

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON RUSSO-UKRAINE WAR: A CASE STUDY OF *AL JAZEERA ENGLISH*

By

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B225799B

A Research Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Master of Science in International Relations Degree

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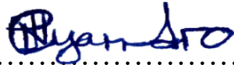
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ABSTRACT

The role of the media in conflict zones has been a topical issue across the world. The influence of the media has immensely increased and scholars are yet to reach consensus on the magnitude of the media influence in conflicts and conflict management. The aim of this research was to examine the impact of media on Russia-Ukraine War, with reference to *Al Jazeera English* satellite television channel. The study objectives were to outline the Russo-Ukraine conflict; to explore the coverage of Russia-Ukraine war by *Al Jazeera English*; to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as an international news channel and to suggest ways of improving media coverage on conflicts between nations States. Two media theories, namely the Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory were analysed to unpack the role of the media in international conflicts and to develop the conceptual framework. A qualitative research design and convenience sampling method with a sample size of 10 respondents was used in the study. Questionnaires and standardized interviews were used to obtain primary data from the respondents. The research findings were presented and analysed using tables and graphs. The study found out that *Al Jazeera English* played a critical role in informing the world about the Russo-Ukraine War. It was also established that *Al Jazeera English* fairly and objectively covered the conflict since its inception on 24 February 2022. The study found that the 24-hour television news network gave opportunity to newsmakers from both parties, Russia and Ukraine to express their thoughts and feelings without showing bias. The study recommends for the improved accessibility of international news channels by reducing monthly television subscriptions. The research also recommended for the intensified use of social media platforms by global news agencies to reach wide audience and equipping journalists with conflict reporting skills. The study further recommends for complete editorial independence of global news outlets and promotion of the safety of journalists in war zones.

DECLARATION


This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or any other award.

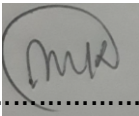
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I confirm that the candidate carried out the work reported in this dissertation under my supervision.

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APPROVAL FORM

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DEDICATION

This thesis is duly dedicated to the Almighty to whom I owe the gift of life. I also dedicate this dissertation to my wife Evelyn, sons Tanaka, Takudzwa and Tawananyasha who always gave me the encouragement and courage to soldier on during those difficult moments. Not forgetting my brothers and sisters who always render me their moral support. To you all, I say thank you and may the Lord bless you in abundance.

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LIST ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CGTN | China Global Television Network |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| DSTV | Digital Satellite Television |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ITS SETTINGS

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the historical background of the study, defines the problem as well as focusing on the impact of the media on Russia-Ukraine war: A case of *Al Jazeera English*. It is within this part of the project where the researcher spells out the assumptions attached to the project. The researcher also gives reference to some works of other researchers who did similar studies. Later in the chapter, the author highlights research tools and techniques that will be used to get to the conclusion.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Russia-Ukraine War

On February, 24, 2022, Russia launched a military attack on its neighbour, Ukraine following a long security and defence disputes. Russia's move shocked the entire world and was well publicised throughout the globe. A lot of armed personnel and civilians were killed and property was destroyed as a result of the war. The impact of the war did not only affect the socio-economic activities of the two concerned countries, but it shook the whole world trade including that of Europe and Africa. Russia received a wide condemnation from different parts of the international community mostly the United of America, Britain and their allies. On the other hand, countries such as China, North Korea and other African countries rally behind Russia as their long-time friend. Some countries went as far as imposing sanctions against Russia. Sanctions against Russia and war in Ukraine crippled the supply of wheat, oil, gas and others agricultural inputs.

According to Nagy and Beng (2022), Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most violent interstate conflict in the world since the second invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. Ivaldi and Zankina (2023) contend that the war has claimed tens of thousands of lives and caused hundreds of thousands more to flee while devastating Ukrainian infrastructure and wrecking the country's economy. The consequences of Russia's aggression have been felt far beyond Ukraine's borders. The financial sanctions on Russia, disruptions to supply chains, and general economic insecurity

have destabilised global energy markets and supply chains, causing food prices to soar (Boungou and Yatié, 2022).

Ivaldi and Zankina (2023) argue that the impact of the conflict has hit certain territories harder than others, depending on the region's closeness to the competition and reliance on Russian and Ukrainian exports. In Europe, this has meant an asymmetric effect on domestic economies relative to their dependence on Russian gas and Ukrainian grain. This has triggered a major slowdown in economic growth in the Eurozone and an energy crisis over the winter (Celi et al., 2022). In addition, some European countries have used a lot of resources to provide welfare assistance, temporary housing, and organisations to welcome refugees fleeing the conflict. The economic repercussions of the war have caused a looming recession as a result of the interconnected nature of the international economy.

1.2.2 The role of the media on the Russia-Ukraine War

The media plays a critical role in geopolitics. It is only through the media that we get to know about what is happening in and around the world. The primary functions of the media are to inform, educate, entertain and persuade the audience to act in a certain way. The aspect of ownership and control has a great impact on how the media report on certain global issues including conflicts between Nation States. Nasir (2013) claims that one of the major duties of media today is to inform the audience about the latest events around them and the world. They cover all aspects of our interest like weather, politics, war, health, finance, science, fashion and music. The need for more and more news has evolved into creation of dedicated television and radio channels and magazines. People can listen, watch and read latest news whenever and wherever they want (Nasir, 2013).

The media information has significant power as it can shape discussions about and reality of the war. In the aftermath of the initial invasion, international news organisations in various parts of the world covered the Russia-Ukraine war in drastically different lights. The Western media labelled the "special military operation" a "war crime" laden "unprovoked invasion" perpetrated by the Russian government (Phillip, 2022). Russian media organisations, in turn, have largely denied any war crimes, placing fault for the necessity of the "special military operation" on Western countries. Media is the overseer of the political system and if it plays its role honestly, it

will be a great force in building the nation. It plays a great role in bringing common man close to their leaders. The media focuses in bringing details of all major political situations, decisions and scenarios. Hence people can better understand their rights and make better decisions (Nasir, 2013).

Chutel (2014) posits that the media's role is to disseminate accurate and objective information about particular phenomena but the media itself is rarely an objective institution. In international relations, the media exists as a non-state actor, able to exert power through its representation, reinforcement and the possibility to challenge the narrative of a particular conflict or intervention. The media's description of such international relations phenomena, its interpretation of events and even the decision to highlight one issue over another show that the media is a contested space. The power of the media in this geopolitical arena is seen as a post-modern interpretation of an eighteenth century phenomenon in which non-state actors such as professionals and academics challenged the established system of governance and fiscal management in central Europe and whose ideas shifted power and gave way to new systems and policies of government (Chutel, 2014).

Chutel (2014) argues that the media serves as one of the main sources of information for the public on issues in international relations and thereby serve to bear witness to events and bring the public's attention to particular occurrences and in turn to spark and ventilate debate that would otherwise have happened behind closed doors among political elites (Hill, 2003). In the case of humanitarian disasters or conflicts, the role of the media is aimed at bringing attention to human suffering with the intention of encouraging the public and policy makers to call for change. In the newsroom, the aim of coverage of instances of violence and suffering are meant to simplify a complex international incident without trivialising human suffering while also bringing to the fore key political questions about these events (Seaton in Thussu and Freedman, 2003).

1.2.3 *Al Jazeera English* and the Russo-Ukraine War

Al Jazeera English is a global 24-hour news and current affairs channel. It is headquartered in Doha, Qatar, with broadcast centres in London and Washington DC and more than 70 bureaus worldwide. It is owned by the monarchy government of Qatar. Al Jazeera was launched in 1996

and it is inspired to putting the human story at the forefront of the news agenda. On November 15, 2006, the *Al Jazeera* Media Network launched *Al Jazeera's* first 24-hour television news channel in English. *Al Jazeera English* is the first English-language news channel to be headquartered in Western Asia. This significant step furthered their objective to advance from the category of regional ethnic media providers in the Middle East to that of major international news networks, and the network became the world's first English-language news channel to have its headquarters in the Middle East (Samuel-Azran, 2017). *Al Jazeera English's* international footprint continues to grow, now reaching more than 430 million households on 6 continents in more than 150 countries. *Al Jazeera* is now one of the largest and most influential international news networks in the world (Media Network website, 2023). *Al Jazeera* is one of the leading global news channels that have been extensively covering events since the launch of Russia's military operations in Ukraine.

1.3 Statement of problem

The Russia-Ukraine War has been a topical issue since its inception on February, 24, 2022. The conflict between the two neighbouring countries drew the attention of international news organisations because of the two nation states' contribution to the international trade. Both local and global media organisations thrive on where there is controversy and conflict. Most media organisations believe that people are normally interested in stories that involve conflict, tension or public debate. According to Chutel (2014), the media's role is to disseminate accurate and objective information about particular phenomena but the media itself is rarely an objective institution. In international relations, the media exists as a non-state actor, able to exert power through its representation, reinforcement and the possibility to challenge the narrative of a particular conflict or intervention. The media's interpretation of events and the decision to highlight one issue over another show that the media is a contested space (Chutel, 2014).

Global news agencies such as Sky News, Cable News Network (CNN), France 24 International, China Global Television Network (CGTN), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Russia Today and *Al Jazeera* have different views on who is wrong or right in as far as Russia-Ukraine war is concerned. The Russia-Ukraine war has generally divided the whole world into two rival camps, those who sympathise with Ukraine and those who justify Russia's offensive attack against its neighbour. Both Russia and Ukraine are using the media to defend their ideologies.

Al Jazeera English is one of the leading global news channels that have been extensively covering events since the launch of Russia's military operations in Ukraine. As a giant international news agency with several bureaus and news reporters dotted across the world and wider viewership, its contribution cannot be ignored. The study is anchored on the fact that global media organisations pursue different agendas to achieve different goals. The media reportage can promote peace or hatred among nation States. This research therefore evaluates the impact of the media on Russia-Ukraine war focusing on how *Al Jazeera English* has been reporting on the conflict. No recent study has focused much on this topic particularly on the impact of *Al JazeeraEnglish* on Russia-Ukraine conflict.

1.4 Research aim

The research aims to assess the impact of the media coverage on the Russo-Ukraine War.

1.5 Research objectives

The research seeks to;

- 1.4.1 Outline the Russo-Ukraine conflict.
- 1.4.2 Explore the coverage of Russia-Ukraine war by Al Jazeera English.
- 1.4.3 Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of Al Jazeera as an international news channel.
- 1.4.4 Suggest ways of improving media coverage on conflicts between nations States.

1.6 Central research question

What is the impact of the media coverage on the Russo-Ukraine War?

1.7 Research questions

- 1.7.1 What are causes of the Russia-Ukraine War?
- 1.7.2 How did *Al Jazeera* cover the Russia-Ukraine war?
- 1.7.3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as a global news channel?
- 1.7.4 How can the media improve the coverage of international conflicts?

1.8 Justification of the study

1.9 The findings of the research will be useful to international relations scholars, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international Trade and international news organisations.

1.8.1 International relations academics

Students and other scholars who are undertaking international relations studies at universities and colleges will make use of the research outcome as a source of reference in their studies. Academics will have a better appreciation of the effects of the media as non-state actor on Russia-Ukraine war.

1.8.2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

As the ministry responsible for foreign affairs, it can use the research results to have an insight on the impact of the media on wars between nation States. The ministry may take advantage of the research findings to know the strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as global media entity.

1.8.3 Global television news channels

International news agencies that are operating in different parts of the world can benefit from the research findings since they will get relevant information on the effectiveness of international news channels. They will also get information on the weaknesses, strengths of international news organisations and ways of improving the operations of global news outlets in report international disputes.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The research is centred on the impact of *Al Jazeera English* on Russia-Ukraine war. The study gives emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of international news channels in covering international disputes. The study mainly focuses on the coverage of Russia-Ukraine war by the global news organisation during the period February 2022 to June 2023. The study does not focus much on other conflicts other than Russia-Ukraine War.

Map 1: Russia-Ukraine map



Source: International Chamber of Shopping (2020)

1.10 Definition of key terms

1.10.1 Geopolitics the study of the effects of economic geography on the powers of the state.

1.10.2 Global Media includes television, newspapers, radio, social media and all forms of mass communication that reach every corner of the world (Islam, 2022).

1.10.3 Impact a forceful consequence or strong effect.

1.10.4 Television an electronic communication medium that allows the transmission of real-time visual images and sound.

1.10.5 War organised armed conflict between countries or national groups

1.11 Chapter summary

This chapter touched on various issues ranging from the background of Russia-Ukraine war, the role of the media, history of *Al Jazeera English*, delimitations and limitations of the study. The author outlined research objectives, questions as well as the significance of the study. Specific area of study and key terms were also defined in this chapter. The next chapter will give emphasis on the literature review which is a foundation to the research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research problem and its settings. This chapter reviews the literature related to the topic: The impact of the media on the Russo-Ukraine War, a case of *Al Jazeera English*. Das (2022) defines a literature review as a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organisational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. He claims that literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period. The literature review is a written overview of major writings and other sources on a selected topic. Sources covered in the review may include scholarly journal articles, books, government reports and Web sites. The literature review provides a description, summary and evaluation of each source (Das, 2022). This research is informed by the agenda setting and Framing theories of media studies. The chapter concludes with the analysis of identified gaps in the reviewed literature.

The literature was reviewed under themes derived from the research objectives and questions. These themes are;

2.1.1 The Russo-Ukraine conflict.

2.1.2 The *Al Jazeera* coverage of the Russia-Ukraine War.

2.1.3 The strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as a global news channel.

2.1.4 Ways of improving media coverage of international conflicts.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study is guided by the Agenda Setting and Framing theories. The research discusses various theories that assist the author in analysing the role of the media on the Russo-Ukraine. Although these theories can be used to assess the impact of mass media messages in general, particular attention is given to the influence of media on international conflicts focusing on Russo-Ukraine War.

2.2.1 Agenda setting theory

The key assumptions of the agenda setting theory are anchored on the fact that the messages in the media have the effect of setting an agenda or “structuring issues” for people in societies, and this is a long-term process (Kwaramba, 2000). This theory was developed in the context of election campaigns and in situations where politicians seek to convince voters as to what are the most important issues. The theory assumes that the media play an important role in determining who is important, where important things happen, why things are important. For example, in our international news bulletin, news is almost always what officials are doing, where and why. The issues that are regarded as topical and important are the ones that the media give attention to. Kwaramba (2000) also opines that this theory proposes that the social agenda is derived from a combination of opinion and political choice.

2.2.1.1 Relevance of the Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory explains the effects of media in general on international issues. Since most people rely on the media as the prime source of information, the theory is still relevant even in our today’s lives. The agenda-setting role of the media has since been either celebrated or vilified by media scholars depending on what role it served. Wright (1986) contends that agenda-setting is when some public issue becomes a topic for mass media attention giving it the appearance of importance and making it salient to the public. Likewise, matters that are not given much attention by the mass media are regarded as unimportant. Agenda setting theory posits that the audience subconsciously becomes more interested in those issues given prominence by the media. For example, if headlines of global television channel highlight talks about Russo-Ukraine War, then this issue is likely to be seen as important news item hence the audience will concentrate on it. (Kenyah, 2004).

2.2.1.2 Weaknesses of the Agenda Setting Theory

However, the theory does not consider whether the print and other forms of mass media actually manage to influence public opinion about those issues as the mere act of raising awareness on an issue is not the same thing as imparting new knowledge or skills about the issue. By placing certain social issues on the public’s agenda, the media define what people should think about but not necessarily how they should think about it. The agenda setting theory does not explain the

influence of non-political media messages. The theory ignores the fact that the media message receivers in some cases challenge the contents of the media messages. The audience is not given the opportunity to contribute to the content of the messages. The theory gives more power to the media messages and it regards the audience as passive. This research takes a close look at the impact of the media on the Russo-Ukraine War.

Agenda setting theory is very relevant in assessing the impact of the media on Russo-Ukraine War as it reveals how the media organisations give prominence to some global issues at the expense of other news stories. Since the launch of military operations in Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, most global media organisations including *Al Jazeera English* placed Russo-Ukraine War at the top of their agendas. The causes and justification of the war have been reported from different perspectives depending on the agenda of individual media entities. Pro-Russia media international media organisations have been reporting in favour of Russia whereas western media has been condemning Russia for being aggressive to its neighbour.

2.2.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory that was developed by Robert Entman (1993) suggests that the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of international events and issues by selecting certain aspects of reality to highlight as well as organising and interpreting information. He urges that the media creates a narrative or framework for understanding. This process influences public opinion, decision-making, and ultimately, international affairs. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), Framing Theory submits that the media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing international relations by selecting certain aspects of reality and highlighting them in a way that influences how audiences think about issues. The media also sets agenda by prioritizing certain issues or topics, which in turn, affects what people consider important. Both the print and broadcast media influence how people evaluate and make decisions about international events and issues by activating certain mental frameworks or associations

2.2.2.1 Relevance of Framing Theory

The key assumptions of the Framing Theory dovetail with how most global television news channels have been reporting on Russo-Ukraine. Because of the extensive coverage of the conflict by the many international news agencies, television news viewers have been exposed to

the wide reportage of Russo-Ukraine War. Resultantly, the audience will end up being obsessed with the “television world” view as opposed to reality. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) argue that the media's framing of international events and issues can influence public opinion and attitudes towards other countries, leaders, and policies. The Framing Theory helps to understand how the international media shape people's perceptions of international conflicts, crises, and diplomacy between nation states like Russo-Ukraine war. The theory suggests that the media affects how people evaluate the effectiveness of foreign policy decisions and has a direct impact on public's willingness to support or oppose military intervention, foreign aid, or other international initiatives. Overall, Framing Theory claims that the media plays in shaping public opinion and influencing international relations through framing, agenda-setting, and priming.

2.2.2.2 Weaknesses of Framing Theory

While framing theory is useful in assessing the impact of media on people's behaviours and attitudes, it is not without its criticism and limitations. While Framing Theory offers valuable insights into the media's influence on public opinion and international relations, it also has some weaknesses. The theory oversimplifies complex international issues, neglecting nuances and multiple perspectives. It was also noted by some scholars that the Framing Theory focuses on the media's framing effects whilst overlooking the broader social, political, and cultural context in which media consumption occurs. It implies a passive audience, neglecting how individuals actively interpret and resist media frames. The Framing Theory doesn't fully address how competing frames interact and evolve over time. The theory does not address the issue of changing media landscape and digital platforms' role in shaping international relations.

2.3 Review of related literature

Guevarra (2012) claims that literature review provides researchers with a handy guide to a particular topic. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), literature review assists researchers to generate and select a research topic, expand their understanding and widen their knowledge and perspective of the topic and at the same time arrive at researchable and well-defined questions for research. The purpose of a literature review is to analyse the literature surrounding a certain research topic. The word “literature” means sources of information. Literature review

also informs the researcher about the studies that have already been made within a particular area under discussion.

Carrying out a literature review also informs the researcher of the influential scholars and research groups in the field. Randolph (2009) opines that literature provides a roadmap for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion section of the research. Without reviewing the previous research, it is difficult to establish how the new research advances the previous efforts. According to Fry (2014), literature review serves the purpose of creating familiarity with current thinking and research on a particular subject, and may justify future research into a previously overlooked area.

According to Taylor and Procter (2008), a literature review summarises, interprets, and critically evaluates existing "literature" or published material in order to establish current knowledge of a subject. For them, the purpose for doing so relates to ongoing research to develop that knowledge. The literature review may resolve a controversy, establish the need for additional research and define a topic of inquiry. A literature review also defines and limits the problem the researcher is working on, places the study in an historical perspective and avoids unnecessary duplication. Literature review evaluates promising research methods and relates the findings to previous knowledge and suggests further research.

Lang and Heiss (1994) observes reasons why reviewing related literature may prove beneficial to researchers. Literature review can introduce the researcher to new approaches towards solving problem and assist researchers to delimit the problem. It helps researchers to avoid errors in planning their study, provides new ideas to the researcher and acquaints the research with new sources of information.

There are various sources of information which can be used by researchers in the literature review. These sources include indices, bibliographies, professional conferences, online publications, journal articles, edited collections, reviews and books. The researcher in this research project consulted published material such as books, journals, and online publications. The researcher also used published works on the impact of media on the Russo-Ukraine War.

2.3.1 The Russo-Ukraine conflict

According to Chiwodza (2014), a number of factors can cause conflict and these may include individual differences in nature, attitudes, ideals, interests and aspirations can cause conflict. He further argues that conflicts can also arise when people are competing for the same resources such as territory, housing and natural resources-cultivable land, fresh water when they are not distributed fairly or when there are not enough to go round. Conflicts can also arise when the people are unhappy with how they are governed, for example, when a particular group wants to be independent from a central government, or when their viewpoint is not represented in government, or when the government oppresses them and does not respect or meet their basic needs (Chiwodza, 2014).

Furthermore, conflicts arise when people's beliefs clash. The beliefs can be political or religious. Moreover, ethnic differences can cause conflict, or be made to cause it. Again, people's ethnicity gives them a sense of identity and belonging, and it is the threat to this sense of belonging which can cause violent responses (Chiwodza, 2014). Although Chiwodza (2014) highlights the causes of conflicts at individual and community level, he does not clearly explain the sources and causes of international conflicts. He also ignores defence and security issues as another source of international conflict.

On the 24th February 2022, the world witnessed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a war erupted between two neighbouring countries. This event was shocking, newsworthy and well publicised throughout the world. Media information has considerable power because it can shape discussions about and, to a certain extent, reality of the war. In the aftermath of the initial invasion, media outlets in various parts of the world covered the war in drastically different lights. The Western press characteristically labeled the "special military operation" a "war crime" laden "unprovoked invasion" perpetrated by the Russian government (Phillip, 2022). Russian outlets, in turn, have largely denied any war crimes, placing fault for the necessity of the "special military operation" on Western countries (Thompson & Myers 2022). African as well as South East Asian countries very quickly called for more dialogues among relevant sides to seek a peaceful solution for the Ukraine-Russia conflict. According to Nagy and Beng (2022), Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most violent interstate conflict in the world since the second invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

2.3.2 Functions of media in international conflicts

Gilboa (2007) suggests that the media plays increasingly more significant roles in contemporary international conflicts. Scholars have argued that global television networks now determine policy towards conflict, and even foreign policy of great powers. They call this phenomenon the "CNN Effect." According to Gilboa (2007), the media and international conflicts have dramatically changed, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Scholars have also lagged behind and have produced little insight into the effects and roles of the media in international conflicts. International relations scholars often ignore the media, while communications scholars often ignore the relevant and useful literature produced by international relations experts (Gilboa, 2007).

In order to understand the role of media in conflict management, it is important to explore various ways through which media influence conflict and conflict management. Newbold (1995) contends that majority of scholars and researchers have concentrated on the role of media in economic, social and political issues affecting states with little attention being given to conflicts. He further reveals that media impact on conflict management is an emerging area that has been under studied due to lack of multidisciplinary models and concepts that would view media's role from peace and conflict realm. The media has a very complex role to play that is often taken for granted by political decision-makers and the military. Statements claiming the media's impressive effects are often heard from decision-makers. Political practitioners, and even researchers, most often assume the effect of news media in political conflicts (Chebii, 2014).

Chebii (2014) asserts that television has been considered to be the most important source of news for the public and possibly, the most powerful influence on public opinion. Television coverage is thus a powerful influence in problem recognition, which in turn helps to shape the foreign policy agenda. But television does not necessarily dictate policy responses (Gowing, 1994). The media does not necessarily express the wants and vision of the public. More often, it serves to shape their wants. Therefore, if governors do react to the media in a direct fashion, they move even further away from public opinion than they might be otherwise. Chebii (2014) also argues that the media can serve to shape both public opinion and government policy, but need not do either so blatantly and thoughtlessly. As well, the media should not be relied upon for influence on either party, as its resources are limited, and so is the breadth of its attention, perhaps even

more so than the general public (Chebii, 2014). The media also serves as one of the main source of information for the public on issues in international relations and thereby serve to bear witness to events and bring the public's attention to particular occurrences and in turn to spark and ventilate debate that would otherwise have happened behind closed doors among political elites (Hill, 2003).

Chawodza (2014) argues that the media has a number of functions in international conflict including, awareness, learning, initiation, mobilisation, legitimacy, confidence building, dramatisation, realistic expectations and positive balance. However, the media has a number of dysfunctions in international conflict including apprehension, preclusion, blocking, creating opposition, illegitimacy, confidence destruction, over dramatisation, high expectations and negative balance (Chawodza, 2014).

2.3.3 The strengths of the media in conflict management

The media plays an import role in managing international conflicts. Puddephatt (2006) argues that the growing recognition of the crucial role the media can play in helping provoke conflict has led many to examine how the media can play a constructive role in resolving conflict. In order to explain the conflict in terms that are comprehensible, the media must have the ability to operate freely and without threat and with the capacity to report on all aspects of the conflict. While policy makers have a role in providing the circumstances in which the media can operate, a high responsibility falls on journalists and editors themselves (Puddephatt, 2006). The following are strengths of the media in handling international conflicts.

2.3.3.1 Extensive coverage of the conflict

2.3.3.2 Media as a platform for dialogue

2.3.3.1 Extensive coverage of international conflicts

According to Puddephatt (2006), international media organisations like *Al Jazeera English* have vastly more resources than local media, although market pressure in a globalised media environment means that many media organisations are cutting the number of specialised foreign reporters they employ with two consequences. One is that local journalists are often employed to cover conflicts without the same protection or salary that would be provided to an international

employee. Secondly, in a competitive environment, media organisations tend to play safe and stick with the herd so that all the media focus on one conflict at a time. Which conflict is covered bears little relationship to its scale or long-term significance (Puddephatt, 2006). *AlJazeera English* has hundreds of news reporters that report from different parts of the world and it has been extensively covering Russo-Ukraine War.

2.3.3.2 Media as a platform for dialogue

Media can create a room for dialogue between conflicting parties. Puddephatt (2006) posits that the international media has also allowed itself to become an actor in a number of the conflicts. This was most noticeable in the Bosnian wars where the volume of coverage for a particular incident was linked to the subsequent escalation in the scale of intervention. Arsenault et al (2011) postulate that media platforms provide a platform for dialogue among disagreeing parties and a critical source for information about available services and potential threats. They further argue that recognising media's heightened importance in conflict environments, governmental organisations, Non-governmental Organisations, multilateral organisations, broadcasters, and community activists have expanded their efforts to use the media to prevent, manage, and reconcile conflicts. Just as conflict environments are heterogeneous, so, too, are these media interventions. They vary from context to context and are differentiated by function, form, and audience. Media programmes include establishing or supporting radio and television stations, conducting press and regulatory training, international broadcasting efforts, and other issue-specific media outreach initiatives (Arsenault et al, 2011).

2.3.4 Weaknesses of the media in international conflict management

The media, whether local or international, will always face a considerable challenge in trying to cover conflict. There will inevitably be commercial pressure to focus on the immediate, most violent or dramatic incidents, at the expense of explaining the background and issues that may underpin the conflict. Media has its own downside in covering conflicts including the Russo-Ukraine War and other international conflicts. The following are weaknesses of the media in covering international conflicts.

2.3.4.1 Media as a catalyst of conflict

2.3.4.2 Imbalanced media coverage of international conflicts

2.3.4.1 Media as a catalyst of conflict

The media in conflict-ridden countries can play a critical role in promoting both facilitating factors and triggering factors linked to internal and external threats facing the nation. According to Terzis and Melone (2002), media can create divisions by not reflecting pluralism in the social and political structures. This could be achieved by contributing to the creation of an informed critical citizenry within a country by acting as a mouthpiece for ethnic power circles. Thus, she concluded that a deliberate distortion of news coverage for particular interests easily exacerbates the tension between opposed factions and becomes a major trigger of violent conflicts (Chebii, 2014). Instead of promoting peace, some international media organisations such as the Sky News, Cable News Network (CNN) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) contributed to widening of differences between Russia and Ukraine.

Dimitrova et al (2005) suggest that the media can select to focus on the destruction of war as opposed to freedom from tyranny, can frame the event as an invasion versus attack, can emphasise the victims versus invaders, and can highlight a positive versus negative attitude toward the war. Media may also play negative roles by creating new values and guiding the public to adopt them, resulting in cultural conflicts between conservatives and believers in the new concepts. The media is crucial in reproducing ideology and there would be no globalisation without media and communications. It is within the scope of this study to proffer ways of improving the effectiveness of the media as a non-state actor in combating conflicts.

Chutel (2014) suggests that in the case of humanitarian disasters or conflicts, the role of the media is aimed at bringing attention to human suffering with the intention of encouraging the public and policy makers to call for change. In the newsroom, the aim of coverage of instances of violence and suffering are meant to simplify a complex international incident without trivialising human suffering while also bringing to the fore key political questions about these events (Seaton in Thussu and Freedman, 2003). According to Howard (2002), the media role in conflict and war is not straightforward. He opines that the media is a double-edged sword and it can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or disinformation that manipulate public sentiment. It has been argued that the media has become a

weapon employed in conflicts; for some scholars, it has become an arm used by armies (Chutel, 2014).

2.3.4.2 Imbalanced media coverage of international conflicts

Apart from escalating conflicts, some global media organisations broadcast unbalanced news stories that mislead the audience. According to Ahmad (2023), well-known international media organisations like BBC, New York Times, Sky News and Fox News often present a one-sided view that highlights Russia's alleged aggression and portrays Ukrainian forces as heroes, who is defending their motherland against the tyrant regime. On the other hand, coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lacks in-depth analysis and fails to shed light on the complex issues and humanitarian consequences involved. These media outlets are providing round-the-clock coverage of the Ukraine conflict from the battleground. However, when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, they often limit their coverage to mere seconds or a few lines, accompanied by biased information (Ahmad, 2023).

Ahmad (2023) argues that by providing only partial information, international media organisations risk distorting the reality on the ground and hindering a global understanding of the situation. The imbalanced coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian War and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict raises significant questions about media bias and its impact on public perception. Selective reportage of events, lack of accountability for human rights violations, and incomplete information contribute to a twisted narrative that fails to capture the complexities and nuances of both conflicts. It is crucial for media outlets to strive for balanced reporting, giving a voice to all affected parties and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of these global issues (Ahmad, 2023).

2.3.5 Ways of improving media coverage of international conflicts

To improve media's reportage of international conflicts, global media organisations should adopt the following strategies;

2.3.4.1 Organising media events

2.3.4.2 Media as diplomatic space

2.3.4.3 Use of new media technologies to reach wide audience

2.3.5.1 Organising media events

Global media outlets can make use of media events for peacebuilding. Bratic and Schirch (2007) claim that media events can be used at the beginning of negotiations to build confidence, facilitate negotiations or break diplomatic deadlocks to create a climate conducive to negotiation. They also contend that media events such as press releases, rock concerts, or radio programs can celebrate peace agreements and negotiations. Bratic and Schirch (2007) suggest that the media events may help to promote and mobilise public support for agreements. The media has influence on policymakers, particularly as they think about how to prevent and respond to violent conflict. The media is also a tool of policymakers to get across their message. Some theorists even claim that Cable News Network (CNN) has taken over policymaking, at least in humanitarian disaster situations. Images on CNN of genocide, famine, and violence force policymakers to intervene militarily to stop death, even if they do not think it is in the best interest of their country to adopt this policy. In Bosnia, for example, the media played a very important role in motivating the public to press their policymakers to intervene to stop the aggression (Bratic and Schirch, 2007).

2.3.5.2 Media as diplomatic space

Media can be used as platforms of diplomatic initiatives for the contesting parties. According to Bratic and Schirch (2007), the media can also be used to promote positive relationships between groups, particularly in conflicts over national, ethnic, religious identity. They contend that sometimes the media is used to cover diplomatic initiatives and send messages back and forth between sides of a conflict. While policymakers usually prefer secret negotiations, sometimes there are no direct channels of communication. If one side wants to test reactions to a negotiation proposal, they may send signals and messages to other groups through the media. At times, the news media will invite leaders of opposing groups or nations onto a television or radio program to talk with each other. The media may help to create bridges among enemies and build confidence needed to open negotiations (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). For example, Russia and Ukraine have been using the media to communicate messages on peace talks.

2.3.5.3 Use of new media technologies to reach wide audience

In addition to traditional media, international media organisations such as *Al Jazeera* and Cable News Network (CNN) have harnessed the use of new media technologies to reach wide audience. Gilboa (2007) notes that a revolution in communication and information technologies has altered media coverage and intervention in international conflict. He further reveals that the revolution created a global capability to broadcast live almost every significant development in world events and it created and expanded the Internet. These changes have led to the globalisation of electronic communication and to substantial growth in networks, stations and communication consumers worldwide. Websites and web logs can provide state and non-state actors, as well as individuals, with endless opportunities to exchange and debate events and processes. Any analysis of the media's roles in international conflict must address both the traditional media and the new media. Very little research has been conducted on the functions of the new media (Gilboa, 2007). Global media organisations such *Al Jazeera* and Sky News are also using new technologies to reach wide audience and provide news stories in real time.

According to Chutel (2014), the media's role is to disseminate accurate and objective information about particular phenomena but the media itself is rarely an objective institution. In international relations, the media exists as a non-state actor, able to exert power through its representation, reinforcement and the possibility to challenge the narrative of a particular conflict or intervention. Chutel (2014) also argues that the media's description of international relations phenomena, its interpretation of events and even the decision to highlight one issue over another show that the media is a contested space.

2.4 Gaps in the reviewed literature vis-à-vis the theoretical framework

Unlike other previous works that focus on the role of media in general in covering international conflicts, this research narrows its focus on the impact of *Al Jazeera English* television channel on Russo-Ukraine War and its contribution towards peace building. This study also focuses on identifying strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera English* in promoting peace in Ukraine. The researcher also noted that most theories and previous studies discussed on the role of media in general without narrowing focus on the impact of global television networks on international conflicts. Even those who studied on the impact of the media on international conflicts focused

on other issues that exclude Russo-Ukraine conflict. Some of the previous findings are no longer relevant to the modern world since they were established before the advent of new media technologies.

The researcher also noted that some of the theories such as the Framing Theory and Agenda Setting Theory are not objective since they view media consumers as passive audience. The media and international conflicts have dramatically changed, particularly since the end of the Cold War. International relations scholars have also lagged behind and have produced little insight into the effects and roles of the media in international conflicts. International relations scholars often ignore the media, while communications scholars often overlook the relevant and useful literature produced by international relations experts (Gilboa, 2007). Unlike previous studies which were done outside Zimbabwe, this research includes some Zimbabwean media and international experts as sources. This study therefore intends to fill the identified gaps in literature.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter defined the term literature review and explored the purpose of literature review when undertaking research projects. It was highlighted that the major aim of carrying out literature review is to assist researchers to generate and select a research topic, expand their understanding and broaden their knowledge and perspective of the topic. Literature review also enables the researcher to arrive at a researchable and well-defined question for the research. Media theories like the Agenda Setting and Framing theories were also analysed in this chapter. The researcher discussed previous works of various scholars who studied on the impact the media on international conflicts. It was noted that although efforts were made by some researchers to evaluate the role of the media on international conflicts, no much effort was made to evaluate the impact of television on Russo-Ukraine War. Moreover, the majority of these previous studies were conducted outside Zimbabwe without direct influence and relevance to local people. Unlike some of the reviewed literature which looked on the impact of the media on international conflicts, this study touches on the impact of *Al Jazeera English* on Russia-Ukraine. The next chapter focuses on research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature related on the impact of the media on international conflicts. This chapter presents the research designs and instruments used in this research during the course of the study. According to Musingafi and Guzura (2015), a research methodology is a collection of approaches and techniques used in carrying out a study. They further argue that research methodology is the overall strategy employed by the researcher to conduct research. Research methods are the apparatus within this overall study plan (Musingafi and Guzura, 2015). This chapter also highlights the sampling methods and population size used in this study. The chapter describes the study area and discusses the research design used, state and explain the data sources used in the analyses, explain the sampling and methods used in data collection. It is in this chapter where the researcher discusses the kind of data that was collected and the collection methods. Data collection methods and the type of analysis done to produce the results that has provided answers to the study research questions were also presented in this chapter.

3.2 Research philosophy

The selection of an appropriate paradigm lays the ground for the intent, inspiration and expectations of research. Philosophy is concerned with views about how the world works and, as an academic subject, focuses primarily on reality, knowledge and existence. According to Rao (2018), philosophical underpinning is important in research as this leads to investigation as per a specific paradigm. Every subject domain has a dominant paradigm in which the research is carried out. Khun (1962) defines a paradigm as a particular way of thinking that is shared by a community of scientists in solving problems in their field or commitments, values, beliefs and outlooks shared across a discipline. The researcher used constructivism philosophical assumptions during the course of the study. Creswell and Clark (2011) contend that constructivism is typically associated with qualitative methods and literary and informal rhetoric in which the researcher relies as much as possible on the participants' view and develops subjective meanings of the phenomena. Constructivist research is shaped from the bottom up,

that is, from individual perspectives to broad patterns, and ultimately to broad understandings (Creswell and Clark 2011).

3.3 Research approach

Research approach is a general plan and procedure of conducting a study (Dudovskly, 2022). The approach for the research can be divided into three categories namely deductive, inductive and abductive approach. Deductive approach tests the validity of assumptions in hand whereas inductive approach contributes to the emergence of new theories and generalisations. Abductive approach starts with surprising facts and the research process is devoted to their explanation. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used inductive approach to analyse the impact of the media on Russia-Ukraine War.

3.3.1 Inductive approach

Dudovskly (2022) posits that inductive approach does not involve formulation of hypotheses. It begins with research questions, aims and objectives that need to be achieved during the research process. Inductive approach focuses on finding answers to the research questions. Answers that are established at the end of the research process will imply generating a new theory related to the research problem. The researcher used inductive approach to evaluate the role of the media in international conflict management

3.4 Research designs

Adopting an appropriate research design is one of the key elements of the research. Creswell (2009) defines research design as plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It involves the intersection of philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods. Research design provides information on what data is required and data collection methods to be used in the research. The researcher should choose data collection methods that fit the nature of the research and answer the research questions. Different research designs are used for different types of studies. Harwell (2011) opines that research design reflects the whole research process from conceptualising a problem to the literature review, research questions, methods and findings. Research design, in other studies, refers only to the methodology of a research which

includes data collection and analysis (Harwell, 2011). The research design also provides essential components of the study. Masuku (1999) defines research designing as a process of planning and organising the components which constitute the research study. The researcher in this study used qualitative research approach so as to fetch as much information as possible.

3.4.1 Qualitative research

MacDonald and Headlam (2008) postulate that qualitative is concerned with a quality of information, qualitative methods attempt to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for actions and establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them. Qualitative research methods provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas and hypotheses. Qualitative design is an approach which gives attention to the feeling and reactions of people concerning a certain research problem. Hiatt (1986) argues that qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, views and thoughts of respondents. Qualitative research studies things in their natural state and it attempts to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). According to Harwell (2011), qualitative research is a process that allows a detailed exploration of a topic of interest in which information is gathered through case studies, ethnographic work and interviews.

Bolarinwa (2006) postulates that qualitative research describes what is done or what has been done and reveals the story around events, occurrences and practices. In qualitative research design, theory and conceptual insights are extracted from data collection rather than prior to it (Musingafi and Guzura (2015). Qualitative methods are more interpretative, historical, and ethnographic than quantitative approaches (Musingafi and Guzura, 2015). According to Hancock (1998), qualitative research techniques are anchored on developing explanations of social events. The focus of qualitative research design is to understand the world in which people live and why things are the way they are.

According to Masuku (1999), in qualitative design, information is collected from its direct sources, in its natural setting and the researcher is the key data collector. The researcher should be at the scene of action in order to get accurate first-hand information. He further argues that in qualitative research, data is collected in the form of words or pictures than numbers. Analysis of

information in qualitative research remains as much as possible to the form in which it was recorded during the data collection process. Qualitative research gives prominence to the process at the expense of outcomes of the research project. Qualitative research is also not based on hypotheses but findings are derived from the analysis of the relevant data (Masuku, 1999).

Kothari (2004) argues that qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis. Generally, the techniques of focus group interviews, projective techniques and depth interviews are used (Kothari, 2004). Advantages of using qualitative research design include the fact that information is gathered from few individuals therefore findings cannot be spread to larger populations and the researcher has a clear vision on what to expect from the study. In this research, the researcher adopted qualitative research to interview international relations and media experts from Zimbabwe. Qualitative research technique is more premised on the 'why' part of the research questions rather than on 'what', 'when' and 'how' question.

However, qualitative research has its own shortcomings that should be taken into consideration by researchers when carrying out their studies. Atieno (2009) claims that the main disadvantage of qualitative research is the fact that its findings cannot be extended to wider population with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analysis can. This is because the results of the study are not tested to assess whether they are statistically significant or not. The credibility of study findings relies on the skills of the researcher and can be easily influenced by personal biases of the researcher. The presence of the researcher in the process of data collection can influence responses from the participants. In addition, issues of confidentiality and anonymity can negatively affect the research findings as some of the respondents are likely to supply false information taking advantage of anonymity. The researcher in this study adopted qualitative design since the point was to assess respondents' perspectives and feelings over the impact of international relations and media experts on how *Al Jazeera English* has been covering Russo-Ukraine War. The researcher used the interview as a tool to gather information which is in line with the parameters of the research problem.

3.5 Research population and sample

In this part of the project, the researcher explains how participants in the study were selected and the sampling methods used to identify the suitable respondents.

3.5.1 Targeted population

Sampling is related with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a population to estimate the characteristics of whole population. The two main advantages of sampling are the faster data collection and lower cost (Kish 1965). According to Musingafi and Guzura (2015), population is defined as a group consisting of people or objects to whom the researcher desires to apply his findings. Burgess (2001) defines population as all members of the group that the investigator is interested in. There are two common types of population when conducting a research project and these are target population and accessible population. More often than not, members of the research population share common characteristics depending on the scope of the study. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) note that targeted population is the entire group of people to which the researcher is interested in generalising the findings. Researchers use the accessible population to carryout investigations. It is from this accessible population that researchers extract samples for the purpose of a study. Although there are hundreds of people who could be used as research participants, the researcher decided to select a few of them for easy management of the research. The research population comprised a total of ten media and international relations experts. All the research respondents were drawn from Harare Metropolitan. Both male and female readers had equal chances of being selected.

3.5.2 Research sample

According to Hull and Hawkins (1993), a sample is a subsection of the population that is intended to represent the whole research population. Burgess (2001) defines a sample as a subset of the population that is usually chosen because of its accessibility to the researcher. Mugo (2000) defines a sample as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a research study. Creswell (1994) defines sampling as the process of selecting participants for a study from the general population. Sampling is done using two basic approaches namely probability and non-probability. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) postulate that a sampling frame is derived from a subsection of potential respondents who are identified to take part in the research

project. In other words, a sampling frame is simply a list of all of the members of the accessible population. The issue of time, money and other resources are barriers to access targeted population. The researcher assumes that the selected media and international relations experts have in-depth knowledge on geopolitics and global media.

3.5.3 Sampling techniques

There are different types of sampling techniques that can be used by researchers to gather research data. These techniques include stratified random sampling, convenience sampling and quota sampling. The study employed convenience sampling to select research participants.

3.5.3.1 Sampling in Qualitative Research

Since the objective of qualitative research is to understand and give meaning to a social process, rather than quantify and generalise to a wider population, it is inappropriate to use random sampling or apply statistical tests. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) contend that sample sizes used in qualitative research are usually very small and the application of statistical tests would be neither appropriate nor feasible. Unlike quantitative research that involves large samples to allow the researcher to make accurate predictions mathematically, qualitative research typically involves small samples that allow the researcher to gather a lot of information about a few people. Qualitative researchers frequently also use convenience, snowball and network sampling, but they also use other types of sampling methods (Musingafi and Guzura, 2015).

3.5.3.1.1 Convenience sampling

The researcher in this study used convenience sampling method during the whole research project. Convenience sampling is non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are easiest for the researcher to access. This can be due to geographical proximity, availability or willingness to participate in the research. Simkus (2023) contends that the individuals in the sample are selected not because they are most representative of the entire population, because they are most easily accessible to the researcher. There is little or speculation when choosing the representatives in convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is useful when time is a constraint, as it is a simple method and it takes minimal effort. According to Simkus (2023), researchers can use convenience research sampling to conduct pilot

data or explore a hypothesis that might be tested in future research. However, convenience sampling is not without limitations. selection bias can occur when researchers use convenience sampling. Collected samples may not represent the population of interest, thus, the results cannot be generalised to a greater population. A total of ten international relations and media experts were selected from Harare (Simkus, 2023). The participants were selected because of their proximity, availability and knowledge in international relations and media studies.

3.6 Pilot testing the questionnaires

Cleave (2021) asserts that pilot testing enables the researcher to assess the whole research questionnaire under survey conditions. The primary benefit of pilot testing is to identify problems before implementing the full survey. Pilot testing looks to examine the validity of each question. It is concerned with whether the question is capturing the information it is intended to measure. Pilot testing is not only meant to meet the goals and objectives of the study, but it analyses various aspects of the whole questionnaire. Pilot testing assesses aspects such as the arrangement of questions, how well the questions meet the expectations of the study and average time that is taken to complete each question. Pilot testing should be carried out under survey conditions, should be tested on a sample size that is representative of target population for the research (Cleave, 2021).

According to ESCAP (2010), the main objective of the pilot test is to complement the cognitive test results in a way that allows for a final decision to be made on the question evaluation, and thus remains an evaluation exercise and not a measure of prevalence of various difficulties in the given population. However, the pilot test will look at different demographic factors in the analysis to determine whether the biases noted in the cognitive test remain in a larger and more representative sample, such as the trend of women reporting pain more often than men (ESCAP, 2010). The researcher carried out pilot test to identify problems before implementing the full survey.

3.7 Data collection methods

According to Musingafi and Guzura (2015), data collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results. Research methods or instruments are tools used by researchers for collecting data

to find solutions to a research problem. Examples of these research tools are questionnaires, interviews and observation. Kajornboon (2005) argues that data collection is a crucial component of research project. There is no one data collection method which is regarded as the best. O'Leary (2004) asserts that collecting credible data is a difficult task and one method of data collection cannot be absolutely better than another. The nature and goals of the research determine the data collection method to be used. Data can be collected from a number of sources including written documents, records, workplaces, the internet, surveys or interviews. The researcher in this study used questionnaires to collect data throughout the research process. Advantages and limitations of each research instrument are highlighted in this section of the chapter. The researcher also justifies why he chose these questionnaires as research tools at the exclusion of others.

3.7.1 Qualitative data collection methods

According to MacDonald and Headlam (2008, qualitative data collection methods are concerned with a quality of information, qualitative methods attempt to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for actions and establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them. Qualitative methods provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas or hypotheses (MacDonald and Headlam, 2008). The researcher also employed interviews in this study to gather information from the participants.

3.7.1.1 Questionnaires

Masuku (1999) contends that questionnaire is by far the most common method of data collection for academic studies. Unlike other methods of gathering information, the questionnaire is cheaper, saves time and its anonymity promotes the obtaining of honest results. Masuku (1999) suggests that the questionnaire should be prepared in such a way that it can be easily completed by respondents and research questions are supposed to be logically sequenced. The researcher should avoid unnecessary repetition of questions. However, questionnaires are not without their own weaknesses. Questionnaires are useful only to people who are literate which means those who cannot read and write cannot be used as respondents. The researcher decided to use questionnaires to gather information because of their convenience and user friendliness. Questions were crafted in such way that the targeted information could be fetched from the

respondents. All respondents were given questionnaires with the same content of questions to minimise bias.

3.7.1.2 Interviews

Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way of collecting data from research participants through conversations. According to Kajornboon (2005), the interview is a method of collecting data as well as gaining knowledge from individuals. Kvale (1996) defines an interview as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The Interview values the importance of human interaction for knowledge production and it emphasises on the social situatedness of research data.

Masuku (1999) contends that the interview is used where detailed information is required and respondents are few. Interviews give the researcher or an interviewer the opportunity to obtain personalised data from the research participants. The researcher prepared the interview questions well on time before the actual interview. During the interview, the researcher used an interview guide which contained a list of questions, topics and issues that the researcher wanted to cover during the interview. The questions on the interview guide were clear so that the interviewees would not face difficulties in responding to them. As part of the procedures of carrying out a good interview, the researcher made an appointment with the participants. The researcher also explained to the respondents about the purpose of the study and the issue of confidentiality.

3.7.1.1.1 Structured Interviews

A structured or standardised interview is one whereby the same questions are asked to all respondents. Corbetta (2003) suggests that structured interviews are interviews in which all participants are asked the same questions with the same wording and in the same sequence. The goal of structured interviews is to ensure that respondents' replies are not aggregated (Bryman, 2001). The interview enables the researcher to further probe the respondent and get more information than what would be anticipated. Masuku (1999) posits that the disposition of the respondent can tell the researcher how valid the information they are giving during an interview is. Another advantage of using the structured interview method over other instruments is the fact that the researcher has control over the topics and the format of the interview. During the course

of the interview, non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures can be recorded thereby enhancing the results of the study.

However, the use of structured interviews in research project has its own limitations. Kajornboon (2005) reveals that in structured interview, respondents may not understand the question from the interview guide and as a result they might fail to answer it properly. The interviewer's intervention during the interview may influence the interviewee to give information that does not reflect his or her true feelings about a particular subject (Kajornboon, 2005). Since there is a set interview guide, the respondents may hear and interpret or understand the questions in different ways. The researcher's verbal comments and non-verbal communication can cause bias and have influence upon respondents' answers. Moreover, interviews in general lack anonymity and the interviewee might tell the researcher what he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear (Masuku, 1999). As a result, this compromises the quality of the research findings.

3.8 Data collection procedures

This part of the chapter explores how the researcher used the questionnaire to get information from the respondents. The section narrates steps taken in administering instruments and collection of data from research participants. The questionnaires were crafted in such way that they captured all research questions under study. Questionnaires were sent to through their individual emails. No names of respondents were recorded to protect the identity of the research participants. The questionnaires had a provision for respondents to add on information which they thought was relevant to improve the coverage of international conflicts by global media organisation.

3.9 Validity and reliability

Evaluation of the validity and reliability of research data is essential in any research. This is done to ensure that research data is sound and replicable and the results are accurate. Reliable and valid data promotes the integrity and quality of the research findings.

3.9.1 Validity

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation. Validity basically means “measure what is intended to be measured” (Field, 2005). Validity can be defined as the correctness or credibility of an account, explanation or interpretation that a researcher may come up with. It is also concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (McCaig, 2010). Reinhaz 1992 maintains that “validity is the consistency of a measure with some outside criterion or standard by which to judge the test. A measurement’s validity depends on how closely the operational definitions overlap with the theoretical definitions of the phenomena being measured. The validity of the findings depends upon the quality of the raw data which depends on the research instruments used. If the instruments are valid and reliable, the findings should be valid and reliable. To enhance reliability, the researcher designed instruments with simple, unambiguous, logical and comprehensive questions. Different instruments were used to collect data depending on the nature and type of data required. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to gather data from the respondents.

3.9.2 Reliability

Palys (1997) argues that reliability implies that repeated observations of the same phenomena should yield similar results, and different observers following the same research methodology or procedures should arrive at the same conclusions. De Vos (1998) contends that reliability is the extent to which independent administrations of the same instrument yield the same results under comparable conditions and it is synonymous with dependability, stability, consistency, predictability and generalisability. To improve reliability, the researcher designed instruments with simple, logical, unambiguous and comprehensive questions. Reliability was further enhanced by having properly operationalised definition of terms and understanding of concepts to avoid ambiguities. Before adopting research instruments, the researcher cross-checked, inspected and scrutinised information on the research instruments to ensure their accuracy, completeness, relevance, consistency and uniformity. That enabled the researcher to establish whether content in question items deals with and reflects the content and objectives of the study (Patton, 1990).

3.10 Ethical considerations

According to Punch (2005), research ethics are moral obligations and principles that researchers should follow when carrying out their studies. There are a number of ethical issues to be considered when carrying out research projects. The researcher considered the issue of securing permission to gather research data from respondents. Researchers are not allowed to misuse any of the information gathered from the respondents and they should respect privacy of the people who are participating in the study (Musingafi and Guzura, 2015). It is also the duty of the researcher to protect the rights of research participants. Ethical issues should be considered at all stages of the research process, beginning with the researcher's choice of research topic. Punch (2005) summarises the main ethical considerations as harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of data.

3.10.1 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is one of the ethics to consider when conducting social science research. Researcher duly informed the participants that they were free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion. All participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point without feeling an obligation to continue. On the same note, the participants were not required to provide a reason for leaving the study. According to Bhandari (2021), voluntary participation is an ethical principle protected by international law and many scientific codes of conduct. The study emphasised and respected participant freedom of acceptance or refusal to respond to the questionnaire. Clear information was given to outline these assurances.

3.10.2 Informed consent of all participants

Fujii (2012) claims that consent is at the core of ethically responsible research. Informed consent includes information about the study's benefits, risks, funding, and institutional approval. Bryman and Bell (2007) contend that respondents should participate on the basis of informed consent. The researcher provided the participants with sufficient information and assurances about taking part in the study. This was done in order to allow individuals to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered and freely given decision about whether or not to do so, without the exercise of any pressure or coercion. The researcher

employed informed consent thorough explanations of the purpose of the study and guarantees of confidentiality in the preamble of questionnaires.

3.10.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Researchers should always consider confidentiality when conducting researches. According to Bhandari (2021), confidentiality means that the researcher knows who the participants are, but removes all identifying information from the research report. All participants have a right to privacy, so researcher should protect their personal data for as long as he stores or uses it. Before beginning the study, the researcher asked participants to agree to keep the research data confidential and to respect each other's privacy.

Confidentiality means that researcher does not know who the participants are and he cannot link any individual participant to their data (Bhandari, 2021). Researcher can only guarantee anonymity by not collecting any personally identifying information such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, physical characteristics, photos, and videos. The data can still be linked to participants but it is harder to do so because the researcher separates personal information from the study data. For example, if the researcher is conducting a survey with college students. Information collected from respondents was taken as private and confidential and no personal details were recorded to promote anonymity. This study adhered to basic social science ethical considerations. Integrity, professional competence, scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity and social responsibility were extremely considered in this study.

3.10.4 Safety of respondents

Potential for harm is one of ethical issues to consider when carrying out research. Researcher should consider all possible sources of harm to participants. Bhandari (2021) posits that harm can come in many different forms namely, psychological, social, physical and legal harm. Psychological harm includes sensitive questions that may trigger negative emotions such as anxiety or shame whereas social harm involves social risks, public embarrassment, or stigma. Physical harm is the injury or pain that can emanate from the study procedures. Legal harm is the reporting of sensitive data that could lead to legal risks or a breach of privacy. Therefore, it is

best to consider every possible source of harm in your study as well as concrete ways to mitigate them (Bhandari, 2021). Shaw and Barrett (2006) argue that researchers can never wholly guarantee safety in any research but participants and researchers must be offered reasonable protection within any study, with appropriate arrangements in place should something go wrong. If there is a risk of harm, the research should prepare to provide participants with resources or counselling or medical services if needed (Bhandari, 2021). The researcher explained to all participants that the research was purely academic and meant to benefit everyone with interest in international affairs. The research also emphasised that participation study was consensual and voluntary.

3.11 Data presentation and analysis

This segment provides a synopsis on how the gathered data would be presented and analysed. The research will be using tables and graphs to present and analyse information on the impact of the media on Russo-Ukraine War, a case of *Al Jazeera English*. Responses from questionnaires and interviews were presented through graphs and tables as well as words. This is because questionnaire results can be easily quantified and expressed through text.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the qualitative research design that was used by the researcher during the course of the study. Strengths and limitations of qualitative research design were discussed in this chapter. The researcher explained about qualitative design and the reasons why he decided to use this design at the exclusion of other techniques. Questionnaire and interviews as data collection tools was also explained in the chapter. The researcher explained the procedures taken during the data collection process. This chapter also touched on population size, sampling method and the targeted participants of the study. Finally, the researcher highlighted essence of respecting ethical issues at all stages of the research exercise. The next chapter will focus on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on research methodology and designs. This chapter presents the information gathered during the course of the study. It is in this chapter that the researcher analyses and discusses the research data. Data presentation involves scanning and sifting, organising and summarising of research data. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) opines that data analysis is a process of summarising the mass data gathered and presenting the results in a way that presents the most important features. The researcher will present and analyse information collected from questionnaires. The collected data will be presented in the form of text in a way that can be easily understood by potential users. Comments which were gathered from international relations and media experts during the interviews will also be analysed in this chapter.

4.2 Data analysis

The researcher analysed data based on both relevant reviewed literature and text recorded from questionnaires. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) contend that data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modeling data in order to underscored useful information and suggesting conclusions. Adegoke (2010) identifies two significant ways of data analysis and these are editing and coding. Editing involves detailed examination of collected information. Proper editing of data would reveal any incorrect entries, omissions, irregularities and other possible errors. Editing provides qualities that assist data analysis and these are accuracy, completeness, clarity and legibility and consistencies (Adegoke, 2010).

Coding refers to a process of organising responses into categories and numbers as to assist tabulations and analysis of the data. The wisdom behind the coding of data is to make the data suitable for quantifiable analysis (Musingafi and Guzura, 2015). As for qualitative data, a system of categorization and classification is used to apportion codes to the data before analysis. It is also the role of the researcher to organise the raw data into specific categories and create themes which are used to analyse data.

4.3 Qualitative data presentation

Qualitative data has several components to consider when planning the presentation of the research findings. It is recommended to divide the collected data into well spelt themes and categories so that readers can easily interpret the results of the study. The themes are presented in sections with categories as subsections. Further evidence to support the findings in qualitative data analysis is provided by presenting direct quotations from respondents. The researcher recorded verbal respondents from international relations and media experts.

4.4 Quantitative data measurement and analysis

Quantitative data normally begins with words but is then transformed and classified into numerical information. Data for analysis in quantitative research emanates from the measurement of one or more variables. Quantitative data is usually presented in the form of table, graphs, pictures and narratives. The investigator in this study used questionnaires to gather people's views and feelings on the impact of the media on Russo-Ukraine War, case of *Al Jazeera English*.

4.5 Data presentation process

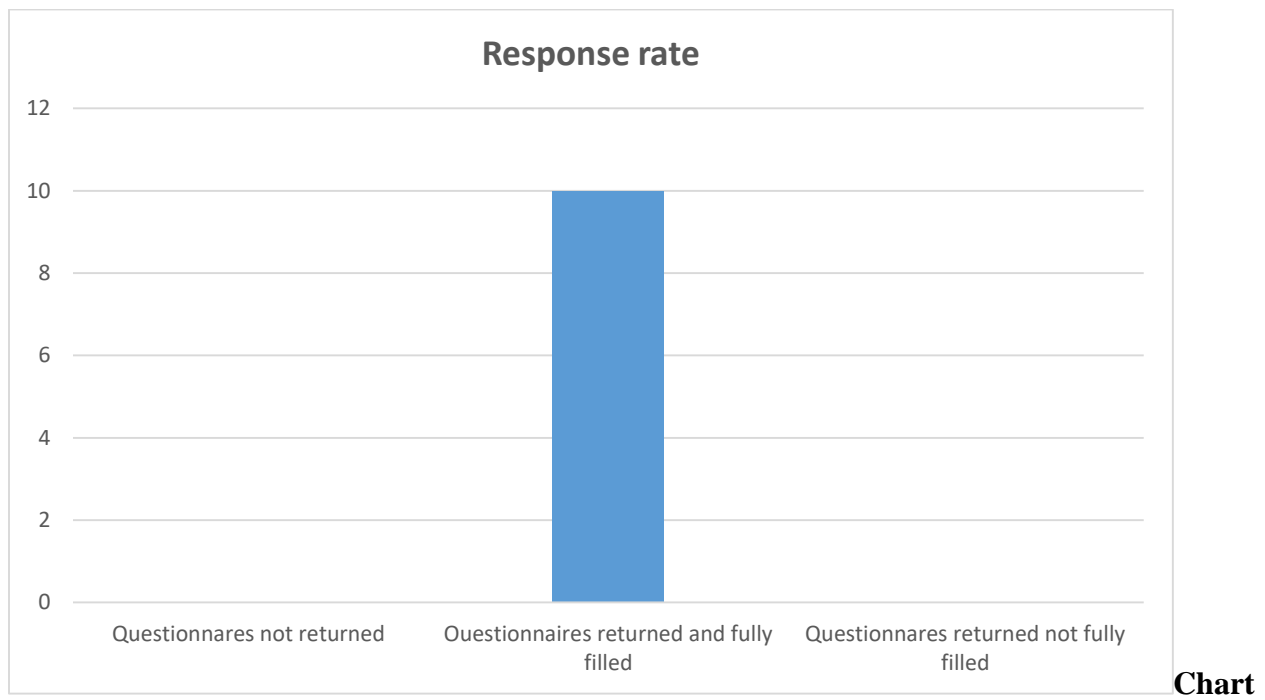
After collecting data from the respondents, the researcher is expected to go through data presentation process which includes scanning and sifting, organising and summarising of data. Musingafi and Guzura (2015) claim that data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data for the purpose of highlighting worthwhile data, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. The researcher did meticulous verification of the data to ensure that it was complete, consistent, accurate and relevant to the scope of the research project. The researcher also considered trends which might emerge in the scanned information. The collected information was organised into manageable form for easy presentation and analysis. The researcher also summarised the data using tables, graphs, words and statistical summaries.

4.5.1 Response rate

The study targeted a sample size of 10 respondents. All the issued questionnaires were returned and duly filled. The researcher considered the dully filled questionnaires for analysis. This accounted for 100% response rate that is ideal for the study analysis to progress. The response rate is represented on Table 4.1 and Chart 4.1.

Table 4:1 Response rate

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Not returned | 00 | 0 |
| Returned and fully filled | 10 | 100 |
| Returned and not fully filled | 00 | 0 |
| Totals | 10 | 100 |



4.1 Response rate

4.6 Causes of Russo-Ukraine War

Respondents who participated in the research shared their thoughts on the causes of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The following causes of the war as suggested by the respondents.

4.6.1 NATO expansion towards Russia borders

4.6.2 Genocide against ethnic Russians

4.6.1 NATO expansion towards Russia borders

Respondents revealed that Ukraine's decision to NATO as one of the reasons that prompted Russo-Ukraine War. Russia regarded NATO extension towards its borders as move that comprises its national security. Russia views the admission of Ukraine into NATO as a threat, as it extends a hostile military alliance right up to its doorsteps. The respondents also highlighted that fundamental principles of international relations have always limited the freedom of sovereign states to act in their own interests if those interests are considered a threat to other nation states. Russia claims that its military operations against its neighbor, Ukraine are aimed at protecting its spheres of interest. The respondents also revealed that Russian invasion emanates from the faults in the constitution of the state formations which followed the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Russia contests the internal policy of the Ukrainian state which harms Russian speaking citizens whom Russia seeks to protect. Nagy and Beng (2022) posit that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most violent interstate conflict in the world since the second attack of Iraq and Afghanistan.

4.6.2. Genocide against ethnic Russians

Respondents underscored that Putin and his allies blamed Ukraine's government of killing ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers in the Donbas. However, Ukraine wholly rejected the accusations. Days before the invasion, Putin recognised the separatists' self-styled republics, scuppering the Minsk accords, peace deals brokered by Germany and France that sought to end the violence there through a political settlement. He said an objective of the invasion was the "demilitarisation" of Ukraine. That would make it unable to join NATO, whose expansion into countries that were once within Russia's sphere of influence Putin views as an encroachment on its interests. He said another aim was the "denazification" of Ukraine. Russia's President

Vladimir Putin accused Ukraine of carrying out mass killing of Russian-speaking population in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, where Ukrainian army has been fighting Russian-backed separatists since 2014. Russia has the view that military operations against Ukraine are a response to genocide against residents of Donbas.

4.7 Al Jazeera and the Russo-Ukraine War

| Item | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Respondents who agreed that <i>Al Jazeera</i> objectively covered Russo-Ukraine War | 10 | 100 |
| Respondents who disagreed that <i>Al Jazeera</i> objectively covered Russo-Ukraine War | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 1000 |

Table 4.2 *Al Jazeera* and Russia-Ukraine War

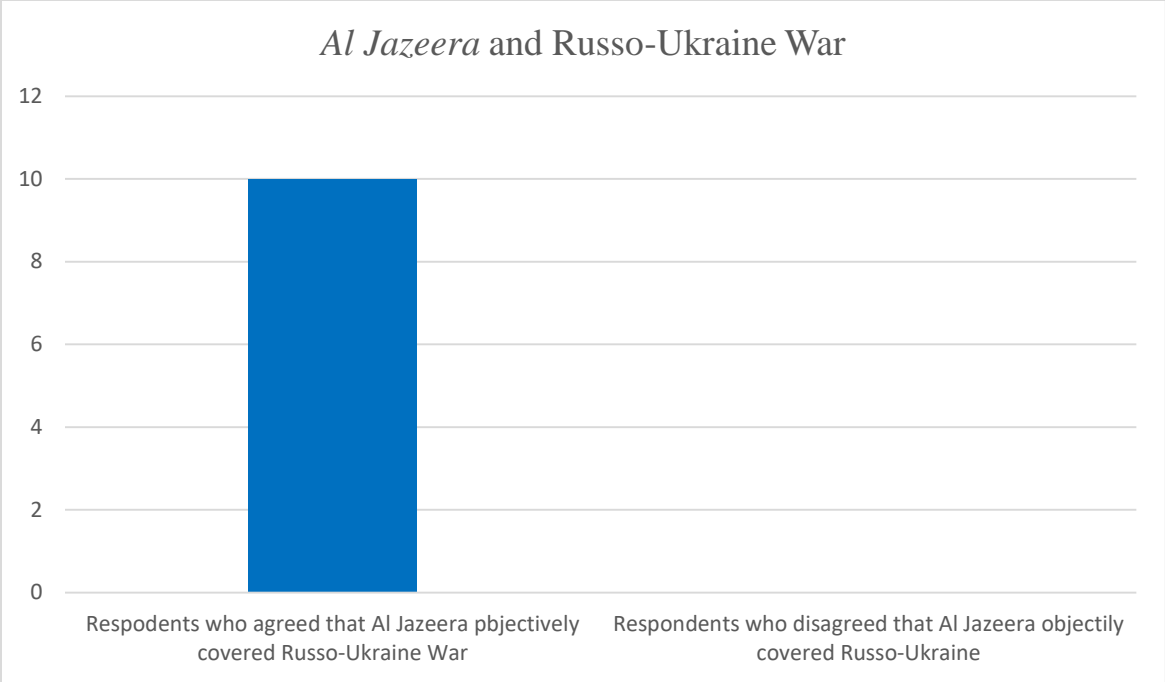


Chart 4.2 Al Jazeera and Russo-Ukraine War

Table 4.2 and Chart 4.2 show how the Respondents’ comments on how *Al Jazeera* has been covering the war in Ukraine. All the ten research participants revealed that *Al Jazeera* as global satellite television channel broadcast balanced stories since the beginning of Russia-Ukraine conflict on 24 February 2022. No respondent had reservations on the objectivity of *Al Jazeera* English in handling the conflict. Research participants concurred that international media including *Al Jazeera* has allowed itself to become an actor in Russia-Ukraine War. Unlike some western media organisations, *Al Jazeera* has been described as one of the objective global television news channels. Research participants revealed that *Al Jazeera* has been extensively covering Russo-Ukraine War since the beginning to the war on February, 24, 2022. The respondents also concurred that the media has increasingly become a non-state actor within international conflicts because of its ability to shape and refine opinions of people and even governments. It was also highlighted that unlike other international television channels such as Russia Today, France 24 International, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Sky News and Cable News Network (CNN) that did not fairly cover the conflict, *Al Jazeera* has been giving voices to all major conflicting parties.

The survey established that the media including global television networks provide people with important information about their environment and respond to more imminent problems such as international conflicts. Television has been considered to be the most significant source of news for the public and possibly, the most influential on public opinion. Television coverage is a powerful influence in problem recognition, which in turn helps to shape the foreign policy agenda (Chebii, 2014). Respondents suggested that *Al Jazeera English* assist them to interpret events beyond our physical realm and help them make sense of them. With the improvement of technologies and the advancement of new media such as the internet, media plays an increasingly more prominent role in people's daily communication and entertainment. The research participants got daily updates of what has transpiring in Ukraine through *Al Jazeera English*.

According to Bratic and Schirch (2007), media can be as a platform to cover diplomatic initiatives and send messages back and forth between sides of a conflict. While policymakers usually prefer secret negotiations, sometimes there are no direct channels of communication. If one side wants to test reactions to a negotiation proposal, they may send signals and messages to other groups through the media. Since the beginning of the war, *Al Jazeera English* has given opposing groups in Russia-Ukraine War to talk with each other. It helped to create bridges between Russia and Ukraine and built confidence needed to open peace talks.

Bratic and Schirch (2007) posit that the media can be used to promote peace in international conflicts. Because of its influence in international media space, *Al Jazeera* created a conducive environment for negotiations to build confidence, facilitate negotiations or break diplomatic deadlocks. Both Russia and Ukraine sympathisers were given equal and fair coverage to share their thoughts and feelings regarding war between two neighbouring nation states. *Al Jazeera English* also covered all efforts towards peace agreements. Respondents revealed that *Al Jazeera* lessens polarisation between Russia and Ukraine.

4.8 Strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as an international news channel

Al Jazeera English as a global television network as its own strengths and limitations.

4.8.1 Strengths of *Al Jazeera English*

4.8.2 Limitations of *Al Jazeera English*

4.8.1 Strengths of *Al Jazeera English*

Respondents highlighted strengths of Al Jazeera as a global television news channel. Research participants claimed that *Al Jazeera English* covers stories and regions underrepresented by the western international news outlets and agencies. Unlike the BBC and Cable News Network (CNN), *Al Jazeera* does not position itself as a channel representing a particular national lens on the world. Like what Puddephatt (2006) suggested, the media must have the ability to operate without restrictions and without threat and with the capacity to report on all aspects of the conflict. According *Al Jazeera* website, the satellite reaches upwards of 260 million households in more than one hundred countries all over the world including Zambia, Vietnam, India, New Zealand, Israel and even the newest nations, such as South Sudan. *Al Jazeera English* as an international media organisation have vastly more resources than local media.

Al Jazeera English has become an important actor in global affairs. It enables peoples in different parts of the world to communicate with each other and with others around the world in addition to providing news of events and incidents in the world. The relation between democracy and media is significant because free media promotes plurality and debate, which are important indicators for democratic consolidation. The study revealed that *Al JazeeraEnglish* stands against the oppression of the state and is considered a natural ally for citizens in controlling abuses of power. Respondents claimed that *Al Jazeera* is accessible on cable, satellite, smartphones and the Internet. In 2006, *Al Jazeera* launched its live stream on YouTube where its branded channel has become top news channel on the site. In 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also came out to praise *Al Jazeera* for providing real international news.

Research participants also concurred on two distinct traits within *Al Jazeera* that make it stand out. Firstly, *Al Jazeera* has extensive news coverage of global issues including Russo-Ukraine War. Secondly, it has political discussion programmes that delve into very controversial subjects and provide a theatre for disparate opinions.

4.8.2 Weaknesses of *Al Jazeera English* as a global news channel

The respondents suggested that television news stories on *Al JazeeraEnglish* are shorter than newspaper and online publication stories. A standard newspaper story ranges from hundreds to thousands words whereas the same story on television may have 30 seconds or if it is an important story, it may be allocated 90 seconds or two minutes. As a result, television viewers are starved with in-depth analysis of some global issues such as the historical background of Russo-Ukraine War. *Al Jazeera English* satellite television services are not affordable to by low income earners as some people in third world countries cannot afford subscribe to DSTV and other satellite television service providers.

Research participants revealed that although *Al JazeeraEnglish* provides extensive news coverage through 80 bureaus on a variety of media, it has not resident news reporters in some countries. *Al Jazeera* correspondents are usually deployed in capital cities of nation states. It was also established from the study that regardless of the fact that *Al Jazeera* has a large audience, has been criticised for its alleged involvement in controversies ranging from slanted journalism to anti-Hindu bias and anti-Israel bias. *Al Jazeera* as a satellite television news channel has also been criticised for its anti-American bias. *Al Jazeera* was established in 1996 as part of Qatari efforts to turn economic power into political influence in the Arab world and beyond. It continues to receive political and financial backing from the Qatari government. As a result, *Al Jazeera* has been criticised for being Qatari state media. In 2010, United States once accused the Qatari government of manipulating *Al Jazeera* coverage to suit the country's political interests. The media is a double-edged sword and it can be a dreadful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of bias or disinformation that manipulate public sentiment. It has been argued that the media has become a weapon employed in conflicts to pursue sinister motives (Chutel, 2014).

4.9 Ways of improving coverage of international conflicts

Respondents also suggested ways of improving the coverage of international conflicts by global news organisations. It was established that journalists can be both peacemakers during a conflict and instigators of conflict at the same time. Respondents revealed that the main task of the media in the context of conflict situations is to promptly provide information to the audience. It is

information that becomes the main factor in shaping public opinion. Research participants also opined that global news channels like *Al Jazeera* and others should promptly disseminate reliable, complete and objective information about activities and events during an armed conflict. International television news networks should also prepare and disseminate ready-made information, reference and explanatory materials with the purpose of promoting of information in which a certain state is interested.

Moreover, global news organisations are expected to always assess the society reaction to the activities of a state during a political armed conflict. The functions of the media during armed conflicts should include facilitating shaping public opinion and fulfil people's need in receiving socially valuable information. The research participants also suggested that the media should provide purposeful or spontaneous coverage of significant events of the conflict. It always of paramount importance to separate the concepts of spontaneous coverage and information support since the second one implies a much deeper involvement of the media in the international conflict. Coverage of the conflict can be understood as informing the audience, providing it with information about the conflict, its occurrences, its actors or competing parties, their goals and intentions, about the possible consequences and results of a conflict situation.

Research participants also highlighted that media should satisfy people's need to obtain socially significant information and contributes to the emergence of public opinion as a phenomenon. It is also the role of the media to direct or indirect participants in the conflict by providing information support to the conflict situation. The media should make efforts to provide information that contributes to the de-escalation of the conflict. In this situation, journalists who are covering the conflict should publish information that lessen the tension and intensity of conflict confrontation. Journalists should provide information that reflects and describes the true problems that caused the conflict and realistic assessment of the conflict stage. The media should also make efforts to form an objective image of the parties of the conflict and avoid stereotypes that may cause further damage.

Respondents also suggested that the media should present a full retrospective of the conflict using alternative sources, provide accurate and comprehensive coverage about conflict events. Research participants underscored the critical role of the media in peacebuilding. They suggested

the that the media should reflect all existing initiatives and steps towards conflict resolution and support for social technologies to mitigate the conflict.

The media should always avoid demonstrating imaginary or false problems of the conflict as well as false assessment of the conflict stage. The respondents also claimed that the international media covering international conflicts like the Russo-Ukraine War should stay away from creating a false image of the conflict subjects, emphasising on negative stereotypes of one side and positive stereotypes of the opponent. News coverage of international conflict may contribute to constructive or destructive outcomes of those disputes.

Media sources like *Al Jazeera* and other global media outlets provide people with information, highlighting certain facts, details and occurrences, and hence shapes recipient's opinion about the conflict. Mass media covering conflicts should not hide unpleasant facts of any events or make up such facts in the absence of accurate information, choose only some facts while ignoring other facts. It was revealed by the respondents that the media should strive to provide objective coverage of information by referring to independent experts, carefully and meticulously study processes, present events as it is the facts covered by the media that foster developing a certain reaction from citizens.

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of the information gathered during the course of the study. The researcher presented the data in the form of tables and graphs. He also explained the importance and purpose of carrying out data presentation and analysis in research project. Information gathered from questionnaires was presented and analysed using tables and graphs whereas sentiments from respondents were presented in words. The researcher made effort to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as satellite television channel in covering international conflicts. The next chapter, Chapter 5, explores the summary and conclusions of the study. The researcher will also present research findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed research data. This chapter contains a summary of the results, key conclusions discussions and their implications. The researcher also provides recommendations obtained from the results and areas for further research. The study aimed at analysing the impact of the media on Russo-Ukraine War: A case of *Al Jazeera English*. Analysis was based on a cross-sectional sample of 10 international relations and media experts. A summary of the results is given in the next sub-section.

5.2 Summary of the study

The main purpose of the study was to analyse the impact of media in on Russo-Ukraine War, a case of *Al Jazeera English*. *Al Jazeera English* satellite television channel operates from Doha, the capital city of Qatar. The researcher reviewed literature on the role of media in managing international conflicts. This was done to appreciate works done in previous researches as well as to identify gaps which need to be filled. The researcher reviewed books, journals and online publications. Although some scholars made strides to analyse the role of the media in geopolitics, there are no serious studies that were carried out to assess the impact of the media particularly on the Russo-Ukraine.

The whole research was premised on the following objectives:-

- 5.2.1 Outline the Russo-Ukraine conflict.
- 5.2.2 Explore the coverage of Russia-Ukraine war by *Al Jazeera English*.
- 5.2.3 Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as an international news channel.
- 5.2.4 Suggest ways of improving media coverage on conflicts between nations States.

The researcher used qualitative design so that he could capture detailed information to achieve set objectives. A total of 10 international relations and media experts participated in the study by way of responding to the questions on the questionnaires. Respondents who participated in the

study were selected using convenience sampling technique. Research participants were selected due to their geographical proximity, availability and willingness to participate in the research. No resistance was faced from the respondents since they were guaranteed privacy and confidentiality during the course of the study. Ten international relations and media experts were interviewed to ascertain their views with regards to the impact of the media on Russo-Ukraine War, a case of *Al Jazeera English*. The gathered data was presented and analysed using tables and graphs. The information gathered from interviews was presented in the form of words in Chapter Four of the research.

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusion is an interpretation of the research findings from the researcher's point of view. In this section of the chapter, the researcher gives an anecdote of the findings from questionnaires and interviews. The two research designs namely quantitative and qualitative design assisted the researcher to expose research participants' views on the impact of the media on Russia-Ukraine war.

5.3.1 Causes of Russo-Ukraine War

The research participants concurred that NATO expansion towards Russia borders is one of the chief causes of Russo-Ukraine War. Russia regarded NATO extension towards its borders as move that comprises its national security. The admission of Ukraine into NATO was viewed as a threat to Russia's security. The participants underscored that Russia launched military operation against Ukraine to protect its national interest. The respondents also revealed that Russian invasion emanates from the faults in the constitution of the state formations which followed the breakup of the Union Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Research participants also highlighted that Russia blamed Ukraine's government of killing ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers in the Donbas. Russia's President, Vladimir Putin claimed one of the reasons behind the invasion was to demilitarise Ukraine and make it unable to join NATO.

5.3.2 *Al Jazeera* and Russo-Ukraine War

All the ten respondents who participated in the study revealed that *Al JazeeraEnglish* fairly covered Russia-Ukraine conflict since its inception on 24 February 2022. Respondents concurred

that international media including *Al Jazeera* played a key role in disseminating information on Russia-Ukraine War. Participants described *Al Jazeera English* as one of the objective satellite television news channels in the world. The study also revealed that *Al Jazeera English* has been extensively covering Russo-Ukraine War since the beginning to the war in 2022. The survey established that the media provides audience with important information about their environment and respond to more imminent problems including international conflicts. Television has been considered to be the most significant source of news for the public and possibly, the most influential on public opinion. The research participants acknowledge that they get daily updates of what has transpiring in Ukraine through *Al Jazeera English*.

Seventy percent of the respondents highlighted that *Al Jazeera English* created as a bridge between Russia and Ukraine and built confidence needed to open peace talks. Due to its influence on global media area, *Al Jazeera English* created a conducive environment for negotiations to build confidence, facilitate negotiations or break diplomatic deadlocks. The study also established that both Russia and Ukraine representatives were give equal and fair coverage to share their views on the war between Russia and Ukraine. *Al Jazeera English* covered all efforts towards peace agreements. Findings show that *Al JazeeraEnglish* made efforts to lessen polarisation between Russia and Ukraine by letting all contesting parties to speak in news stories

5.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as an international news channel

Respondents also identified strengths and limitations of the *Al Jazeera English* as a global satellite television network.

5.3.3.1 Strengths of *Al Jazeera English*

Findings on the strengths of *Al Jazeera English* revealed that *Al Jazeera English* widely covers stories and regions underrepresented by the western news outlets and agencies. Respondents underscored that *Al Jazeera English* does not position itself as a global television news network that represents a particular national ideology. The study established *Al Jazeera English* covered Russo-Ukraine War without restrictions and threat and from other extrinsic forces. Study revealed that *Al Jazeera English* reaches over of 260 million households in more than one hundred countries worldwide.

Respondents highlighted that *Al Jazeera English* enables people in different parts of the world to communicate with each other and with others around the world in addition to providing news of events and incidents in the world. Research participants revealed that one of *Al Jazeera English's* strengths is its ability to promote plurality and debate, which are important indicators of a democratic society. The findings revealed that *Al Jazeera English* stands against the oppression of the state and is considered a natural ally for citizens in controlling abuses of power. Respondents pointed out *Al Jazeera's* accessibility on cable, satellite, smartphones and the Internet as one of its greatest strengths. Respondents also revealed two distinct characteristics of *Al Jazeera English* that make it unique amongst other international media players. Firstly, *Al Jazeera English* has been extensively covering Russo-Ukraine War. Secondly, it provides political discussion programmes that delve into very controversial subjects and provide a theatre for disparate opinions.

5.3.3.2 Weaknesses of *Al Jazeera English* as a global news channel

Research findings revealed that television news stories on *Al Jazeera English* are shorter than newspaper and online publication stories. Respondents noted that a standard newspaper story ranges from hundreds to thousands words whereas the same story on television may be allocated 30 seconds or if it is an important story, it may be aired for 90 seconds or two minutes. Resultantly, television viewers are starved with in-depth analysis of some international issues such as the historical background of Russo-Ukraine War. Additionally, respondents revealed that *Al Jazeera English* television services are not affordable to by low income earners as some people in third world countries cannot afford subscribe to DSTV and other satellite television service providers.

Research participants revealed that although *Al Jazeera English* provides extensive news coverage through 80 bureaus on a variety of media, it has not resident news reporters in some countries. *Al Jazeera* correspondents are usually deployed in capital cities of nation states. It was also established from the study that *Al Jazeera English* as a satellite global television news channel has also been criticized for its anti-American bias in its reportage. *Al Jazeera* was established in 1996 as part of Qatari efforts to turn economic power into political influence in the Arab world and beyond. It continues to receive political and financial backing from the Qatari government. As a result, *Al Jazeera English* has also been criticised for being Qatari state media.

5.3.4 Ways of improving coverage of international conflicts

Research participants suggested ways of improving the coverage of international conflicts by global news organisations. Respondents revealed that the media should always provide information to the audience that promotes peacebuilding. Research participants also opined that global news channels like *Al Jazeera* English and others should promptly disseminate reliable, complete and objective information about activities and events during an armed conflict. Respondents also revealed that the media should facilitate shaping of public opinion and fulfil people's need in receiving socially valuable information in conflict zones. Respondents also proposed that the media should provide purposeful or spontaneous coverage of significant events of the conflict. It was established that the media provide information about the conflict, its occurrences, its actors or competing parties, their goals and intentions, about the possible consequences and results of a conflict situation. This would enable the audience to make well-informed decisions.

Respondents revealed that it is the role of the media to direct or indirect participants in the conflict by providing information support to the conflict situation. They highlighted that media should make efforts to provide information that de-escalates the conflict. To improve the efficiency of the media in war situation, journalists should provide information that reflects and describes the true problems that caused the conflict and realistic assessment of the conflict stage. The study also established that media should also make efforts to form an objective image of the parties of the conflict and avoid stereotypes that may worsen the situation. They suggested that the media should reflect all existing initiatives and steps towards conflict resolution and support to mitigate the conflict. Research findings also revealed that the media should always avoid demonstrating imaginary or false problems of the conflict as well as false assessment of the conflict stage.

Research participants also suggested that media covering international conflicts should not hide unpleasant facts of any events or make up such facts in the absence of accurate information, choose only some facts while ignoring other facts. It was revealed by the respondents that the media should strive to provide objective coverage of information by referring to independent experts, carefully and meticulously study processes, present events as it is the facts covered by the media that foster developing a certain reaction from citizens.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendations are words of advice by the researcher that can be used to solve challenges identified during the course of the study. The researcher provides for recommendations which can be adopted to address the research problems. This section of the chapter presents these recommendations in response to the research findings.

5.4.1 Improving accessibility of *Al Jazeera English* news

The study recommends that *Al Jazeera English* management should improve the accessibility of its news content on satellite television. Satellite service providers like DSTV and Azam TV should come up with monthly subscription charges that accommodate low income earners so as to reach wide audience. Affordable television subscriptions would improve viewership of *Al Jazeera English* news content. The study also recommends that *Al Jazeera English* should increase the number of its bureaus as part of efforts to improve its coverage of world events. The television news network should have resident journalists in all countries.

5.4.2 Using new media technologies to reach wide audience

Al Jazeera English should take advantage of new media communication platforms such as Facebook, X, WhatsApp, website and YouTube to disseminate news across world. These digital communication platforms will complement the distribution of conventional satellite television services and enable the television news channel to reach wide audience. Considering that most young people are using digital media platforms as their primary source of information, intensifying the use of new media communication tools would assist *Al Jazeera* to reach youths who may want to follow world news.

5.4.3 Equipping *Al Jazeera* news reporters with conflict reporting skills

The study recommends that *Al Jazeera English* news reporters should go through conflict reporting training regularly to hone their conflict management skills. These trainings would enable news reporters to write from well-informed positions and objectively interpret events for the benefit of the television audience. The trainings or refresher courses should include newsgathering, news writing and conflict reporting skills. It is through these personal development programmes that the *Al Jazeera English* news reporters would know about various

types of international conflicts and how to deal with them. The training can also include post-conflict trauma management.

5.4.4 Independent editorial policy

The researcher recommends that *Al Jazeera English* house policy should not be influenced by Qatari government or any other forces with hidden agenda that would compromise the integrity and credibility of the television network. *Al Jazeera English* should report on world events without fear or favour adhere to principles of fairness, accuracy and balanced news.

5.4.5 Safety of journalists covering conflicts

The study recommends that nation states should protect journalists or news reporters during conflicts in sync with the United Nations Convention on the protection of journalists in war zones. Contesting parties should not attack or threaten journalists on duty or destroy their news gathering equipment. Violence that is perpetrated against journalists would compromise the quality of news from the concerned victims.

5.5 Areas of further study

The researcher identified two areas which need further research. These areas have not been addressed in this research project.

5.5.1 Research on the impact of social media on international conflicts

Considering the fact that social media has become an influential communication channel, there is need to examine the influence of new media technologies on international conflict management. These social media platforms include Facebook, X, YouTube and WhatsApp.

5.5.2 Research on the relevance of Agenda Setting Theory in global news distribution

The researcher recommends that further studies should be done to assess the applicability of the Agenda Setting Theory in international news dissemination. These further studies would unpack the validity of the theory in contemporary global news production and distribution.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for International Relations and Media Experts

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

My name is TONNY NYANDORO, I am a student with the Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) and I am currently carrying out a study on "**The Impact of the Media on Russo-Ukraine War: A Case of Al Jazeera English**". My research is a partial fulfillment of the

Master of Science Degree in International Relations. I am kindly requesting you to participate in this research by responding to the questions on this questionnaire. You are being assured that whatever you are going to supply in this study will be treated as private and confidential. Your responses will be used only for academic purposes. You are not required to reveal your name or any form of your identity during the course of the study. Therefore, feel free to answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. What are the causes of Russo-Ukraine conflict?

.....
.....
.....

2. Do you think that *Al Jazeera English* objectively covered Russo-Ukraine War? If not, specify your answer?

Yes

No

.....
.....
.....

3. What are strengths and weaknesses of *Al Jazeera* as a global television news channel?

.....
.....
.....

4. Are you satisfied with the accessibility of *Al Jazeera* content on conventional television channels and online platforms? If not, what can be done to improve its availability?

Yes

No

.....
.....
.....

5. Which type of news stories do you like to watch on *Al Jazeera*? (Specify)

.....
.....

6. Do you think *Al Jazeera English* is doing justice in promoting peacebuilding in Ukraine?

Yes

No

7. What can be done to improve the media coverage of international conflicts?

(Specify)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your support.

APPENDIX 2 Interview Guide international relations and media experts

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

My name is TONNY NYANDORO, I am a student with the Bindura University of Science Education and I am currently carrying out a research on “**The Impact the Media on Russo-Ukraine War: Case Study of *Al Jazeera English***”. My research is a partial fulfillment of the

Master of Science in International Relations. I am kindly requesting you to participate in this research by responding to the questions which I will be posing to you. You are being assured that whatever you are going to say in this study will be treated as private and confidential. Your responses will be used only for academic purposes. You are not required to reveal your name or any form of your identity during the course of the interview. Therefore, feel free to answer the questions to the best of your ability.

- 1) What are the positive effects of *Al Jazeera English* on conflict management?
- 2) Is *Al Jazeera English* fairly covering Russo-Ukraine War?
- 3) What are the shortcomings of *Al Jazeera English* in conflict management?
- 4) Are you satisfied with the accessibility of *Al Jazeera English* on both conventional satellite television and online platforms?
- 5) Which type of news stories do you follow on *Al Jazeera English*?
- 6) Do you think the television channel is promoting peacebuilding between Russia and Ukraine?
- 7) Is your *Al Jazeera* well-resourced in terms of material, financial and human resources?
- 8) What can be done to improve the media coverage international conflicts?