and technical awareness (HSRC).</p> <p><b>D7:</b> Focus on leadership by example (HSRC) (LTE).</p>
	<p><b>C6:</b> Empowerment of employees (Deming, 1982; Juran, 1988; Dale &amp; Cooper, 1992; Powell, 1995; Boaden, 1997; Soltani <i>et al.</i>, 2005; Robbins &amp; Coulter, 2005; Drucker, 2006) (2.10.3, table 14).</p>	<p><b>D1:</b> The organisation is adequately staffed (Underwood, 1993) (3.1).</p> <p><b>D2:</b> The organisation offers skills-based and quality improvement training and development (Flynn <i>et al.</i>, 1994; Sohn <i>et al.</i>, 1999; Drucker, 2006 (2.7; 3.3.1.11).</p> <p><b>D3:</b> Training is holistic, continuously combining theory and practice, and regularly uses in-house expertise and Web-based training resources (HSRC) (MMC).</p> <p><b>D4:</b> Firm commitment to training young people (HSRC) (MMC).</p> <p><b>D5:</b> Firm commitment to creating a competitive environment for training and internships (HSRC).</p> <p><b>D6:</b> The organisation focuses on cultivating a “family environment” (HSRC).</p> <p><b>D7:</b> The organisation is committed to gender equity and ethnic diversity in the workplace (LTE).</p> <p><b>D8:</b> A job-specific performance review system and development plan for employees (MMC).</p>
	<p><b>C7:</b> A strong focus on (external and internal) customer satisfaction (Deming, 1982; Juran, 1988; Taguchi, 1989; Jablonski, 1994; DTI, 2001c; Schneider &amp; White, 2004; 12Manage, 2008d; Hom, 2000) (2.10.3, table 14).</p>	<p><b>D1:</b> The organisation emphasises close relationships between customer and supplier (internal and external) to cultivate motivation and loyalty (Flynn <i>et al.</i>, 1994).</p> <p><b>D2:</b> Service orientation, i.e. the organisation demonstrates genuine concern for the customer, employee and stakeholder (Mobley <i>et al.</i>, 2005) (3.3) (ISAS BCP).</p> <p><b>D3:</b> The organisation continuously focuses on the needs of readers and advertisers in the quality chain, ensuring access to quality editorial and advertising content (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007).</p>

Level A	Level C	Level D
Element/ process	Quality criterion	Measuring instrument/checklist: To what extent does the organisation adhere to the following criteria? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 = not at all (less than 20%) and 5 = fully (more than 80%))
		<p><b>D4:</b> The organisation is responsive to feedback from readership and stakeholders (ISAS-MSF, 2010) (3.3.1).</p> <p><b>D5:</b> The organisation values a good relationship with the community, and is committed to and involved in the community (Breit, 2004) (LTE).</p> <p><b>D6:</b> The organisation embraces diversity in the community (Stathacopoulos, 2009) (3.3.1.13).</p> <p><b>D7:</b> The organisation contributes to social development and democracy in the community (ISAS BCP).</p>
	<b>C8:</b> Firm financial control (Addison, 2006; Participant 1).	<p><b>D1:</b> The organisation balances public trust with fiscal responsibility (Roche, 1996).</p> <p><b>D2:</b> Leaders have entrepreneurial aptitude and skills to enable business growth (HSRC).</p> <p><b>D3:</b> The organization pays attention to the risk of non-compliance where external suppliers are concerned (ISAS BCP 7.1).</p>
	<b>C9:</b> Quality journalism orientation (Roche, 1996; Breit, 2004) (3.3.1.1).	<p><b>D1:</b> The organisation is committed to professional journalistic values of honesty.</p> <p><b>D2:</b> The organisation is committed to the public interest (Kovach &amp; Rosenstiel, 2007) (3.3.1.5).</p> <p><b>D3:</b> The organisation is free from external and other interference (ISAS-MSF, 2010).</p> <p><b>D4:</b> The organisation is transparent about affiliations to interest groups (ISAS-MSF, 2003-2007).</p> <p><b>D5:</b> The organization is governed by editorial guidelines understood internally and externally (ISAS BCP).</p>

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher focused on quality in the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers. Firstly, concerns about quality in community newspapers were highlighted. Secondly, the researcher stressed the importance of quality standards in managing quality and provided examples of standards/best practices in the industry. The model was then deconstructed into the final level of sophistication (C) by adding criteria that constitute quality in community newspapers.

In addition to the micro level C, the researcher also deconstructed one process element (A1) into measures (level D) that can be used to evaluate quality in a community newspaper organisation. This demonstrates how the model could be developed as a measuring instrument that community newspaper organisations could use to help improve the quality of their organisational processes and products.

This concludes the development of the quality management model. In chapter 6, the researcher will provide a final summary of the model, and conclusions and recommendations for the application thereof.

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## CHAPTER 6:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Community newspaper editors always run the risk of making people mad and losing subscribers and advertisers, but the greatest threat to their livelihood would be to blink when the tough stories must be published. In the long run, people appreciate a real newspaper, with accurate, plain-style news stories, features that reveal new facts about supposedly familiar people and places and an editorial voice that speaks about critical issues while avoiding personality clashes. Among the booster sheets and the shoppers, such newspapers stand out as the best of their breed ... smart advertisers know that newspaper that attract readers also are critical to commerce – and thus the unique institution survives.*

— **Brown** (2006:xiii-xiv)

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, the researcher investigated the dilemma of how community newspaper organisations in South Africa can manage quality comprehensively given concerns about sustaining quality in this sector (see 1.6). The lack of well-defined quality criteria and theoretical quality management guidelines motivated the researcher to develop a model that could help community newspaper organisations address this dilemma from a systems- and process-based point of view.

In the first part of this final chapter, the researcher provides a brief synopsis of the study, reviews the research objectives and draws final conclusions in light of the objectives. In the second part, the researcher summarises the research methods used to build the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers in respect of the triangulation process illustrated in chapter 1 (fig. 1). Moreover, the researcher clarifies how the model can be applied in a community newspaper organisation. Finally, the researcher makes recommendations for further research.

#### 6.2 STUDY SYNOPSIS AND REVIEW: RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Against the problem statement above (also see 1.6), the main aim of this study was to develop a model that community newspapers can use to identify critical environmental and organisational elements potentially impacting on the quality of a newspaper. An appreciation and understanding of these critical elements should enable owners, publishers and editors to effectively manage quality across all levels of the newspaper organisation, i.e. a *comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers*. To this end, the researcher formulated research questions that formed the basis for the research objectives applicable to this study.

In table 26, the questions and objectives are linked to the chapters in the study:

**Table 26: Research questions linked to objectives and chapter references.**

Research question	Research objective	Chapter reference
<b>RQ1:</b> What do the concepts of quality and quality management entail, viewed from both a general management and media management paradigm?	<b>RO1:</b> To investigate and analyse the theories, principles and best practices of quality management from both a general management and media management paradigm in order to identify quality variables that could be applicable to community newspapers in South Africa.	Chapter 2
<b>RQ2:</b> How could the concepts of quality and quality management be applied to community newspapers in South Africa?		
<b>RQ3:</b> What do organisational functional processes in community newspaper organisations involve?	<b>RO2:</b> To investigate and analyse the different organisational functional processes in order to identify/map key processes in community newspaper organisations.	Chapter 3 Chapter 4
<b>RQ4:</b> How could the organisational functional processes be utilised to identify key processes in community newspaper organisations?		
<b>RQ5:</b> What constitutes the nature and characteristics of a quality community newspaper?	<b>RO3:</b> To investigate and analyse the nature and dimensions of quality community newspapers and to identify quality criteria that could contribute to measuring and improving quality in community newspapers.	Chapter 2 Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 6
<b>RQ6:</b> How could the characteristics of a quality community newspaper be utilised to measure quality in community newspapers in South Africa?		

For ease of reference, the chapters in which the central theoretical statements (see 1.6.3) are relevant are provided in the next table:

**Table 27: Central theoretical statements linked to chapters in this study.**

Central theoretical statement	Chapter reference
<b>CTS1:</b> Media products are distinguished from non-media products by a combination of unique characteristics (Chan-Olmsted, 2006:173).	Chapter 1
<b>CTS2:</b> Good quality gives an organisation (e.g. a community newspaper) a competitive advantage (Rao <i>et al.</i> , 1996:6). However, if an organisation does not continuously manage quality across and on all organisational levels, it is confronted with the challenge of “patching up” problems in a reactive manner rather than addressing it pro-actively (cf. Crosby, 1995:66-73).	Chapter 2
<b>CTS3:</b> Community newspapers do not merely have a role to play in society; they are a vital part of the community (Addison, 2006:340). As such, they create a platform to publish a community’s intimate news (Naidoo, 2008; Froneman <i>et al.</i> , 2005:62; cf. NAB, 2004; cf. De Jager, 1979:2-5, 49). However, they can only reach their objectives if they meet their audiences’ needs and expectations and understand the quality management concept illustrated through established quality processes (Negrine & Eyre, 1998:42).	Chapter 3
<b>CTS4:</b> An organisation is a multiplicity of micro-sub processes all fitting into a macro process with the aim of working in synergy (Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 2005:3). Defining or documenting a process is an important step in improving it. This ensures that the process is logical, complete and efficient (Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 2005:70-71). Process data is generated through feedback loops that relate information from the sources of output back to the sources of input, subsequently improving the process (Gitlow <i>et al.</i> , 2005:3).	Chapter 3

Central theoretical statement	Chapter reference
<b>CTS5:</b> A comprehensive quality management model could fundamentally contribute to improved quality in all processes involved in the production of newspapers (cf. Mierzewska & Hollifield, 2006:57-58). This, in turn, could contribute to community newspapers fulfilling their role in the South African society (cf. Memela, 2008; cf. Harber, 2002).	Chapter 3
<b>CTS6:</b> Community newspapers should adhere to the same standards of quality as their mainstream counterparts (cf. Howley, 2005:14; cf. Bogart, 2004:46).	Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5
<b>CTS7:</b> Because there are no universal evaluative quality criteria for the media (McQuail, 1992:11), quality characteristics should be extracted from the literature by evaluating the principles and practices of good journalism and implement these in a community media quality management context (cf. Conley & Lamble, 2006:42; cf. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008).	Chapter 5

**Chapter 1** provided the context and motivation for the study. In this chapter, the researcher investigated the community newspaper construct in a democratic society against the background of media development and transformation in South Africa (1.1 and 1.2). The chapter provided historical background and highlighted the vital role community newspapers play in society (see 1.3). The researcher also outlined concerns about quality and introduced the concept of quality management (1.5). The chapter also contains the research objectives and central theoretical statements in light of the problem statement and explains the research methodology and methods (1.6 and 1.7) as well as the scientific contribution of this study (1.8). The researcher elaborated on CTS1 in chapter 1 by exploring the characteristics that distinguish media products from non-media products.

In **chapter 2**, the researcher investigated quality and quality management to create the theoretical framework for the study. Guided by CTS2, the contribution of several scholars to quality theory and the concept and dimensions of quality were explored, followed by an investigation of the different points of view, models and techniques of quality management (2.2-2.7). This provided the background for introducing the systems approach to quality and the macro theoretical framework of this study (2.9). The researcher then put the theory into perspective by highlighting the significance of quality in an organisational context. The researcher emphasised Total Quality Management (TQM, see 2.8) as the preferred approach to quality management in community newspaper organisations (2.10) and identified variables that could influence quality in this sector, the key outcome of the first objective of the study (table 14). To conclude the chapter, the researcher constructed the macro level (A) of the quality management model (fig. 5), achieving the first research objective.

**Chapter 3** focused on the intermediate level (B) of the model, steered by CTS3-6. After an exploration of the hard and soft dimensions related to organisational quality (3.2), the researcher investigated organisational culture (3.3) and then probed organisational functional processes in the literature to expand the theoretical framework (3.4). Several scholars' models were investigated to construct a suggested production system for community newspapers (fig. 13). The researcher then elaborated on the research method outlined in chapter 1 before identifying/mapping the main processes relevant to a community newspaper organisation. These were presented in the framework of the main functions of the organisation, i.e. advertising, editorial, production and circulation/distribution (3.5). Mapping the processes constituted the deconstruction of the macro model into the intermediate (B) level, increasing the intricacy level of the comprehensive model. In this process, the researcher partly met the second research objective of the study.

In **chapter 4**, the researcher elaborated on the content of the proposed model by presenting the results of the empirical phase of the study. The research method was explained (4.2) before comparing participants' input in the pre-testing/verification phase with the literature to verify the content of the model (4.3). The researcher provided a summary of factors participants argue influence quality (table 21), followed by a synopsis of the findings from the post-testing/refining phase (table 22). Finally, the researcher refined the proposed model by incorporating the post-test results (fig. 39), ensuring the complete achievement of RO2.

In **chapter 5**, the researcher deconstructed the proposed model into its final, micro level (C), focusing on criteria that could be used to evaluate quality in a community newspaper organisation. First, the researcher investigated existing resources that could be used as measuring instruments in addition to the dimensions and characteristics in the earlier chapters (5.2). This was followed by an explanation of the research method used to extract criteria from the literature in chapters 1, 2 and 3 (5.3). In line with CTS7, unpacking the model in table form and adding criteria to the specific elements and processes, represented the micro level (table 23 and 24). The researcher also added a further level to one element of the proposed model as an example of how the model could be used as an instrument to measure quality in the organisational component of a community newspaper organisation (table 25). By extracting quality criteria from the literature in chapters 2 and 3 and the interviews in chapter 4 and incorporating these into the micro level of the quality management model, the researcher achieved the third and final research objective of the study.

### 6.3 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

In exploratory research, little information exists to guide the researcher in his or her quest for information and understanding (see 1.7.1). Further to the feedback difficulties described in chapter 4 (see 4.4.1), the researcher thus experienced the following challenges:

- The lack of scholarly work in the field of quality management in the media (see 1.7.2) compelled the researcher to rely heavily on mainly international sources on *general* quality management research in the literature review. Quality management in the media, particularly in the production function, is studied in especially the Nordic countries as well as in Germany, but in some cases, language barriers as well as a heavy price tag prevented access to these studies.
- Very little research has been done about community newspapers in general, and in South Africa in particular. Moreover, recent research concentrates on community newspapers as defined by the MDDA (see 1.3), virtually ignoring the "local commercial press" (the MDDA's term for the community newspapers this study focuses on [see 1.4]) and the unique challenges they face in an increasingly demographically and socially diverse South Africa.
- Research about quality in newspapers tends to focus on editorial quality, excluding quality in the other organisational functions (i.e. advertising, production and distribution/circulation). The only comprehensive study the researcher could find is that of De Jager (1979).

Due to the challenges, the researcher had to work mainly inductively as well as draw on her own experience in the community newspaper sector to draw conclusions from the literature as to how principles and theories could apply in the community newspaper environment. It is encouraging that the findings were confirmed in both the pre-testing and post-testing phases.

In the next section, the methods used to build the comprehensive quality management model will be summarised.

## 6.4 BUILDING THE COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY MODEL

In this exploratory study (see 1.7.1), the researcher took the following steps to build the model:

- **Step 1:** The macro (A) level of the model (fig. 5) was constructed following a deductive approach. The researcher analysed the literature – specifically existing quality management models, theories and approaches. An important step was identifying quality dimensions/variables applicable to community newspapers (see table 14), in line with the nature of exploratory research (Sohn *et al.*, 1999:274, see 1.7.1). The researcher then constructed the macro model following a systems-based approach by identifying the main organisational components of input-process-output and feedback (fig. 5). In this step, the researcher implemented *theoretical triangulation* by combining various theories (i.e. from general quality management and media management, as described in 1.7.3 (see also fig. 1, an illustration of the triangulation process followed in this study).
- **Step 2:** The researcher then inductively verified level A of the model by exploring quality and quality management processes and practices at selected South African community newspapers, using an instrumental case-study approach (1.7.3.1) and depth interviews (1.7.3.2). The researcher implemented *source triangulation* in this step by combining data from theoretical and empirical sources, i.e. the owners, managers and editors on different levels and indifferent departments at the community newspaper cases (see 1.7.3).
- **Step 3:** This step entailed deconstructing the macro level A into the intermediate level B by using the findings from the literature study and the depth interviews (pre-testing phase) to identify/map the key processes within the community newspaper organisation as a system (see step 1). By using different methods to gather information, the researcher implemented *methodological triangulation* (i.e. the literature study and depth interviews).
- **Step 4:** During this step, the model was refined using the Delphi method (1.7.3, see also 4.1) by returning the collated results to the participants for a second round of evaluation (4.4). Notably, participants concurred with the content of the model, suggesting only one process change. This increases the validity of the study. The researcher then refined the model by incorporating the post-test feedback from participants (4.5).
- **Step 5:** Finally, the researcher deconstructed the intermediate level B into the micro level C by inductively extracting quality dimensions and guidelines from the literature (chapter 1-3) and the empirical study (chapter 4). Using the variables in table 14 as a broad framework, the dimensions/guidelines were used to formulate specific criteria necessary for valuating and improving quality in a community newspaper organisation. Level C thus comprises criteria linked to the individual elements in level A as well as each of the processes and sub-processes in level B of the model.
- **Added value (step 6):** To further enhance the model, the researcher demonstrated how the model could be used as a measuring instrument by adding another level (D) to element A1. This



constitutes a Likert-type checklist (table 25, see also 6.5). These checklists provide detailed guidelines relevant to specific activities in a process. Community newspaper organisations can use these checklists to make sure they have taken all the necessary steps to ensure quality.

The final, comprehensive model can thus be illustrated as follows (fig. 44, CNP refers to community newspaper[s]):

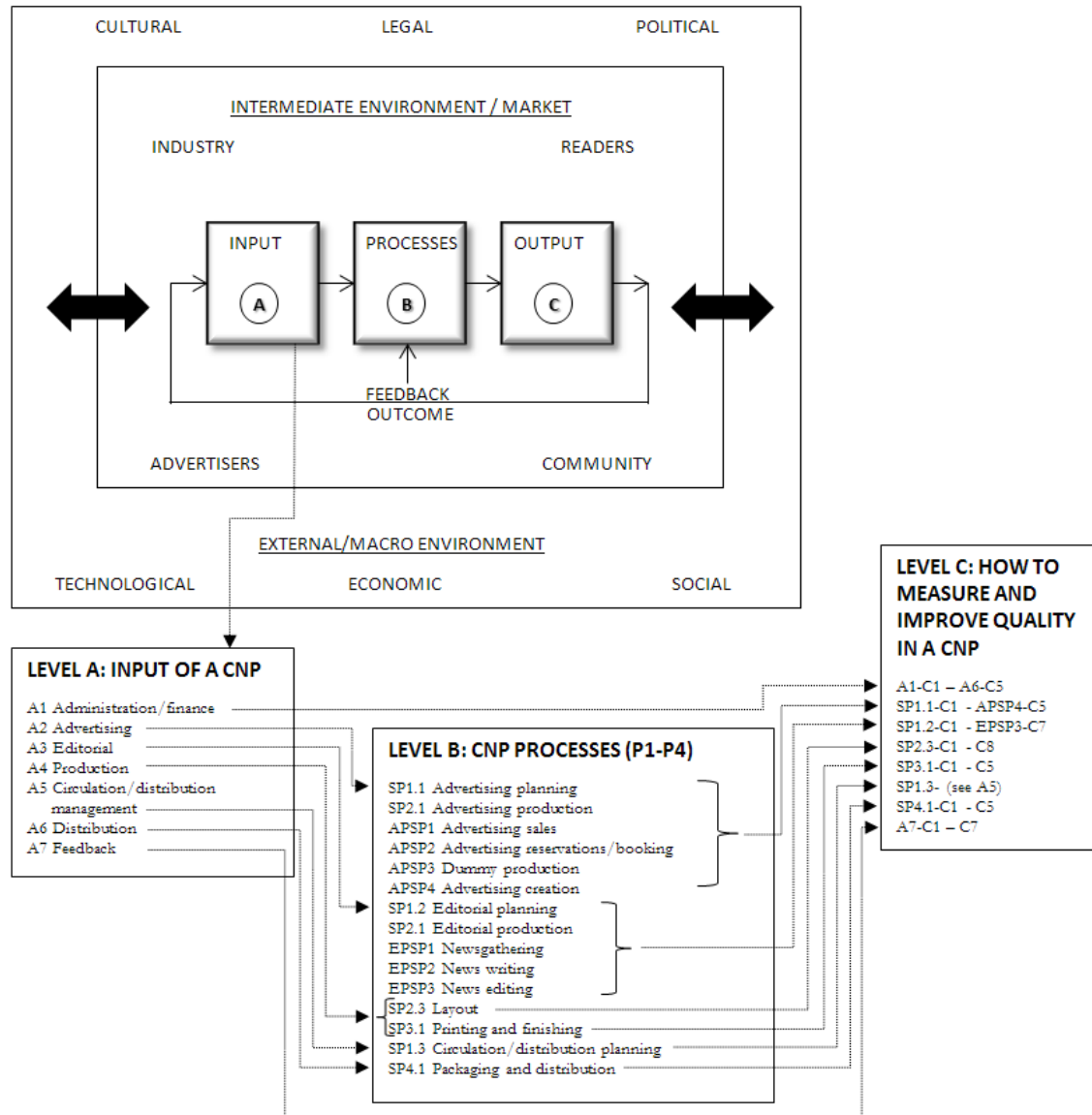


Figure 44: The final comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers.

## 6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE MODEL

In this study, the researcher determined that a community newspaper organisation could be regarded as an open system that functions within an internal and external environment. The community newspaper is also dependent on that environment for sustenance and growth (see 2.9 and 2.10.3). It is important,

though, that quality is managed holistically in and across all functional levels of the organisation (i.e. the quality or value chain). However, the main benefit of a systems approach to quality is that it allows management to deconstruct the organisation into manageable levels that simplify quality management and quality improvement. The model developed in this study offers such a deconstructed view. As such, it provides a framework an organisation could adapt to its own structure and operational processes in the quest to achieve/maintain and continuously improve quality.

Furthermore, the systems approach holds that quality in each process contributes to quality in the entire chain. However, it is vital that organisations understand how the quality chain works. If the quality of the resources (input) required in a specific process is poor, the process itself and the output (product) will be poor. Moreover, every person in the community newspaper organisation should be committed to and responsible for quality. For example, if the sales force in the advertising function is committed to quality but the newsroom is not, the lack of quality editorial content could cause advertisers to lose interest in the newspaper. In the process, the quality chain is broken.

The macro level of the model (A) provides a breakdown of the main components of a newspaper organisation, allowing an organisation to determine the input in terms of resources it needs to ensure quality in its processes and output (i.e. products). The intermediate level (B) represents the key processes in the main functional areas of advertising, editorial, production and circulation/distribution. Each key process is presented using the input-process-output approach, providing an organisation with detailed information required to ensure quality in its processes. For example, APSP2 (advertising reservations/booking) needs information in the form of sales agreements, people (advertising representatives and administrative staff members), equipment and technology such as an advertising management information system to ensure that advertising space is reserved according to the agreement.

The micro level (C) provides an organisation with guidelines as to what constitutes quality where input, processes and output are concerned. For example, an *effective* advertising management system is necessary to ensure that advertisements appear in the newspaper as required. This will guarantee that a client's advertisement appears correctly, where size, page and date are concerned.

Further to the above, the researcher recommends the following where the application of the model is concerned:

- It is clear from the literature (see, e.g., Milne *et al.*, 2006) and participants' feedback (see chapter 4) that every community newspaper organisation faces unique challenges, which could be integrated in the model – especially where specific measures derived from the quality criteria are concerned. The researcher suggests that similar groups of community newspapers form an association or committee that specifically focuses on quality. Using the model as a basis, an objective of such a body could be to investigate best practices in light of the particular challenges. For example, all the participants reported challenges where recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced journalists are concerned. In addition, the need to recruit committed journalists from their specific communities was emphasised. The committee could investigate manners in which community newspapers could recruit and retain people from the communities to establish best practices in this regard. Moreover, they could explore ways to use existing expertise (across organisations) to train these community journalists. Similarly, best practices could then be identified. Cooperating in this manner and then implementing these best practices would not just

improve quality in individual organisations, but could contribute to improving quality of the community newspaper sector as a whole.

- The model is not only useful for top-management. Line managers in each of the functional areas could apply the model to evaluate quality in their functional processes. Moreover, individuals could use the model as a guideline as to what would constitute quality in their particular position. This could help to get inexperienced staff members on the quality track faster, because they would know what is expected of them. It has been established that organisation-wide awareness of and responsibility for quality contributes to overall quality by maintaining the quality chain in and across processes, departments and functions. If employees on the different levels and in the various positions thus understand and correctly apply the model, this could lead to increased quality across the board.
- The model could also be used to facilitate cross-functional evaluation of quality. For example, the editorial function could evaluate quality in the circulation/distribution function and vice versa. Such an exercise could be particularly useful to determine and compare perceptions about quality. If there are significant gaps in how the functions perceive quality in other functions, the organisation as a whole could cooperate to align perceptions within, e.g., a particular process. An added benefit of such an exercise could be greater understanding of quality challenges in all functional areas and processes.
- Although this model was developed specifically for printed commercial community newspapers, it could also be implemented at community newspapers with a different financial and ownership structure. The functions in community newspapers remain fairly constant, but processes could be different depending on the structure of the organisation. Moreover, the measure of importance attached to certain functions could vary. For example, free community newspapers might emphasise quality in the advertising function more than quality in the editorial function. Community newspapers with characteristics different from those of printed commercial community newspapers could apply the model by focusing on functions/processes relevant specifically to them.
- Entrepreneurs entering the market could use the model as a quality management guide. The model focuses on the key components/functions that are necessary in a community newspaper organisation. This could help entrepreneurs to put the structure of a community newspaper organisation in place. Furthermore, the model contains the key processes linked to the organisational components, which could help entrepreneurs refine the components into the activities needed to produce the newspaper product. The model is further useful in that it provides entrepreneurs with guidance on the input/resources a community newspaper organisation needs to produce its products.
- The example of further refinement (level D) the researcher provided should be the starting point for the comprehensive deconstruction of this level. This would provide specific measures community newspaper organisations could use to measure quality on a broad, strategic level as well as on a functional process level. Such a measuring instrument could enable organisations to improve quality by rooting out the causes of quality errors and continue to work pro-actively to prevent errors from occurring. This will also guide any management interventions to improve the quality of organisational processes.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendation for future research can be made:

- As mentioned earlier, each of the cases that participated in this study has a Web presence. However, the content of the online version is mostly a mirror image of the printed version. It does not take the specific nature of online news and multi-media storytelling and the skills necessary for quality on this platform into account. Research into quality and quality management of the online version of a community newspaper could thus contribute to providing a more comprehensive view of how community newspapers should manage quality across platforms. Identifying/mapping the processes relevant to the online version could be a valuable addition to the proposed model. Such research could, for example, provide guidelines as to how existing resources could be reallocated to benefit both the printed and online products. Furthermore, deconstructing the processes could lead to guidelines for journalists, for example, on how they should adapt copy written for the printed version to the online platform while maintaining quality for both platforms.
- Other related issues that could warrant further investigation include the influence of the soft factors (i.e. organisational culture) and environmental dimensions such as demographics, politics and socio-economic issues on quality in the printed media. The particular demographical and cultural profile of a country may impact on the quality dimensions included in the model. Additional studies to assess the applicability of the model to newspapers in other countries (developed and developing) may further assist to streamline the model.

### 6.7 CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the researcher summarised the study by highlighting the key issues addressed in each chapter and how these relate to the research objectives. Tables were provided to illustrate the association between the research questions, research objectives, central theoretical statements and the chapters. The researcher determined that by adequately answering the research questions, the research objectives were achieved.

Furthermore, the researcher emphasised specific challenges experienced, specifically pertaining to the lack of scholarly work on quality management in community newspapers.

In the second part of the chapter, the researcher provided a step-by-step account of the process followed to build the comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers. This synopsis emphasised the research methods employed and the types of triangulation implemented. It culminated in a diagram of the comprehensive model, illustrating the deconstruction of the intermediate and micro levels. This was followed by a discussion of how the model can be applied in practice. In this regard, the researcher also emphasised the value of the model as a measuring instrument.

To conclude the chapter, the researcher made suggestions for future research, emphasising the importance of investigating quality management in the online products of community newspaper organisations.

In conclusion, the key motivation behind developing the model is the argument that effective application of the comprehensive model could contribute to improving quality management and thus eventually

quality itself in geographically defined, printed community newspapers in South Africa. These newspapers are in a unique position to provide a community's most intimate news in a manner that allows readers to function as responsible, informed citizens in a democracy. It is because community newspapers are in this unique position that they should pay attention to the quality of their organisations, processes and products. Applying the proposed comprehensive quality management could be viewed as a step towards better quality and, as such, a stronger role in a democratic society.

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## ADDENDUM

### Empiriese bevindings

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Beste Respondent,

Ons het nou die verifikasiestadium van die omvattende gehaltebestuursmodel vir (tradisionele, kommersiële) gemeenskapskoerante waaroor ons in Mei vanjaar gesels het, bereik. Dis is die finale stap om die model te verfyn. Ongelukkig het die tyd my ook ingehaai en moet ek 'n bietjie druk toepas! Ek sal dit besonder waardeur indien jy so gou moontlik jou inset kan lewer.

Bekyk eerstens die diagram wat die volledige gehaltebestuursmodel voorstel. 'n Kort verduideliking van elk van die prosesse volg in die tabel daarna. Kyk of jy hiermee saamstem en of jy iets wil byvoeg en/of verander. Dit verteenwoordig die inligting wat ek uit die literatuur verkry het.

Daarna volg 'n *opsomming* van die gesamentlike insette van al die respondente. Kyk ook of jy dink dit is volledig en of jy hier iets sou wou byvoeg en/of verander. Ek gebruik die Delphi-tegniek (in aangepaste vorm), wat beteken dat ek kodes gebruik om na die koerante/respondente te verwys. Sodoende word koerante en respondente nie gekompromiteer nie, en spesifieke insette nie aan spesifieke koerante gekoppel nie. In die finale studie word die koerante se name wel in hoofstuk 1 genoem, maar geen verdere verband word aangedui nie. Die doel van die studie is nie om spesifieke gevallestudies (dus koerante) te ondersoek en gehalte daar te meet nie, maar om die teorie/model te toets.

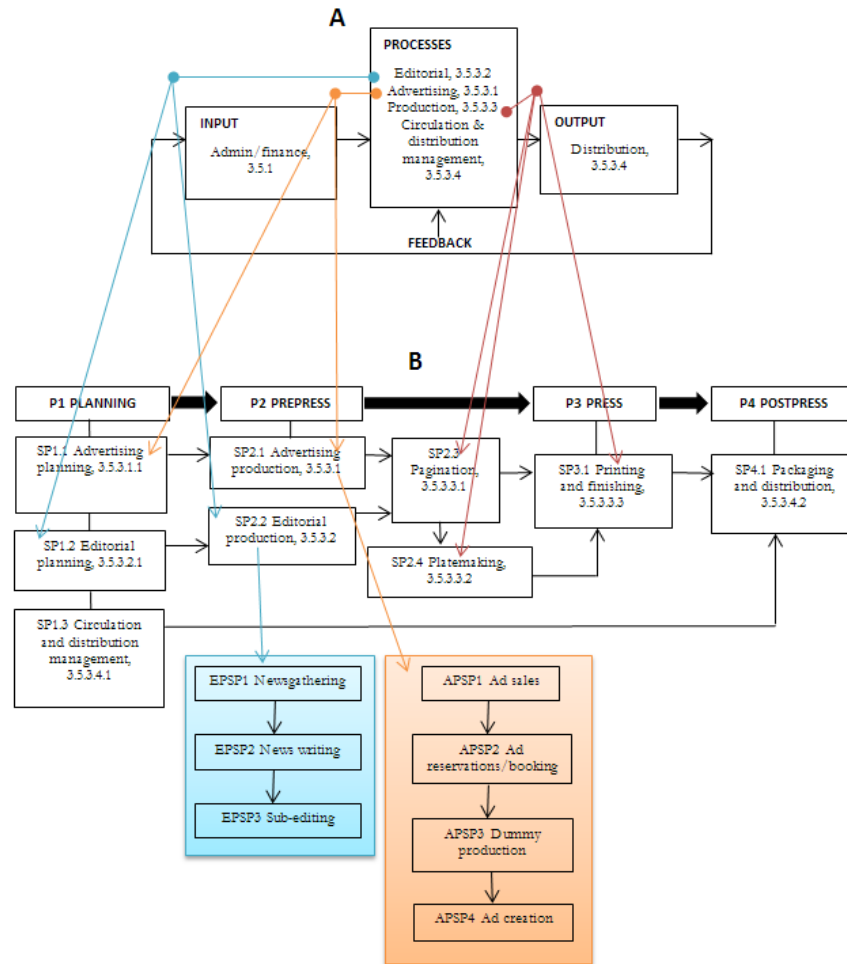
Uiteindelik sal ek wil sien dat gemeenskapskoerante die model gebruik om gehalte te evalueer en te verbeter waar nodig.

Dui asseblief jou insette in die dokument aan – jy kan “comments” gebruik of jou insette bloot in die teks invoeg. Merk dit asseblief net baie goed (hoofletters, kleur) sodat ek dit vinnig kan raaksien. Aan die einde van die dokument is daar ruimte vir algemene kommentaar.

Let asseblief daarop dat die proefskrif in Engels is, en dat ek om tyd te bespaar nie alles in Afrikaans vertaal het vir die verifikasieproses nie.

Baie dankie vir jou samewerking en waardevolle insette.





**A: The community newspaper as a system (macro model)**

**B: The production process in a community newspaper organization (intermediate model [P1-P4] and micro model [SP1.1- SP4.1])**

**P1 PLANNING**

- Planning is an activity of the organisation as a system and fits in high up in the structure of the organisation; filters down to all levels, processes and activities.
- Includes developing and deploying policies and strategies, setting up appropriate partnerships and resources; designing in quality; conducting audience research.

**P2 PREPRESS**

- Includes all the steps before the actual printing of the product, including composition (i.e. recording and formatting text, and pagination), reproduction of photographs and graphics, and assembly (i.e. page layout/make-up) and platemaking.

**P3 PRESS**

- Print the newspaper product.

**P4 POSTPRESS**

- Preparing to distribute and actual distribution of the printed newspaper product.

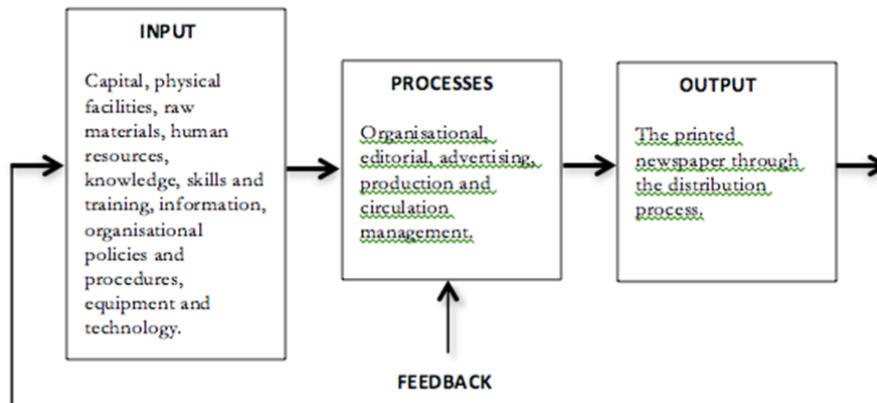
## Explanation of the model:

### Defining quality community newspapers: Respondent input

#### General comments:

- A quality product attracts readers; people want to identify with such a newspaper, its content and the quality of its editorial writing (RC1).
- Quality is a relative term. A community newspaper is often amateurish, but exceptionally popular. If it is popular, it is good. You publish what is important to your community in as interesting a way as possible. For a journalist to decide something is boring is an insult to your market. Community newspapers still have a soul. They care; they are involved. That's why it's a different type of business. Support from the community is vital – especially in rural areas (RA1).
- A quality community newspaper has a relationship with its community (RD1, RC3).
- A quality community newspaper strives to continuously improve quality, which includes staying abreast of technological development and opportunities (RA1).
- A quality community newspaper reflects the diversity in its community (RD1).

#### Organisational process (admin/finance function)

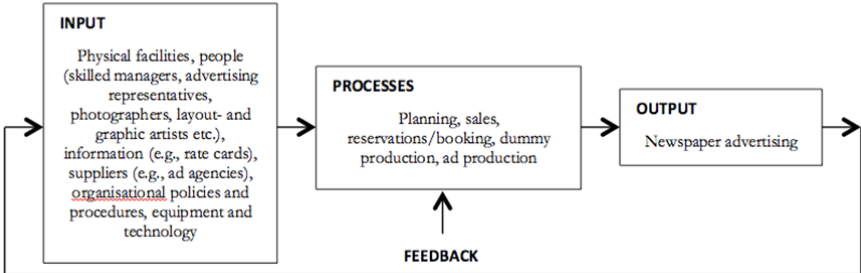


- Includes activities such as financial management, human resources, maintenance and promotion/marketing.

#### Respondent input

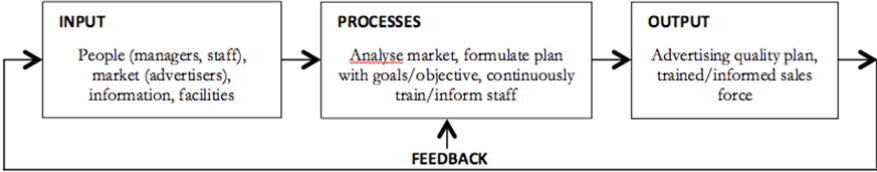
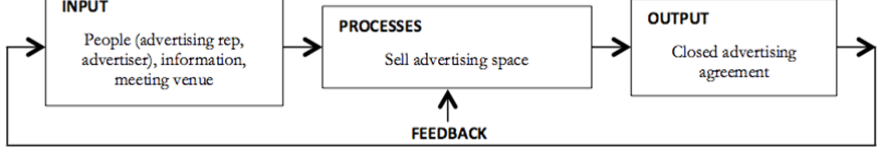
- Editor/owner/manager directly involved in all functions of community newspaper – regardless of ownership model (independent or chain-owned).
- Strict financial control is vital.
- Cooperation between functions is essential.
- Relaxed, open management style.
- Management should be involved with industry issues.
- General lack of skilled editorial staff.
- Market-related remuneration of staff is important, but mostly not possible in community newspaper sector. Solid incentive/commission system for advertising representatives.
- Employee benefits are important, e.g. medical aid, pension fund contributions, financial assistance with academic training.
- Professional conduct should be emphasised and promoted.
- Performance appraisals are important; conducted mostly informally at independent community newspapers, more formal in chain-owned organisations. Emphasis on encouragement of employees in all cases.

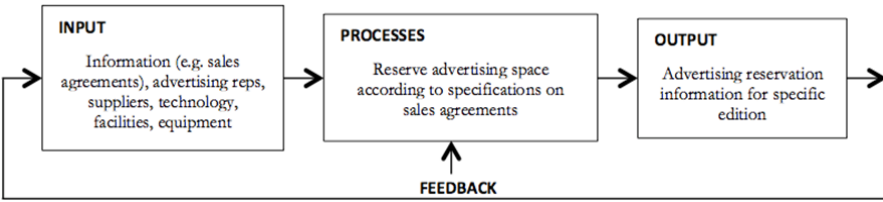
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controls the resources an organisation needs to be successful. As such, it provides and controls capital, physical facilities, materials, training, equipment and technology.</li> <li>• Administrative activities include establishing and directing consistent, uniform policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Important responsibility: “To see that efficiency is maintained and that each department understands the close relationship it has with all the others” (Williams, 1978:14).</li> <li>• Maintains relationships with the organisation’s environments.</li> <li>• Chain-owned community newspapers: administration/finance is subject to the control and policies of the larger system.</li> <li>• Goals must be set to fulfil strategic objectives, e.g. improving journalistic quality and improving the standing of the organisation in the market by improving quality of advertising and distribution.</li> <li>• Plans and assigns resources for the main constituencies to function, e.g. human resources and capital.</li> <li>• Recruit and retain high-quality staff.</li> <li>• Keep up with developments in technology, e.g. information and content management systems.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Human resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community newspaper needs quality personnel: editorial staff, creative people, advertising sales force. Managing such a diverse group is a challenge, but they complement one another. Cooperation is essential.</li> <li>• Ad reps should be confident, outgoing and have good people skills.</li> <li>• Staff retention: journalists and designers/paginators – high turnover, not so much in advertising sales force (in chain-owned organisations – stable in independents). Remuneration, age and head hunting influence this. Case C frustrated about low salaries – loses many people to other publications in the group.</li> <li>• Quality CNP needs skilled and knowledgeable journalists. Entry-level journalists need extensive training. Need to be multi-skilled. Need expressed for journalists with strong ties to community who will make long-term commitment.</li> <li>• Training/coaching opportunities (in-house and external) are important to empower employees, although resources are not always available. Case A, B and C offer in-house training workshops and regularly use opportunities for external training for editorial staff. C continuously trains/coaches advertising staff too – internally/externally. A/B is far from large metropolises and access to such opportunities is limited, so weekly workshops are conducted. They invite guest speakers, staffs are involved with FCJ, participation in CJ awards (A/B – editorial). No training for sales force (A/B) – “Personal relationships are important, hard selling does not work in area” (RA3). Limited training: D.</li> <li>• A/B almost exclusively use editorial correspondents and some freelance writers. Cheaper, but quality is a problem. Stories need to be rewritten. B – exclusively correspondents, some have been there for years though.</li> </ul> <p><u>Policies, procedures and guidelines:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often informal and assumed rather than rigid written editorial procedures; formal where advertising and circulation/distribution are concerned, because control (especially fiscal control) is seen as very important in general. Guidelines are flexible, though.</li> <li>• Firm credit control guidelines in place.</li> </ul>
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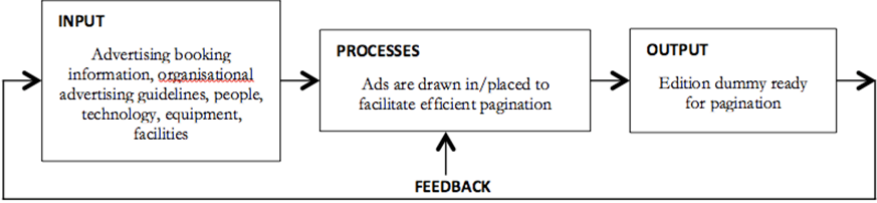
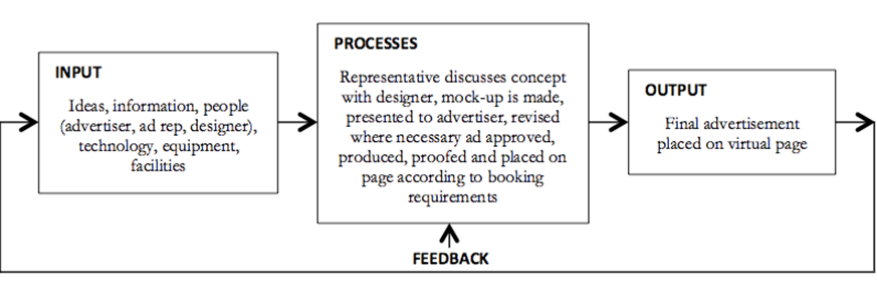
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases adhere to some form of ethical code, e.g. the Press Code and/or a specific institutional code (chain-owned and independent), and the code of the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa.</li> <li>Party politics and sensation is avoided.</li> </ul> <p><u>Infrastructure and equipment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases have established infrastructure and the equipment needed to do the work in all functions, including computers, camera equipment and content management systems ranging from basic (email, central server, FTP system – chain-owned newspapers) to sophisticated, tailor-made content management systems (independent newspaper). In some cases software programmes are somewhat outdated and not standardised on all computers, which causes some problems.</li> <li>Except for case D all newspapers have an Internet presence.</li> <li>Chain-owned cases have the benefit of technical support and equipment from headoffice.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of trained staffs, especially journalists at all cases.</li> </ul>
Advertising	
The advertising function	Respondent input
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serves the advertiser; generates money to keep the newspaper afloat by selling advertising space to advertisers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advertising quality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality printing.</li> <li>The design of the advertisement, the amount of copy, the use of colour: less colour looks better in a newspaper, so does less text and bolder graphics due to the grain of newsprint (RC2).</li> <li>From the perspective of the advertiser quality means personal contact with an informed advertising representative; an affordable product that offers value for money (RC2).</li> </ul> <p><b>General comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selling skills NB (C) – confident, people skills, hard worker, ongereelde ure bereid wees. Qualified would be bonus.</li> <li>Important: not all ad reps have knowledge to “make an ad work”, even if they have good selling skills. Training thus essential (RC2).</li> </ul>

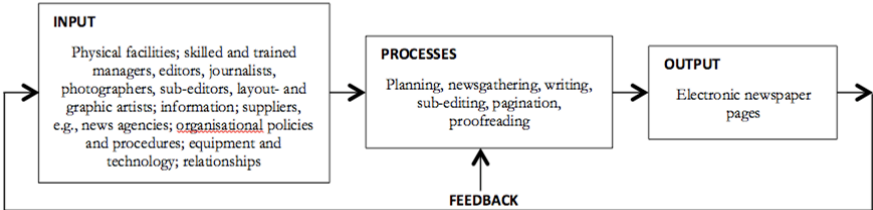


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides creative services to advertisers, such as helping them to write, design and edit their advertisements.</li> <li>• Handles classified and display advertising, mainly for local advertisers. National advertising generally “outsourced”.</li> <li>• Factors most important to advertisers are the editorial quality of the publication, its overall appearance, trends in circulation, and the newspaper’s standing among the competition.</li> <li>• Should have a dynamic sales strategy to reach its goals; strategy should focus on the local nature of the newspaper and the acceptance of readers not just as a news tool, but also as a shopping tool.</li> <li>• Appropriate human and financial resources and support are necessary. Appropriate equipment and technology includes a computer-based sales and management system for advertising.</li> <li>• Number of sub-units and personnel in the advertising function varies according to size. Should include a manager/director, someone responsible for national/general advertising, and a person responsible for local retail advertising; creative person(s).</li> <li>• Most advertising representatives work on commission basis, but some get basic remuneration as well. Commission-based remuneration is a strong incentive but it does not build employee loyalty. It could also lead to representatives neglecting administrative duties and service to existing clients.</li> <li>• Managerial activities: allocating sales/service resources, developing new sources of revenue.</li> <li>• Administrative tasks such as invoicing and record keeping need to be performed.</li> <li>• After-sales services include dealing with customer complaints.</li> <li>• Breaking into national advertising is problematic. Several bodies provide support (Capro, NAB). It has been suggested locally and abroad that community papers that do not have access to national suppliers should consider uniting their efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reps have to know their own product – including the community and its needs/interests; the client’s needs, environment, the particular industry. Relationship very important (RC2).</li> <li>• Commission structure at all cases: A, B and D commission only. C commission and basic salary. Some allowances given – e.g. cell phones.</li> <li>• Good incentives for reps making target (all cases).</li> <li>• Communities (all cases) see advertising as very important.</li> <li>• Advertorials: all cases handle with care, offer as incentive to new advertisers. Help NGOs, schools that struggle (C). Part of social responsibility.</li> <li>• Rates: increases determined by a specific formula according to the specific annual budget. Market research is important – advertisers are well informed. Want value for money.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic downturn has caused a decline in advertising revenue across the board. Advertisers continue to advertise, but place smaller ads less frequently.</li> <li>• Difficult to generate new business in towns where little development takes place. New businesses often are national advertisers that are handled by Capro/NAB. Ad agencies do not know the newspapers and communities the way ad reps do. Do not always give the best advice.</li> <li>• No salary increases for commission earners. Commission increases when advertising rates increase.</li> <li>• Quality control: Case A and B has management system in place to rule out problems such as ads that are not placed. Less control over technical problems such as printing. Advertiser satisfaction is important. Value will be added in some way to compensate, i.e. bigger ad at lower price, even free placement if need be.</li> </ul>
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SP1.1 Advertising planning process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT People (managers, staff), market (advertisers), information, facilities] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Analyse market, formulate plan with goals/objective, continuously train/inform staff]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Advertising quality plan, trained/informed sales force]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse the market in respect of the type of advertisers, the competition, and the community newspaper's strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>Formulate advertising plan and set goals and objectives.</li> <li>Includes advertising marketing to raise awareness about the publication.</li> <li>Requires gathering as much information as possible about a prospective client.</li> <li>Includes recruiting and continuously training the sales force.</li> <li>Sales representatives should be ego-driven, goal-oriented and organised, and informed about organisational objectives and goals, <i>as well as</i> changes and improvements in editorial, and successes in circulation. It is vital that advertising representatives know the newspaper product as well as their clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loose sections/supplements to increase advertising revenue are offered at special rates. Popular at C and D, not so much as A and B – depends on economic situation.</li> <li>Regular supplements are planned a year in advance (C), random focuses for extra revenue (e.g. Mother's Day). Often offer editorial space too as added incentive.</li> <li>Most ads come from retail sector; classifieds important.</li> <li>Set categories of clients and guidelines for allocating workload to make sure it is fair (all cases).</li> <li>Good cooperation generally among sales staff.</li> <li>Internet and email makes process easier – access to material, e.g. photos and logos on Internet; proofs can be emailed. Saves time and money.</li> </ul>
SP2.1 ADVERTISING PRODUCTION: Can be broken down into four sub-processes: advertising sales (APSP1), advertising reservations/bookings (APSP2), dummy production (APSP3), and advertisement creation (APSP4).	
APSP1 Advertising sales process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT People (advertising rep, advertiser), information, meeting venue] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Sell advertising space]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Closed advertising agreement]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The advertising representative is the primary (and often only) contact point between the community newspaper and the advertiser.</li> <li>New client: representative gathers all information possible about the advertiser, then sets up a meeting to explain the costs/benefits of advertising.</li> <li>The representative should build a personal relationship with the client.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rep does research about client, then goes out and sees advertisers, sells ads; makes suggestions about ad design (all cases).</li> <li>If reps know their clients, they know what they want too. If need be, client comes in and sits with designer (case C).</li> <li>Ad reps sell for more than one paper, depending on organisational structure (all cases). National advertising handled externally (mainly Capro). Some local owners of national businesses do advertise directly from time to time (A/B).</li> <li>C: designs most ads – also a need to educate advertisers about what works and what does not (RC2).</li> <li>A/B offers small editorial “introduction” to all new businesses.</li> </ul>

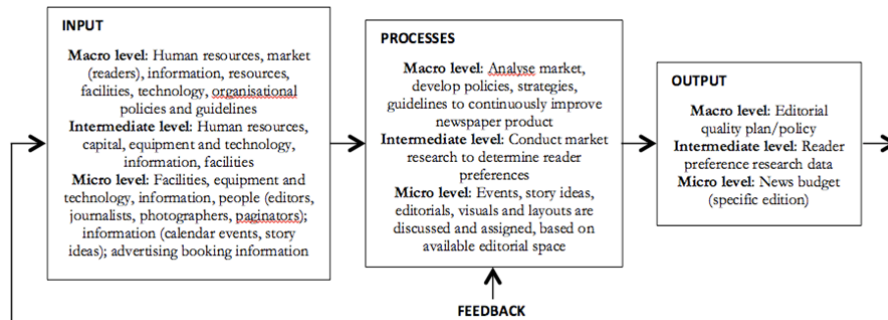
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At many community newspapers, representatives still sell advertising door-to-door, armed with (ABC audited) circulation figures and other marketing information about the publication (rate card).</li> <li>Once the advertiser has decided to buy advertising space and has agreed on size, date, frequency and perhaps position, the advertising agreement is closed.</li> <li>The advertising representative thus discusses ideas for the advertisement with the client – what to include, aim and style.</li> </ul>	
<b>APSP2 Advertising reservations/booking process - clarification</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Information (e.g. sales agreements), advertising reps, suppliers, technology, facilities, equipment] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Reserve advertising space according to specifications on sales agreements]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Advertising reservation information for specific edition]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; INPUT   </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once advertising space has been sold, the details (i.e. size and frequency) is entered into the particular reservation system (e.g. advertising management system) that is in place at the newspaper.</li> <li>National advertising: advertising section receives external advertising material from the suppliers (Capro, NAB) and enters it into booking system before routing it forward.</li> <li>Digital material could be distributed via telecommunication networks or digital storage media.</li> <li>Advertising can be booked months in advance (e.g. when position in the paper is important or advertiser agrees on a campaign involving multiple editions of paper).</li> <li>Every community newspaper has a specific deadline when booking for a specific edition closes. Bookings made during the last hours before the final closing are restricted to relatively simple classified ads.</li> <li>The reservation information is then forwarded for edition planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertisers often book specific positions in front section of paper and pay extra.</li> <li>C: classifieds and real estate is separate section, very high advertising load, good source of revenue. This help to keep news hole relatively open (approximately 35% ad load in main paper).</li> </ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <p>Keep editorial space in mind by not overloading front section. Especially problematic in the middle of the month (C).</p>

APSP3 Dummy production process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Advertising booking information, organisational advertising guidelines, people, technology, equipment, facilities] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Ads are drawn in/placed to facilitate efficient pagination]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Edition dummy ready for pagination]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person responsible for physically planning the pages uses advertising reservation information to virtually place blocks of colour (representing the advertisements) according to the booking requirements (i.e. size and position).</li> <li>This is the “ad dummy” that will be used for editorial planning and pagination (the process of designing the pages using computer software), dictating the shape of the news hole editorial is left with.</li> <li>Newspaper policy/guidelines dictate whether the front page carries any advertising, and how much advertising is placed on the first few pages. This should direct the dummy creating process.</li> <li>Ad placement limits the page designer’s freedom. The advertising and editorial staff should communicate to ensure that advertising is dummied in a way that creates efficient news holes.</li> <li>Completed dummy is forwarded to the editorial section.</li> </ul> <p>If the community newspaper uses a content management system, the virtual pages could be left on the system accessible to all relevant staff members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Owner/manager creates dummy at A/B. Dummy is created in production section at C. D: all work done at group headoffice.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balanced load – lighter ad load in front section of paper. If person is inexperienced, problems can arise. Can be addressed by communication of needs (i.e. editorial department).</li> </ul>
APSP4 Advertisement creation process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Ideas, information, people (advertiser, ad rep, designer), technology, equipment, facilities] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Representative discusses concept with designer, mock-up is made, presented to advertiser, revised where necessary ad approved, produced, proofed and placed on page according to booking requirements]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Final advertisement placed on virtual page]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of advertising material is important to ensure quality printing – relevant to ads created inhouse and complete material from suppliers.</li> <li>Rep comes back with suggestions from advertiser, creative staff drafts ad, proof is sent to client. Simple process if reps know their clients – which is generally the case at all CNPs.</li> <li>RA3: creative people also get to know clients and their preferences, makes process smoother.</li> <li>RD2: Most advertisers already have draft ads. Technical department at headoffice adds some flair; material is emailed to and fro. Editor looks at proof and signs it off.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As soon as advertising space has been sold and booked, the process of drafting and mock-up towards the final advertisement starts.</li> <li>Ad rep discusses the concept with the creative person (e.g., graphic artist or other designer), who comes up with a concept.</li> <li>The advertisement is drafted and presented to the advertiser for approval. Once approved, the final ad is created, proofed for errors and placed on the page.</li> </ul> <p>When external suppliers such as advertising agencies perform the prepress production of advertisements, the material is forwarded for placement as soon as it is received.</p>	<p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <p>Case D: production department is at headoffice. All ads are created there. Can cause problems, because designers do not know advertisers. Could cause delays.</p>
<b>Editorial</b>	
<b>The editorial function</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT["<b>INPUT</b> Physical facilities; skilled and trained managers, editors, journalists, photographers, sub-editors, layout- and graphic artists; information; suppliers, e.g., news agencies; organisational policies and procedures; equipment and technology; relationships"] --&gt; PROCESSES["<b>PROCESSES</b> Planning, newsgathering, writing, sub-editing, pagination, proofreading"]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT["<b>OUTPUT</b> Electronic newspaper pages"]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK["<b>FEEDBACK</b>"]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES   </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Function is to gather news from various sources and to write it into readable, interesting stories, edit them and plan how they will be displayed on the printed pages.</li> <li>Other functions: instruct/influence the public through editorials, commentary and analysis; entertain the public through by-lined columns, comics and other features.</li> <li>Comprises news management (planning and selection), news creation (reporting and writing, as well as sub-/copy-editing), photography and graphic design, and news presentation (layout and design/pagination). Many community newspapers also have a web page and the editorial section is also responsible for preparing stories for this online version.</li> <li>Time is a major production constraint due to tight deadlines.</li> <li>How many people are employed in a community newsroom and the positions they hold depends on the size and structure of the newspaper. Research showed that a higher staff ratio often indicates higher quality. Staff: news managers (editors), news gatherers (journalists and photographers), and news processors (sub-editors and paginators).</li> <li>Cooperation and teamwork are important.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Editorial quality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality is accurate, original content (RA2).</li> <li>Comprehensive coverage of a community's news (RC3) – the good and the bad (RA3).</li> <li>Content should adhere to same standards as mainstream newspapers (RC3).</li> </ul> <p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases: multiple strict deadlines are adhered to – necessitated by the variety of products and also outsourced printing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No time/resources for indepth/investigative journalism – all cases.</li> </ul>

- Due to technological development, page layout (or paste-up) has migrated from the production function where it was traditionally seated to the editorial function.
- The bigger the newspaper, the more complex its structure, which would mean special sections for sports, entertainment etc. However, at small community newspapers with only a handful of staff members, all the topics still have to be covered.
- In a community newsroom structure, staff members often share responsibilities, e.g. editor could be manager, journalist and copy-editor; journalist could be photographer and paginator.
- Technology changes news production process dramatically. However, to keep up with technological development requires substantial financial commitment.
- High turnover of staff in community newsrooms is a quality challenge. Community newsrooms are generally made up of entry-level people, because there papers are often seen as a stepping-stone.

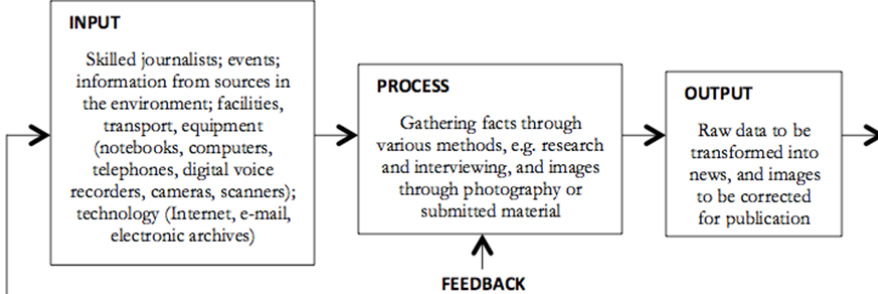
#### SP1.2 Editorial planning process - clarification

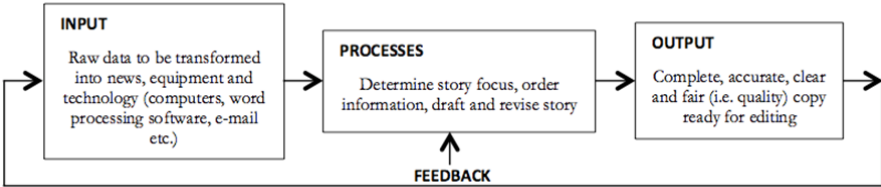


- Involves decisions that affect the operations of the publication and its ultimate quality and success, as well as decisions about every edition.
- Macro level: includes decisions about issues such as design, sections to accommodate new news topics, allocating more resources to, e.g., investigative journalism, reaching a younger audience, evaluating the quality of reporting in specific areas, and the use of training consultants.
- Intermediate level: includes recruiting and hiring skilled journalists and target audience research to determine preferences.

#### Respondent input

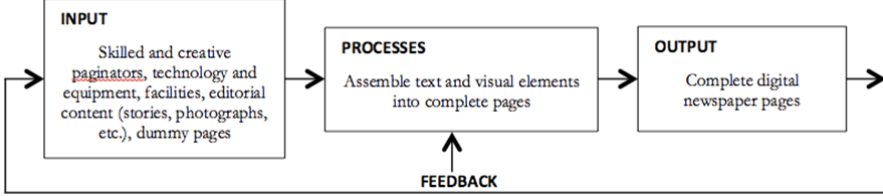
- Content: all cases cover all relevant community news – including sports, schools, courts and crime, business, church news, local authorities – hard and soft news.
- Language: A, C and D write in both English and Afrikaans. B writes in English only. Community did not welcome efforts to include news in vernacular languages (RA1). Paper needs to maintain a balance according to reader profile.
- Important: follow the general principles of good journalism – accuracy, completeness, fairness etc.
- Journalists have to be able to write. Community newspapers are at a disadvantage due to perception that community newspapers are substandard. Same standards apply to CNP journalists than mainstream journalists (RC3).
- C: news meeting is held where ideas are discussed, journalists are briefed on assignments. Preliminary planning of paper takes place: possible front-page photos, stories on news pages. All tentative because precise content of paper is determined closer to printing deadline and depends on what happens (RC3).
- C: news editor starts planning the paper in cooperation with editor as soon as dummy is available. Packs newspaper from the back.

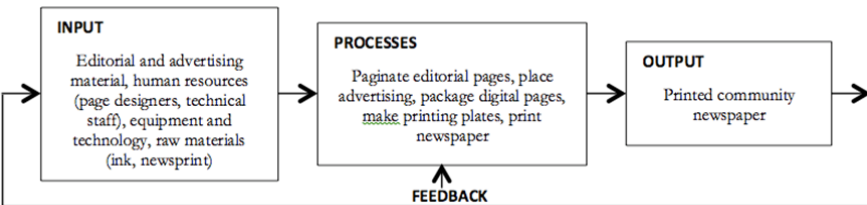
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Micro level</u>: editorial function is responsible for planning page elements such as stories, images and graphics, because it is responsible for producing complete digital pages containing editorial and advertising content for a specific edition of the paper.</li> <li>• <u>Challenges</u>: to serve a diversity of cultures and classes as part of a whole community, to compete with several different information sources for the attention of the community, and to engage younger readers who prefer news in a modern technological format.</li> <li>• Audience research is vital – and a form of quality control, because it involves feedback from the reader.</li> </ul>	
<b>SP2.2 EDITORIAL PRODUCTION: News (i.e. editorial) production involves newsgathering (reporting) and writing.</b>	
<b>EPSP1 Newsgathering process - clarification</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Skilled journalists; events; information from sources in the environment; facilities, transport, equipment (notebooks, computers, telephones, digital voice recorders, cameras, scanners); technology (Internet, e-mail, electronic archives)] --&gt; PROCESS[PROCESS Gathering facts through various methods, e.g. research and interviewing, and images through photography or submitted material]     PROCESS --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Raw data to be transformed into news, and images to be corrected for publication]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; INPUT   </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporters get ideas and information through a variety of sources, including colleagues in the newsroom, wire services, other media (including social media), the newspaper's correspondents in its circulation area, and through individuals and organisations such as local governments, the police and courts, non-governmental organisations, schools, churches, and members of the community.</li> <li>• Reporters are generally assigned one or more beats and have to make sure they have contact with the individuals and organisations where news on a specific beat originates.</li> <li>• When a reporter is sent to cover an event or story, he/she gathers the facts through several methods; including research, interviewing those involved, careful note taking and observation.</li> <li>• To be able to report and write, reporters need physical tools (tangibles) and electronic tools (software, databases, search engines) and "mental tools", i.e. characteristics such as persistence, commitment to accuracy, fairness and courage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondents should know the journalistic principles, especially accuracy (RA2).</li> <li>• C: when journalists come back from story, stories and photos are discussed with the news editor.</li> <li>• Desk-journalism not really a problem – journalists go out to do stories (all cases).</li> <li>• Quality of photographs is important – high resolution to ensure quality printing.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality control: Most mistakes are picked up when pagination is done. Often too late to send story back to journalist. Time thus a huge problem, which impacts quality of stories.</li> </ul>

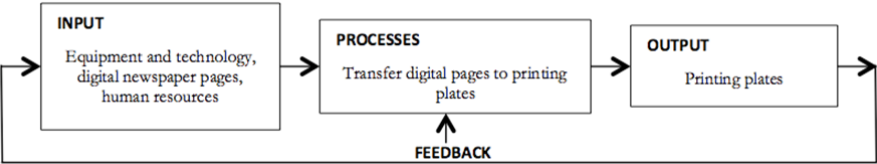
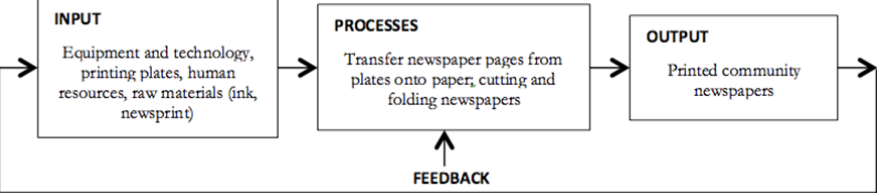
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tools: Internet, email, notebooks, computers, telephones, voice recorders, cell phones, digital cameras.</li> <li>Skills: typing, shorthand/briefhand, ability to think visually – and often take photographs (important at community newspapers).</li> <li>Newsgathering includes collecting information and images (photos, graphics).</li> <li>Large community newspapers might employ a chief photographer, but most often photographers would get their assignments from the editor or news editor.</li> <li>Photographers might accompany a reporter on a story, or cover an event on their own — once again depending on the size of the organisation.</li> <li>The photographer takes the photographs and uploads them to the computer system once back in the office.</li> <li>Printed photographs (or other graphic material) that are submitted to the newspaper can be scanned to convert them to digital format using appropriate technology and software and then treated in the same way as original photographs.</li> </ul>	
<b>EPSP2 News writing process - clarification</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Raw data to be transformed into news, equipment and technology (computers, word processing software, e-mail etc.)] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Determine story focus, order information, draft and revise story]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Complete, accurate, clear and fair (i.e. quality) copy ready for editing]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES   </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before a reporter starts the writing process, he/she has to determine the focus and order the information to form an outline of the story structure.</li> <li>Story is then drafted and revised to make sure it is accurate, fair and clear, as well as complete.</li> <li>Story is then filed into the specific system used in the newsroom.</li> <li>The news or assigning editor pulls the story up, reads it (primarily for content and style, approves it or sends it back for rewriting. If it meets with approval, it is filed for copy/sub-editing.</li> <li>Community newspapers that do not have a formal content management system often use email to direct copy flow between especially reporters and editors. News editors can also save stories onto a shared network directory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C: no content management system. Journalists use Word and file stories in specific folder on the network.</li> <li>A/B: tailor-made comprehensive content management system that streamlines flow of copy and simplifies control.</li> <li>Stories should be accurate and interesting – attitude at all cases. A community journalist can build atmosphere into a story (RC3).</li> <li>CNP stories should be richer and have more depth because journalists are involved with community (RC3).</li> <li>D: all stories are sent through FTP system to group headoffice. Email is also used. Computer system is fast and 24-hour support is available.</li> </ul> <p><u>Quality control:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accuracy is very important at case A and a premium is place on original work (i.e. interviews vs. press releases). Stories are not sent back to sources as a rule, but could be if there is an issue (RA2).</li> </ul>

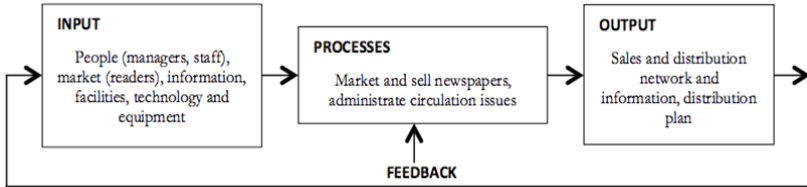


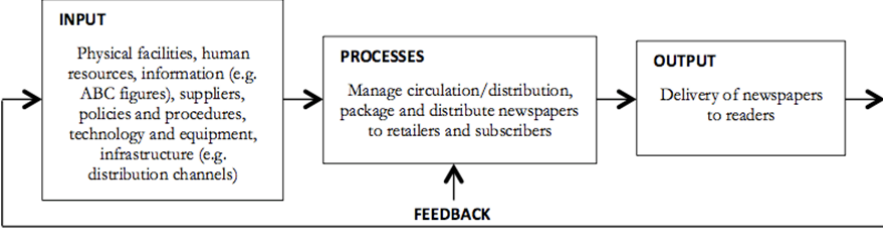
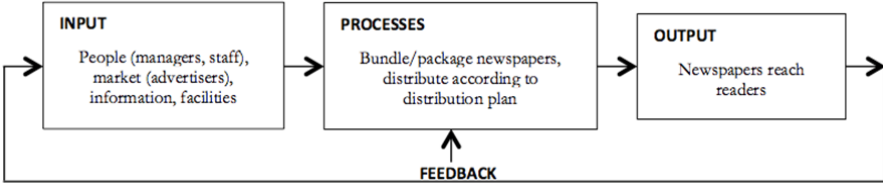
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community newspapers could also get editorial material (stories and photographs) through subscriptions to news agencies (wire services) such as SAPA, AP or the African Eye News Service. In the organisational systems context, the news agencies would be external suppliers of input. This material would be fed into the system for editing.</li> <li>Material from external sources can impact the quality of newspaper production.</li> </ul>	
<b>EPSP3 Sub-editing process - clarification</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>
<div> <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT: Skilled and knowledgeable sub- and photo editors, facilities, technology (computers and appropriate software), editing resources (language resources, style guides etc.)] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES: Prepare editorial copy for publication by correcting errors, checking structure and focus, verifying facts, etc.; writing suitable headlines and captions for photographs; correcting images by cropping, resizing and adjusting quality]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT: Editorial content ready to be placed on virtual pages]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy flow depends on the structure of the newsroom, the work routines, and the available technology.</li> <li>Sub-editors carefully read all stories and other editorial items on the computer for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation, facts and style, as well as legal and ethical problems using style guidelines.</li> <li>Sub-editors write suitable headlines for the stories to capture readers' attention.</li> <li>The sub-editor checks the story length, depending on the system that is used in the newsroom.</li> <li>Wires copy is edited according to the style of the publication and given a headline.</li> <li>Once the story has been edited, it goes back to the chief sub-editor or person who is responsible for the final check.</li> <li>Several people handle a single story – thus ample opportunity for verification of the information. Creates room for error, e.g. changes in meaning. Deadline pressures can often be blamed for these problems.</li> <li>The image editing process: The photographer/photo editor selects the best images and makes quality corrections using appropriate software. Mistakes such as distracting backgrounds, poor exposure or colour balance can be retouched.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A/B and C working on publication specific stylebooks.</li> <li>All cases: subbing starts as stories come in.</li> <li>Different systems are used, e.g. comprehensive management system (A/B), FTP (D), and email/server (C).</li> <li>Not one of the cases has a staff member exclusively responsible for sub-editing. At all cases editors or news editors act as sub-editors.</li> <li>Case C: news editor/sub-editor writes headlines, but expects journalists to suggest headlines. Final headlines are often a team effort.</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and deadline pressure compromises quality – little time to send stories back to journalists.</li> <li>Editing correspondents' copy is time consuming.</li> </ul>

EPSP4 Pagination process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT: Skilled and creative paginators, technology and equipment, facilities, editorial content (stories, photographs, etc.), dummy pages] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES: Assemble text and visual elements into complete pages]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT: Complete digital newspaper pages]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most newspapers have a unique look or identity, although chain-owned newspapers might look similar. Identity is determined by the newspaper's design.</li> <li>• Unlike other products, newspapers have to continually change their appearance – different enough to attract readers, but not so different that identity is lost/blurred.</li> <li>• Once pages have been planned, the advertising and edited news stories and editorial material can be placed into fixed and numbered pages.</li> <li>• Pagination — designing pages using computer software — is the norm in small and large newsrooms.</li> <li>• Pagination involves putting the community newspaper together, i.e. the assembly of text, picture, and graphic elements into complete pages (page layout/make-up).</li> <li>• Page design process ideally involves mapping page on paper according to good layout principles while exercising news judgment to decide where to place stories and how much emphasis an individual story should have. The page is then assembled on the computer.</li> <li>• Paginators work according the specific newspaper's design style, which ensures that its identity is not compromised.</li> <li>• Once the pages are complete, they are printed and proofed as a final quality check. After corrections have been made, the complete digital package is ready to be plated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Layout/pagination quality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader-friendly layout that helps the reader to navigate a page (RC3).</li> <li>• Interesting, clear headlines (RC3).</li> <li>• Meaningful, simple yet attractive layout. Elements should complement each other and form a unit (RC4).</li> </ul> <p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case C “only” community newspaper with tabloid layout (RC3). Paper is in the process of further improving layout. News editor supervises paginators.</li> <li>• C: News editor plans paper, uses printed list of stories filed on network and hard copies of stories for this purpose. Paginator uploads stories/images from network folders. Journalists have to follow formatting guidelines (e.g. justification) to make process more efficient. Completed pages are proofed again.</li> <li>• D: editor plans the pages – content is categorized as hard news, community news, social news, business news and sport. Indicates which pages stories should be on. Pagination is done at group headoffice. Proofs are not sent back, unless specifically requested.</li> <li>• Case A/B: Production section responsible for pagination. Editors also help. Template is designed in such a way that staff can complete pagination in short amount of time. Does not allow a lot of creativity.</li> <li>• Pagination is a team effort (RC4): journalists have to lable text and photos correctly and copy should be edited before layout starts.</li> <li>• C also uses templates to streamline process. Pages are packaged in production section after final check to see that all ads are in place. Production sends pages to printers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy that is not ready for pagination in time, lack of variety of photographs that allows creative layout, poor quality photographs or photographs that have not been downloaded correctly cause delays a community newspaper can ill afford.</li> </ul>

Production	
The production function	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Editorial and advertising material, human resources (page designers, technical staff), equipment and technology, raw materials (ink, newsprint)] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Paginate editorial pages, place advertising, package digital pages, make printing plates, print newspaper]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Printed community newspaper]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes the highly computer-intensive prepress processes of pagination, platemaking, and printing. Although pagination is part of the production function, it takes place within the editorial function.</li> <li>Strict schedules, parallel prepress production using distributed and varied production systems, sequential duplication and press reproduction of the finished product characterise the modern newspaper production system.</li> <li>Computerised production techniques link the processes and systems. Technological advances have made it possible to manage the workflow electronically. Consequently, the production department in P2 was integrated into the editorial/advertising functions where pagination (SP2.3) now takes place.</li> <li>Many different printing methods are used, and in the case of community newspapers, these methods are often older. It is thus vital that community newspapers determine the exact requirements in the prepress phase to ensure a quality printed product. These include limitations where colour and image resolution are concerned.</li> <li>Advertisers who supply complete material to the community newspaper should also take the technological restrictions of the production process in the sector into account to ensure quality in the printed product.</li> <li>Newspaper printing presses are expensive, have to be imported and require technical expertise to run and maintain. Consequently, most community newspapers organisations outsource printing to larger commercial printers. Inefficient printers could compromise quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases outsource printing.</li> <li>C is printed at Paarl Coldpress and D is printed at the newspaper group's headoffice, both in locations approximately 150 km away.</li> <li>A and B are printed in the same town. The newspaper organization and the printer share ownership of the equipment. A "platpers" is used because it is more economical and is capable of printing large volumes.</li> <li>The fact that printing takes place off-site is not seen as problematic and delays are rarely a problem.</li> </ul>

SP2.4 Platemaking process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Equipment and technology, digital newspaper pages, human resources] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Transfer digital pages to printing plates]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Printing plates]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platemaking involves transferred digital data onto the printing plates before a newspaper can be printed.</li> <li>Film or a digital file can be used to produce a printing plate, depending on the available technology.</li> <li>Computer-to-plate (CTP) technology eliminates the need for film, because it digitally transfers the information directly to the plate.</li> </ul>	
SP3.1 Printing and finishing process - clarification	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT Equipment and technology, printing plates, human resources, raw materials (ink, newsprint)] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Transfer newspaper pages from plates onto paper, cutting and folding newspapers]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Printed community newspapers]     OUTPUT --&gt; FEEDBACK[FEEDBACK]     FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Printing is the process of transferring ink onto paper via a printing plate.</li> <li>Web offset printing, which is the major process in newspaper printing, is a technique that transfers ink from a plate to a blanket to paper instead of directly from plate to paper.</li> <li>During the finishing process, the paper is cut into sheets and folded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases lose control over product once it is sent of to the printer. However, quality checks are conducted (cases A, B, C) to (a) ensure quality of printed advertisements and (b) quality of editorial content.</li> <li>Communication is vital.</li> <li>D: Printing is done at headoffice. Sound process. Never had problems with quality of photos.</li> </ul>

Circulation and distribution	
The circulation and distribution function	Respondent input
 <pre> graph LR     INPUT[INPUT People (managers, staff), market (readers), information, facilities, technology and equipment] --&gt; PROCESSES[PROCESSES Market and sell newspapers, administrate circulation issues]     PROCESSES --&gt; OUTPUT[OUTPUT Sales and distribution network and information, distribution plan]     OUTPUT -- FEEDBACK --&gt; PROCESSES   </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper circulation is the barometer of newspaper vitality. The ability to secure readership relies on quality content.</li> <li>• There is no sense in producing a quality community newspaper if it does not reach its final destination.</li> <li>• Quality involves the consistent availability of the newspaper and few delivery errors.</li> <li>• Circulation/distribution is responsible for marketing, selling and distributing the newspaper to retailers and subscribers. Three main methods of distribution are described in the literature: single-copy sales, mail distribution and home delivery.</li> <li>• Smaller operation at community newspapers; distribution often relies on informal channels and is often outsourced.</li> <li>• Manages the circulation data of community newspapers.</li> <li>• Quality challenges: delays, adverse weather conditions, problems with packaging, subscription cancellations, lack of sound administrative and management procedures – including collecting money from carriers/vendors).</li> <li>• Planning and organising the weekly distribution of community newspapers from the printers to retailers/vendors and subscribers efficiently is vital to quality.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Circulation/distribution quality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability and accessibility (RA3).</li> </ul> <p><b>General comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulation and distribution is contracted out - cases A, B and C.</li> <li>• Outsourcing causes lack of control – could cause newspaper to not reach circulation goals. Complaints cannot be handled directly. Problems with external service provider forced newspaper C to employ a monitor to make sure the process is effective.</li> <li>• Cases A and B use small, local service provider and monitor the process closely. A weekly report is submitted to maintain quality control.</li> <li>• Case D handles circulation/distribution inhouse.</li> <li>• Distribution takes place through a locally created network – jobs are created in the process.</li> <li>• Carriers buy the newspapers from the organisation at a reduced price.</li> <li>• Most copies are sold through retail outlets (cafes and supermarkets) and street sales.</li> <li>• All newspapers have few subscribers, mostly not local people but readers who have moved and receive their papers through the postal system (specifically case D). Recruiting subscribers over the phone is not viable. Security measures exclude canvassing door-to-door.</li> <li>• Sales suffer during school holidays.</li> </ul>
<b>SP1.3 Circulation and distribution management process - clarification</b>	<b>Respondent input</b>

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and organising the weekly distribution of community newspapers from the printers to retailers/vendors and subscribers efficiently is vital to quality.</li> <li>• All processes need to be planned according to the delivery deadline.</li> <li>• Fixed plans ensure that the process run smoothly.</li> <li>• Subscriber databases need to be updated continuously, and changes and complaints taken into account promptly and transferred to the distributor. Planning is important to avoid over or undersupplying the distribution network and the market.</li> <li>• Circulation: address and order information has to be gathered, processed and forwarded to the printing plant and distribution organisation or section within the community newspaper organisation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SP4.1 Packaging and distribution process - clarification</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After printing and finishing, the newspapers are packaged/bundled and transported to the distributor (if this service is outsourced) or newspaper organisation, where the bundles are sorted according to the requirements of retailers and carriers in the distribution area.</li> <li>• Drivers transport the bundles to vendors and designated delivery points where carriers collect their bundles for distribution.</li> <li>• Subscribers can get their copies through the postal service, or delivered directly to their</li> </ul>	Respondent input

door through a network of carriers. A continuous flow of information is vital - devices such as cellular phones could improve communication in the distribution network.	
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