



**MEDIA COVERAGE OF FOOD FOR HEALTHY LIVING: A CASE STUDY OF
THE INDEPENDENT ONLINE NEWSPAPER (2014 - 2018)**

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts: Media and Cultural Studies

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22 November 2021

DECLARATION

This research has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being currently considered for any other degree at any other university. I declare that this dissertation contains my own work except where specifically acknowledged and two editors, Dr Shumba and Adigun Ajibola and I have attached the editors notes and agreement under appendix.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving, caring and courageous grandmother Mrs Bhekisiwe Nkosi who sold *amacansi* – African mats, for me to pay my tuition fees at University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2013. She never had the opportunity of getting access to education but always believed that I could be somebody in my community through education. This is also for my late mother, Buyisile Dapheny Mtshali, may her soul rest in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank, Dr Anusharani Sewchurran for her patience, guidance and support throughout this journey. I would also like to thank Mr Mzwandile Makhanya and Dr Sandra for their expertise and contribution.

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ABSTRACT

Non-communicable diseases are medical conditions or diseases that are not infectious from person to person. NCDs result from individual lifestyle choices and require a long duration of medical attention as they progress to become chronic diseases. NCDs include hypertension/high blood pressure, diabetes type two, high cholesterol, heart attack, and stroke. NCDs are increasingly becoming the cause of death in South Africa, followed by Tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which are well-researched communicable diseases. As a result, the Department of Health in South Africa (DOH) has recognised the rise of NCDs. As part of addressing this public health concern, the DOH has acknowledged that NCDs are tied to poor nutrition and recognised indigenous foods as part of a healthy diet that can combat NCDs in South Africa.

Indigenous foods include indigenous vegetables, fruits, and whole grains that are accessible from the wild or accessed at low cost compared to commercial vegetables and grains that are available in major supermarkets, as suggested by research. Furthermore, the DOH has also realised the power of media platforms as an instrumental tool for promoting health messages and encouraging public awareness about indigenous foods as part of a healthy diet. The media has long shared content about food, shaping and influencing conversations about food. From cookbooks to digital recipes shared online as images or videos, the objective is to share a recipe and, as a by-product, to create a social context for that recipe. The Independent Online newspaper (IOL) website shares food recipes as part of its website content offerings. This study explored how the IOL website covered and represented indigenous foods concerning NCDs on its website—applying thematic analysis.

Further, using a qualitative data analysis tool Miner Lite to organise the data into ten main themes gives the study a close estimation of media coverage of the use and promotion of indigenous foods to combat NCDs in South Africa. South African dietary guidelines, Non-communicable diseases, indigenous vegetables, indigenous fruits, healthy, health, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat, chips, dessert, cake, chocolates, sweets, ice-cream. Based on the frequent occurrence of these themes, the researcher identified that IOL recipes published from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018 covered food recipes that often did not follow the South African food-based dietary guidelines. Also, indigenous food recipes are not featured in the recipes published on IOL. Furthermore, none of the recipes mentioned indigenous foods /indigenous fruits / indigenous vegetables, or NCDs. The absence of these key themes from the

recipes means IOL in their framing of recipes; indigenous foods and NCDs are separate from the organisation's main agenda that they wish to communicate with their online audience.

Key Words: Chronic, Non-communicable diseases, an online newspaper, indigenous food, recipes, agenda setting, and semiotics.

EXPLORING MEDIA COVERAGE OF FOOD FOR HEALTHY LIVING: A CASE STUDY OF THE INDEPENDENT ONLINE NEWSPAPER (2014 - 2018)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in South Africa is a result of dietary changes from consuming indigenous/traditional foods to energy-dense foods and processed foods made from animals (Spires et al., 2016). Indigenous/traditional food diet was primarily made up of whole grains and vegetables (Spires et al., 2016). As such, the shift from this diet is linked to the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases such as hypertension / high blood pressure diabetes type 2, as a result of a combination of lifestyle factors, including poor diet, high cholesterol, heart diseases, and stroke. These diseases are not infectious from one person to another. These are non-communicable diseases, and NCDs progress over time due to poor nutrition and require long medical attention (Spires, Delobelle, Sanders, Puoane, Hoelzel & Swart, 2016, p.35; Centre for Non-communicable diseases, 2019). These ailments are a public health concern in South Africa and globally (World Health Organisation, 2017). Research expert Saifaddin Galal wrote to Statista, a statistic publishing website, stating that, in South Africa, the most prevalent chronic disease is hypertension/ high blood pressure. Also, about 4.74 million South Africans reported being diagnosed with hypertension/ high blood pressure, followed by diabetes (Galal, 2019).

In the same year, Statistics South Africa reported that 49.2% of South Africans lived in poverty, which is almost half the population (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Meanwhile, Trading economics reported that 30.80% of South Africans were unemployed in the same year, further exacerbating poverty levels in South Africa (Trading economics, 2019). As a result, more people face the challenge of making ends meet and often resort to foods that are low in nutrition quality, and these foods are often cheaper compared to healthy foods in the market (Spires et al., 2016; Kroll, 2017; Kaldor, Thow & Schönfeldt, 2019; Asiki, Wanjohi, Barnes, Bash, Muthuri, Amugsi, Doughman, Kimani, Vandevijvere & Holdsworth, 2020). A common saying is that the food a person eats determines the nutrition that enters the body. As a result, energy-dense foods such as processed foods, pap known as porridge, bread, sugary drinks, and high-

salted snacks lack nutritious value and the vitamins required for a healthy body. It is essential to state that pap is a product of maize, the most common dish in African communities, and it is estimated that a single South African eats about 75 kg to 81 kg of pap per day (Makwela, 2020). Also, Dr. Makwela, a food researcher, pointed out that pap is high in glycaemic index (IG); therefore, it is advisable to serve after cooling to reduce the amount of IG each serving contains (Makwela, 2020; Health24,2013). As a result, these foods are associated with hypertension/ high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, heart diseases, and stroke because these foods lack the nutrition and vitamins required for a healthy body (Milburn, 2004; Kroll, 2017, p.2).

As such, traditional foods / indigenous food provided protection against NCDs or what Burkitt referred to as Western diseases in low-income countries like South Africa; thus, the upsurge of NCDs in low-income countries is linked to dietary changes (Trowell & Burkitt, 1981). NCDs were previously coined as 'Western diseases' by Burkitt in 1981, observing that the rates of chronic and degenerative disease were historically meager in indigenous populations and low-income countries but prevalent in the Western communities primarily due to poor diets (Trowell & Burkitt, 1981). Speaking about NCDs in South Africa, South African Medical Research Council director, Professor Andre Kengne, said NCDs are fast becoming the leading cause of death in South Africa (Health24, 2017). Further, according to the SA National strategic plan for the prevention and control of Non-communicable diseases 2020-2025 (2019), by 2030, NCDs diagnosis, treatment, and prevention programmes will cost South Africa R35.1 billion per year. Early research of NCDs in low-income countries pointed to globalisation as the underlining cause, saying that globalisation distracted food systems and made unhealthy foods more accessible than healthy foods (Hawkes,2006).

"Globalization affects the nature of agro-food systems, thereby altering the quantity, type, cost and desirability of foods available for consumption for profit maximisation" (Hawkes, 2006, p. 2). The authors propose that this change increased the availability of cheaper and fast foods and has led to a decline in indigenous foods consumption linked with a balanced diet required for a healthy body (Rasche et al., 2007, p. 35; Hawkes, 2006, p. 2). In this light, it is essential to point out that South Africa still has a great variety of indigenous foods; most can be found and harvested from the rural open land (Mayekiso et al., 2017). Indigenous foods include grains, leafy vegetables, and wild fruit types and can grow in various weather conditions in the country (South Africa Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013). Further, the South African

Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (2013) added that scientists study indigenous foods for the nutritious value the food contains.

Various factors have led to the declining consumption of indigenous foods. Globalization and urbanisation have been labeled as the leading drivers for many South Africans to adopt a 'Western dietary culture,' resulting in increasing NCDs (Health24, 2017). The transition is mainly due to the spread of fast food restaurants, which are now part of SA's dietary culture and promises convenience at the expense of quality nutritious food (Business Tech, 2019). However, research highlights that inadequate information about indigenous food's nutritional value and lack of promotion of healthy food choices in the media has strongly influenced the decline in consumption (South African Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, 2013). SA DOH acknowledges the power of media to inform and encourage healthy diets, including more reliance on indigenous food as part of the initiative to address this health problem (South African Department of Health, 2014). As a result, the DOH has called for nationwide attention to what people consume every day and has called for media coverage and promotion of indigenous foods and recipes to raise awareness about the nutritional value of indigenous foods (South African Department of Health, 2014).

As such, the DOH in South Africa recognised that indigenous foods can still be included as part of a daily healthy diet to meet the dietary standards required each day as per South African dietary guidelines. Also, the SA dietary guidelines recommend that a person consume various foods daily, including vegetables, fruits, milk/mass, fish/ chicken/lean meat, or eggs (South African Department of Health, 2014). Therefore, indigenous foods, with their nutritional value and cost-effectiveness, are an answer to combating the spread of NCDs in South Africa, where the diseases are linked to poor nutrition (Rasche et al., 2007; Spires et al., 2016 & Mayekiso et al., 2017)

As mentioned above, media coverage can influence behaviour, and researchers indicate that fast-food companies have invested billions of Rands in media coverage in staying in the consumers' eyes (Branca et al., 2019).

Here, Schouten et al. (2020) propose that media coverage is an instrumental tool because the media is known as a credible source of information. Therefore, what the media covers is seen as essential and, therefore, gains public attention as more people are exposed to the media and often rely on the media to make decisions about what is essential and what is not. As such, the media can play a crucial role in placing indigenous foods on the public health agenda and

heightening awareness about the nutritional value of indigenous foods. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the media's coverage position on this critical public concern and gain greater insight into how the media today addresses NCDs as a public health concern. Thus, the DOH in South Africa has acknowledged the role of media in raising awareness about the indigenous food diet that can contribute to combating NCDs in South Africa.

1.2 Problem statement

The consumption of poor nutritious foods is linked to the rapid upsurge of NCDs, as these diseases have become the leading cause of death in South Africa (News24, 2019). In South Africa, indigenous foods, which include leafy vegetables, fruits, and grains, are nutritious, and some can be accessible from the rural open land (Mayekiso et al.,2017). Food scientists and dieticians have acknowledged that indigenous foods can be an answer to combating diet-related chronic disease in South Africa (Rasche et al.,2007, p. 9; Spires et al., 2016). However, this seemingly positive direction to a public health crisis has yet to gain public attention due to a lack of promotion and inadequate information about the nutritional value of indigenous foods and other healthy food choices available (Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries South Africa, 2013).

In 2013, the Department of health in South Africa issued a strategic plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases with effect from the same year until the year 2017. One of the key strategies for combating NCDs, the document stipulated that "prevent and promote health and wellness of population, community, and individual" (Department of Health South Africa, 2013, p.7). The Department of Health committed to "introducing evidence-based behavioural interventions and campaigns through the media and other information and education mechanisms and increase health literacy amongst South African consumers to reduce the main modifiable risk factors for non-communicable diseases" (Department of Health South Africa, 2013, p. 73). **Therefore, this study will evaluate the extent to which an online media news site, IOL, covers healthy food choices, including indigenous food recipes as part of a healthy diet that can contribute to the fight against NCDs in South Africa.**

One of the critical strategies proposed by DH in South Africa was to promote dietary changes. Further, the recommendation document stipulates that South Africans' dietary changes must include less salt, less fast and fried foods, and snacks. Also, people in SA consume lean meat and low-fat dairy products while avoiding hard margarine at home and commercially baked products to stay healthy. In addition, the document recommends that people add 2-3 fish per

week and consume whole grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes, and other traditional foods and dishes that are part of South African dietary guidelines. While also decreasing the use and intakes of sweetened (sugary) foods and drinks" (Department of Health South Africa, 2013,p. 43).

Therefore, the DOH in South Africa recognises the role of the media in promoting ideas and, in this context, raising awareness about indigenous foods through sharing indigenous food recipes. Therefore, it is essential first to explore the media's coverage of food in South Africa to establish the extent to which healthy food choices, including indigenous foods, are featured in mainstream media concerning indigenous foods and NCDs. The researcher observes food-related recipes published from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018 because the researcher is interested in observing the implementation progress of the strategic plan for NCDs under the leadership of new DOH representatives elected on the local and national level from the 2014 South Africa elections. Therefore, 31st August 2018 marked the period when the researcher started to write this dissertation. Further, this study considers Independent Online Newspaper as the case study because the newspaper website is one of the premium online newspapers with a growing viewership of over 37 million, and viewers do not pay any subscription fee to browse news on IOL (My Broadband, 2020). Thus, operating on a free paywall attracts more viewers to the platform, as free access correlates with more reach (News24, 2020). Also, the IOL newspaper website serves as the publishing platform for other publications in South Africa. Including such as the Star and Pretoria News in Gauteng, the Cape Times and Cape Argus in the Western Cape, and The Mercury and Daily News in KwaZulu-Natal, they are making the IOL newspaper an ideal online newspaper that has content coverage from different locations in South Africa (Independent Online Newspaper, 2019).

1.3 Research questions

1. How has the Independent Online Newspaper covered healthy food choices concerning NCDs, including indigenous food recipes?

2. How often has the Independent Online Newspaper featured healthy food choices, including indigenous food recipes, from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018, as per the SA DOH call?
3. In four years and eight months, has the Independent Online Newspaper covered food recipes that speak about NCDs, and what is the frequency of that coverage?
4. Does the Independent Online Newspaper cover food concerning South African dietary guidelines from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018, as the SA DOH had alluded to in the strategic plan for combating NCDs?

1.4 Research objectives

1. To explore Independent Online Newspaper coverage of healthy food choices, including indigenous food recipes in relation to NCDs from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018, and to see if indigenous foods are part of the food agenda set by IOL.
2. To determine the amount of Independent Online Newspaper coverage of food recipes that include NCDs as part of the recipe framing from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018.
3. To determine the number of food recipes that are framed to follow the South African dietary guidelines from the recipes covered by Independent Online Newspaper starting from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018.
4. Determine the extent which IOL, is using its platform as a vehicle for social transformation in through promotion of healthy living, according to the DOH in South Africa.

1.5 Personal entry point to study

This study will take place online in Durban, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College Campus (internet), between May and December 2018. The researcher writes this paper to bring light to South Africans, particularly Africans who have yet to discover the green treasures of our ancestor's diet. The researcher's grandmother in Emondlo, KwaZulu-Natal, always cooked indigenous dishes when the researcher visited her. It bothered her when she was growing up in the city of Johannesburg that she could not ask her mother to make her the same traditional dishes at home or shop for the traditional foods that she enjoyed when visiting her grandmother in Emondlo. We lived in such a small yard- enough for our five-bedroom house and without any portion of land to plant maize or grow other vegetables. Although it bothered the researcher that we had limited space in our urban home, she enjoyed that we did not pay any bond rates because that also meant we had some disposable income for Mcdonald's and KFC, which I ate as a treat.

The researcher's interest in food grew, and she wanted to learn more about food to answer why indigenous vegetables are less popular and available in the cities. For example, African Leafy vegetable such as Amaranthus (Imbuya) is cheap and as healthy as other commercial vegetables such as spinach, cabbage, lettuce, etc. However, it concerned the researcher that this was unpopular in the mainstream media and that these indigenous vegetables are available on open land for the poorest households, ignored for more expensive unhealthy alternatives such as fast foods from the corner shop.

1.6 Definitions and Key concepts used

The key phrases used in this paper are: "non-communicable diseases" (NCDs), "Indigenous/traditional vegetables," and "Western Diseases." These key concepts, as described and defined below, are used as concepts that set the focus of the study.

1.6.1 Chronic diseases

Chronic diseases are defined broadly as conditions that can last one year or even more, requiring medical attention or limiting certain daily activities (Centre for Diseases Control and

Prevention, 2020). Chronic diseases include heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes. In addition, many Chronic diseases, according to the Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention (2020), cause risk behaviours such as tobacco use, poor nutrition, excessive use of alcohol, and lack of physical activity (World Health Organisation, 2020).

1.6.2. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are chronic diseases that are not passed from one person to another. They are of long duration and generally slow progress. Types of NCDs include cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease, stroke), Cancer, Chronic Lung Disease, Diabetes, Chronic neurologic disorders (Alzheimer's dementia), and Arthritis/Musculoskeletal diseases (World Health Organisation, 2020).

1.6.3 Indigenous foods

Indigenous/ traditional foods- refer to foods originating in South Africa. These foods include staple grains, starchy roots, legumes, vegetables, and fruits (Spires, Delobelle, Sanders, Puoane, Hoelzel & Swart,2016, p.36). Also, crops introduced into the country are now recognised as naturalised or part of the indigenous people's culture (Department of Agriculture forestry and fisheries, 2013). Indigenous foods have a nutritious value, contributing to food security and a balanced diet for poor households (Agriculture Research Council et al., 2007, p. 324).

1.6.4 Western Disease

Western diseases refer to NCDs, which were once prevalent in "developed" or affluent countries. This term was coined by Trowell & Burkitt (1981), describing the increasing spread of non-Communicable diseases in Africa. Further, the authors propose that people return to their ancestor's diet, characterised by indigenous vegetables accompanied by physical activity in combating NCDs (Trowell & Burkitt, 1981).

Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter entails the study background, problem statement, research objectives, main research questions, personal entry point to study, definitions and key concepts used in the study. The second chapter shares the literature reviewed for this study. Chapter two unpacks research on digital media, food coverage in the media, indigenous vegetables, the nutritional content of indigenous vegetables, the causes of the dietary changes in SA and the role of media in communicating healthy food messaging in South Africa. The third chapter is the theoretical framework which shows the premises of media agenda, framing and semiotics as a conceptual framework for this study. The fourth chapter entails in-depth details about how the study is structured and a step-by-step on how it was conducted. Chapter four also includes the position of the researcher, research paradigm, research approach, data collection method, data collection instruments in this study, the researcher as a key instrument, the pilot study, data analysis tools, and thematic analysis. Further, chapter five includes a thematic analysis of the results and interlinks the analysis with agenda-setting and framing theory, including examples from the IOL recipe coverage. The last chapter in this study is chapter six, where the researcher writes the conclusion, which shares the overall summary of the study, study limitations and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The media in any society serves as an information platform for people. As such, people often rely on the media to access credible information about issues that may affect them in the present day or future. People even rely on the media to get ideas about the food recipes they can include in their daily diets. The media landscape, indeed, has been drastically changed by the internet and social media (Kormelink & Meijer, 2018). Digital media offers different digital channels to access information, including social media platforms, blogs, and news websites. The main advantage of the internet is the ability for people to access information on any specialised subject 24/7 outside the traditional time set by print media, radio, and television (Van Leuven, Kruijemeijer, Lecheler & Hermans, 2018, p. 799). However, only some citizens enjoy the fruits of digital media. For example, there is still a significant digital divide in South Africa. Home to 57.73 million people where only 56 % of the population had internet access in 2019 (Kemp, 2019).

There is a significant gap between the rich and poor in South Africa, whereby the top 10 % of the wealthiest population owns the country 93 % of the wealth while the remaining 90 % of the population owns the 7 %, thus leaving the majority in poverty (Webster, 2019). As such, this gap shows the extent of inequality in South Africa. The following literature expands on the role of digital media today and how digital media covers different subjects, particularly food which is the main focus of this study. The last part of the literature discusses dietary changes and NCDs in South Africa. The following literature review contributes to an understanding of digital media coverage. It provides background information on how digital media features food, borrowing some discussion from published scholars and researchers who have studied food coverage extensively.

2.2 The role of digital media in society

Digital media, in this discussion, refers to media that is created and shared through technological devices such as the computer or cell phone using the internet to publish and distribute the content (Das, 2020, p.2745). Also, digital media content can be text, images, videos, websites, and audio and can be accessed, shared, edited, and stored online (Das,2020).

Grant (2010) observed the role of *news in the publication titled News Media In The Digital Age and Its Implication For Democracy* article. Here, Grant said that the rise of digital media had challenged the traditional notion that journalists write stories to keep the public informed about what is happening in society. Therefore, enabling the public to participate in politics, proposing that the latter was a limited view of the media prior to digital media. Saying political conversations are divisive, from his observation, traditional media coverage of political conversations took place amongst elected officials, journalists, commentators, journalist bloggers, and panel talk shows. Therefore, the public was separate from the conversation when it took place (Gans,2010).

Through digital media, the public can be seen on social media platforms, like Twitter, participating in conversations, Twitting (Gans, 2010). Here, there is a clear indication that digital media is interactive and encourages public participation in conversations compared to traditional media. Therefore, it is correct to say digital media serve as a tool to progress society and deepens democracy by encouraging participation from the public. Further, from a study conducted by Gagnon & Steinke titled *Capturing Digital News Innovation Research in Organisation*. The authors found that the digitalisation of media has transformed journalism, calling for traditional media platforms to include social media and websites as part of their news and information publishing platforms (Gagnon & Steinke,2020, p. 1727).

Through digital media, news websites can also break the news in real-time. In that instance, they also used other online sources, such as websites and social media, as news sources (Van Leuven et al.,2018) from their collaborative research paper examining how *Online Sources Are Changing Journalism*. In the paper titled *The Digital Media Impact on Society*, Das (2010) (said that digital media has contributed to citizen journalism, whereby anyone with access to media-producing tools and access to the internet can create online content and share it with the public. Furthermore, the advantage brought by digital media is creating global communities that foster global citizenship. In this light, Das (2020) states that digital media platforms allow people who share a common interest to connect and converse on digital media platforms (Das,2020). Here, Hu, Torphy, Opperman, Jansen & Lo (2018) point to a digital platform called pin interest in their paper titled, *What do teachers share within socialised knowledge communities: A case of Pinterest?* From this website, users across the globe connect to share ideas on food, design, art, and thoughts.

The interactive nature of digital media has further resulted in global conversations that have and are fostering social change. As such, digital media challenges the traditional notion of media, setting the main agenda for the public. For example, social movements such as the 'Me too' movement, started by an African American activist, Tarana Burke, in 2006 to raise awareness about sexual violence. The movement received great public engagement as more people worldwide use the hashtag 'me too' to share their experiences, including celebrities, writes the Vox online journalist (North, 2019). Another movement calling for social change on how police treat African people is the 'Black Lives Matter movement, started in 2013 by African community organisers in the United States named Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi. The movement's objective is to raise awareness about police brutality toward African people in the USA. The movement has received tremendous support and attention from the media. Other countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom, have shown their solidarity with the movement through protests (Britannica, 2020).

With the above mentioned, Feezel (2017) adds that when conversations get digital media attention, the conversation also become salient in public discourse and, in turn, tends to attract coverage from the traditional media. The two mentioned social movements started on digital media, and traditional media followed the movement from then on (Vox, 2019). Therefore, digital media allows users to set public agenda for traditional media. In the study conducted by Pavan and Felicetti in 2019, the authors share their reflections on a paper titled *Digital Media and Knowledge Production within Social Movements in Italy*. The authors noted that the source of success for digital media-social movements is when people share and comment on the conversation. The interaction creates enormous user-recreated content on a subject and sparks mass circulation of that subject (Pavan & Felicetti, 2019). As a result, policymakers and government officials are drawn to these conversations to evaluate policies and to pave the way for society on issues raised through digital media (Pavan & Felicetti, 2019).

However, with all the positives of digital media, it is equally important to highlight that digital media interactivity has some disadvantages. One main disadvantage of digital media is the safety of personal data mined by digital media platforms (Webster, 2017; Das, 2020). Webster (2017), in the paper titled, *three myths of digital media*, on debunking the myths, the author shares that digital media is a marketplace of ideas whereby the media, people using digital media, and metrics interact at the same time. Further, Webster points out that, through consent that users agree on before accessing the website, the digital media platforms take the users' digital information and share it with advertisers (Webster, 2017). As a result, Webster says

advertisers and public messages can find audiences on digital media platforms even though the user might not have searched for that information (Webster, 2017, p. 354). In reflection on the role of advertisement in media, Anderson, Foros & Kind (2018) indicated that digital media works similarly to traditional media. They highlighted that digital media is an information space financed by advertisers and competes for advertisers and viewers online (Anderson, Foros & Kind,2018).

The second disadvantage of digital media is the rise of false information and what Das (2020) calls digital media content manipulation. The author further elaborates that the internet allows images, text, videos, and audio to be easily edited with software online, creating confusion about what is real and unreal (Das, 2020). Pavan & Felicetti (2019) further adds that the fast pace of digital media content creators and journalist often need more time to break the news or share new information, falling into the trap of reporting inaccurate information or distorted facts. In this light, in the paper titled, *online newsworthy*, sharing insight on how online is changing journalism, the authors propose that online consumers of information need to take on the work of a journalist in digital media to examine and verify the information when consuming digital media content online (Van Leuven et al.,2018).

Furthermore, Mihailidis & Viotty (2017), in their paper titled, *Spreadable Spectacle in Digital Culture: Civic Expression, Fake News, And The role of Media Literacies in "Post-Fact" Society*, adding that what they view to be contributing to the obscurity of facts and spread of misinformation on digital media platforms is the shareability of digital media content to other users at a click of a button. Reflecting on a paper titled, *Lies, Damn Lies, and Viral Content, How News Websites Spread (and Debunk) Online Rumours, Unverified Claims, and Misinformation* for Digital Journalism at Columbia University Tow Centre, Silverman said the following. "Online media frequently promote misinformation to drive traffic and social engagement" (Silverman,2015, p.1). The paper adds that, by design, on digital media, lies spread faster than trust, as the audience contributes their interpretations of events, contributing to misinformation and creating confusion (Silverman,2015, p.1). Therefore, with massive information available on digital media, a user still has the responsibility to further inquire on their own to ensure that the information accessed is credible; otherwise, they can contribute to spreading or sharing misinformation on digital media.

The flexibility that comes with the ability to edit the content on digital media, Das said, comes with a blind spot where users can appropriate other users' digital content without permission

touches on intellectual property violation (Webster, 2017; Das, 2020;). The last disadvantage to mention in this discussion is digital media addiction (Webster, 2017, Das, 2020). Khang, Kim & Kim (2013), from a paper published on *Computers in the human behaviour* journal, the authors add that digital media is engaging and interactive, thereby creating a sense of arousal when a person interacts with the media. As a result, digital media becomes a pleasurable experience stimulating positive emotions, which may result in dependence on the media. Here, it is essential to note that digital media has profoundly impacted society and changed how people see the world. As such, it is a good research field with literature that shares both the positives and negatives for a critical view of digital media in society. Also, for this paper, the review of the role and impact of digital media in society is equally important to add as a foundation for understanding digital media before exploring how digital newspaper IOL covers indigenous food to combat NCDs. Furthermore, the above literature touches on the role of digital media in society. It leads this discussion to how **digital media cover stories and later will connect with how digital media covers food.**

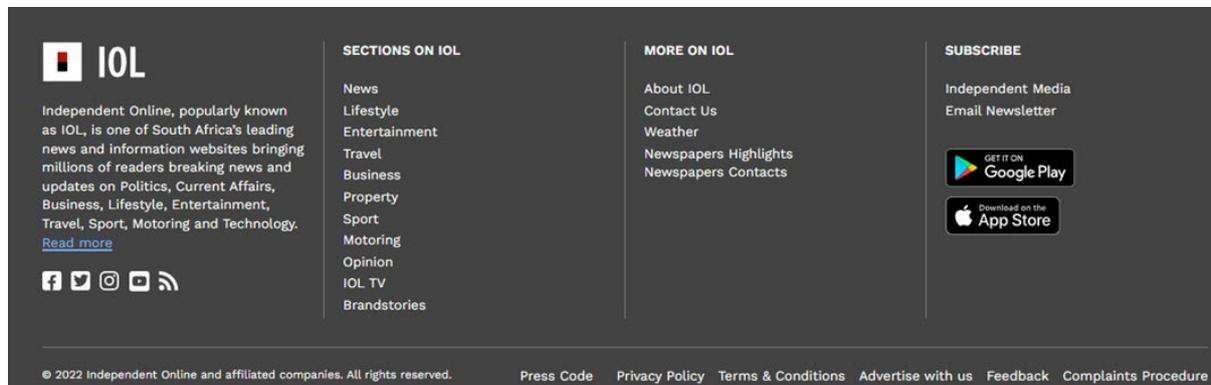
2.2 Digital media coverage

As mentioned above, digital media is a broad term that includes all media that relies on the internet for content distribution. Further, digital media covers a range of products, including news, education, entertainment, food, sports, and advertisement messages (Dincakman,2015, p.118). In an article titled, *semiotic analysis of E- newspapers interface views within the scope of advertisements*, Dincakman (2015) indicated that information shared on digital media, particularly news websites, is packaged for a specific purpose. Adding that it is delivered in a setting that gives it relevance and meaning contributes to its understanding by the viewer (Dincakman, 2015). In other words, digital content curators can encompass text, images, links, and audio and video content. If applied to digital media coverage, they all add elements for enhancing better articulation of the information intended to communicate on that digital media. Therefore, suggesting that other media formats, when covering an issue online, contribute to better framing the issue.

Furthermore, Dincakman (2015) adds that the layout of an E-newspaper, here, a news website, Dincakman "an interface of e-newspapers is the space to arrange the writings and images of the news, the links of e-newspapers content, and the items of the newspapers' corporate

identity" (Dincakman, 2015, p.117). Again, this layout is evident from IOL, as seen in the image below, taken from IOL's main website page.

Figure: 1 picture of the IOL main website



As seen from the above image from the IOL newspaper website interface, there is an invitation for adverts on the sites. The above reiterates the point made by Webster (2017) debunking myths about digital media, pointing out that, similar to traditional media, digital media websites operate on a financial model financed by advertisements. Therefore, the IOL newspaper website shares content aligned with the organisation's main agenda, aiming to attract advertisements with the viewership metrics. Here, Dincakman (2015) adds that the E-newspaper's main agenda is to keep their viewers sharing information with advertisers because, according to the scholar, E-newspapers in a virtual world, whereby the E-newspapers themselves are an advertising platform. In this light, the old ingredients for newsworthy, which makes the news

valuable to the audience, continue to apply in newspaper websites as they also try to attract viewers, in turn, advertisers.

From a study titled, *what is news? News values revisited (again)*, Harcup & O'Neill (2016) reflect on the news values in the age of digital media. The authors proposed that although many events and conversations might take place simultaneously, old news values such as using the power elite, celebrity, entertainment, surprise, and bad news (with an overtone of conflict or tragedy). While on the other hand, the good news (with an overtone of rescue or cure), magnitude, relevance, follow-up, and the newspaper agenda remains the core ingredient for attracting readership and viewership (Harcup and O'Neill,2016). Further, the authors identified five more values from the 2016 publication reporting on news values in digital media. These values are exclusivity, audio-visuals, shareability, conflict (controversies), and drama (Harcup

& O'Neill, 2016, p. 14821). As such, if an issue does not include the news values shared by the authors, that particular issue will get the least media attention. Therefore, news websites use the news values mentioned above as the main frame of the news stories covered by the news websites.

Furthermore, the news values limit what can be covered or attract media coverage. In this light, from the paper titled, *Information or Opinion? Media Bias as a Product Differentiation* Anand, Tella & Galetovic (2007) proposes that there is no specific definition for media bias because it takes many forms. However, bias is a preference over, and in news media coverage, it is what each media house chooses to cover over other issues. This argument draws back to Dincakman's (2015) study on *semiotic analysis of E- newspapers interface views within the scope of advertisements*. Here, the scholar says that E- newspapers, in the context IOL newspaper website, are an advertising platform, arguing that the online newspaper takes on a brand role online, including the newspaper organisation's corporate identity on the website interface (Dincakman, 2015, p. 118). From this statement, news websites, in this context, IOL website, like any brand, has its own corporate identity that distinguishes the websites from other news brands online. As such, the news content IOL covers is in support or somewhat aligned with the organisation's main agenda. Including the newspaper brand values that the news organisation intends to use to attract and retain its targeted audience with published content.

In the report titled *Challenges and opportunities for news media and journalism in an increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment*, Nielsen, Cornia & Kalogeropoulos share that online newspapers pose as brands in digital media. As a result, differentiating each news brand by the colours of the news organisation, content covered, website layout, text tone, and font size all contribute to the organisation's online identity (Nielsen et al., 2016, p.25). For example, News24 and IOL, online newspapers, both have the same objective to attract viewers and advertisers. However, each newspaper website has a different colour code used to brand the organisation's name and website interface (how the stories are layout) and with a similar leading main story but framed differently by each newspaper.

Figure: 2 of the IOL newspaper website main web page

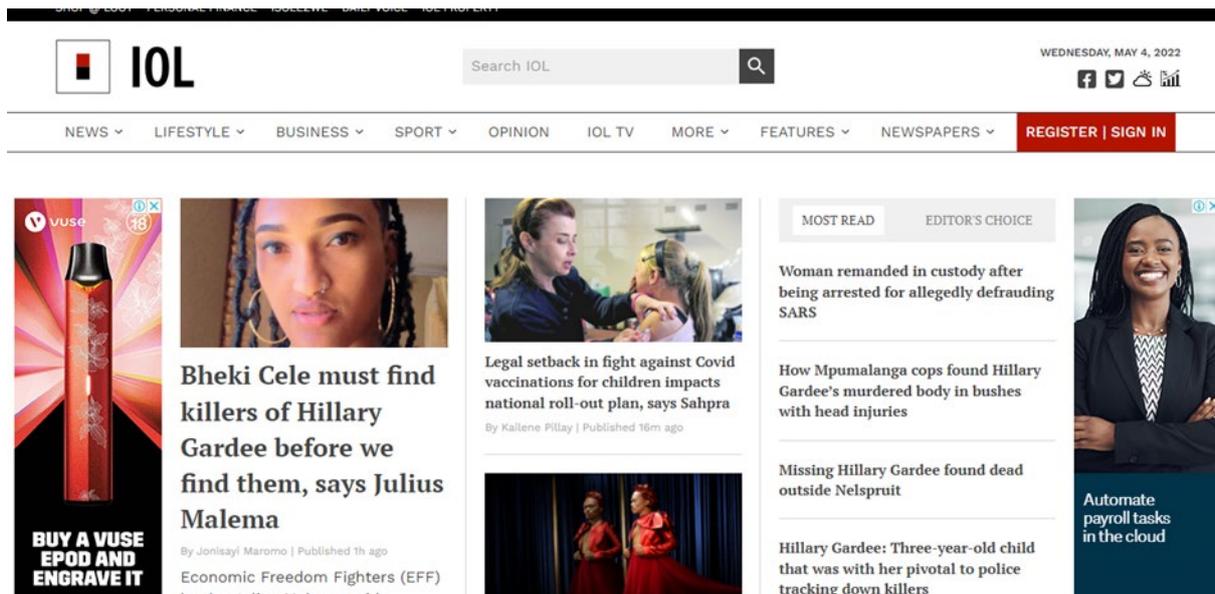


Figure: 3 of the News24 main webpage



The IOL newspaper website covers news, lifestyle, business, sport, opinion, and IOL tv, as shown in figure 2 just below the news organisation's name. In the study titled *The Design of Online Newspapers* Karaaslan, an Ege University mass communication scholar, added that this design the news website is designed to ensure that the reader can follow the news organisation's agenda (Karaaslan, 2019, p.258). As such, the design hierarchy from the IOL news website shows the paper's coverage agenda, whereby in its order, the news followed by lifestyle

coverage and business-related coverage comes as the third priority according to the website design of the news organisation. The lifestyle coverage from the IOL website includes entertainment news, travel, food, health, style and beauty, relationships, and competitions.

As such, the design hierarchy from the IOL news website shows the paper's coverage agenda. In its order, the news section, followed by lifestyle and business-related coverage, comes as the third priority according to the website design of the news organisation. The lifestyle coverage from the IOL website includes entertainment news, travel, food, health, style and beauty, relationships, and competitions. However, this paper is mainly interested in food coverage as the study intends to explore how the IOL, an online newspaper, covers the use and promotion of indigenous foods to combat NCDs in South Africa.

2.3 Food coverage in digital media

The virtual world offers flexibility for journalists and people creating content online to add multimedia formats to enhance how the issue is covered (Karaaslan, 2019, p. 2590). Further, Karaaslan (2019) states that, for online newspapers, images, in particular, are at the heart of storytelling in the virtual world in order to give context and attract viewers. Although the use of images existed in traditional media coverage, online newspapers also have the advantage of online enhancing image tools. Also, it is equally important to share that media coverage of food existed before digital media, from food catalogues and cookbooks to food adverts, mainly dominated by the fast food industry, cooking shows, and more recently, online food recipes (Rousseau, 2012; Lofgren, 2013). In digital media, food coverage can be in video, imagery, and text (Rousseau, 2012; Lofgren, 2013). The primary purpose of these forms is to give a viewer or a reader an appetising experience and encourage interest in the food (Lofgren, 2013).

Food has become part of the digital media interest because food is part of a cultural experience. Sharing recipes online communicates cultural experiences beyond time and space, drawing the audience's attention (Lofgren, 2013). In Lofgren Master's thesis, titled *Food blogging and food-related media convergence*, Lofgren shares that food display in digital media is part of the creative visual appearance for platforms other than emphasising the nutritional benefits. In this light, from an article titled, *eating with our eyes: From visual hunger to digital satiation*, Spence, Okajima, Cheok, A. Petit, & Michel (2016) sharing findings from a study of the brain when exposed to food images, the authors stated that, the rise of digital media food coverage using attractive photos of dishes and visually appetising cooking methods contributes to visual

hunger. Additionally, the visually appetising cuisines shared on digital media are often less healthy and higher in calories (Spence et al.,2016, p.54). Therefore, food published on digital media, the framing of these foods is pleasurable, and the coverage indirectly promotes overeating (Spencer et al.,2016). Also, although this may be true, the authors acknowledge digital media coverage of healthy recipes, which have become a niche market of their own in the virtual world (Spencer et al.,2016, p.52).

Further, a study titled, *ObesiTV: how television influences the obesity epidemic*, conducted by Boulos, Vikre, Oppenheimer, Chang & Kanarek (2012) verified that exposure to food images and videos had a direct influence on an individual's food preference. In other words, research indicates that exposure to food images, whether healthy or not, is likely to influence an individual food preference. Therefore, depending on which food images individuals are exposed to will likely influence their food choice. In other words, more coverage of healthy food images can increase an individual's food preference. Here Spencer et al. (2016) say that the creative representation of food online might be an informative strategy for health policies to promote healthy eating on digital media. The idea here is that intense media coverage of an issue result in that issue being regarded as important to the public, thus influencing public opinion. In this light, Berger and Freeman (2004) argues that the issues covered in the media appear as the main priority of the public agenda, thus influencing public opinion. Therefore, what the media shares, in this context, food recipes, will gain favourable public attention.

2. 4 Dietary Changes and NCDs in South Africa

Dietary changes in South Africa, as a result of shifting from indigenous foods to what researchers refer to as western foods, have resulted in an increasing number of NCDs in the country. As such, it is crucial first to highlight what indigenous foods are. In this study context, indigenous food (crops) or traditional food refers to foods originating in South Africa or Africa. These traditional or indigenous foods include vegetables and fruits. Indigenous vegetables have four categories: grains and roots, tuber, and leafy vegetables. Here it must be highlighted that grains can be either cereal or pulse. (South African Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries, 2013). Cereals such as pearl millet- *unyawothi*, sorghum- *amabele*, and pulse (mung bean, *bambara indlubu*, and cowpea *imbumba*. The second category includes (root or tuber and leafy vegetables) which constitute livingstones potato (Zulu round potato), colocasia

(*amadumbe*), and cassava (*umdumbula*). Furthermore, leafy vegetables include common labsqwater, amaranth (*imbuya*), bottle gourd (*iswela*), blackjack, jews mallow, black nightshade(*ilenjane*), African kale, cowpea, and cleome (*ulude*) (South African Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries, 2013). Indigenous fruits with their origins in South Africa include Marula, Mobola Plum, Red Milkwood, Wild Medlar, Kei Apple, Monkey Orange, Sour Fig, and Sour Plum (South Africa Online, 2020). African South Africans depended on these foods for centuries in their daily diets.

Further, African people collected the above fruits, cereal grains, and indigenous leafy vegetables from the wild before colonialism and now supermarkets (Mayekiso et al., 2017). The National Academy of Science (1996) further pointed out that colonisation distracted this way of life and new food systems emerged as the result of land expropriation (National Academy of Science, 1996). In other words, those with the land had the power over what to farm and plant. Therefore, leaving no room for African people to influence their food systems. As such, colonialism imposed dietary changes on most African communities, and more recently, supermarkets are taking that role (National Academy of Science, 1996; Mayekiso et al.,2017). Today, foreign foods such as (Kellogg's cornflakes and muesli) are the principal cereal in African communities. In contrast, African sorghum cereal products are unpopular compared to today's popular cereals produced by multinational corporations (National Academy of Science, 1996; Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996; Mayekiso et al., 2017).

Furthermore, in an article titled *Colonisation, the New World Order, and the eradication of traditional food habits in East Africa: a historical perspective on the nutrition transition*, Raschke & Cheema (2008) shine light on the rise of NCDs in low-income countries, arguing that post-colonialism era, known as democracy carried policies that promoted institutions set to govern food systems including production, trade, distribution and marketing of food (Raschke & Cheema,2008,p.2)—further reiterating that food systems became a significant source of profits, further as a means to economic and political power (Raschke & Cheema, 2008, p. 2). As such, the authors are pointing out that after the colonial powers collapsed, the new world order never restored the traditional food systems. Instead created new systems marked by multinational corporates visible in many parts of African communities as they serve as supermarkets (Raschke & Cheema, 2008, p.2). In other words, the dietary changes that most indigenous or traditional people have undergone are neither planned nor directed from the context of health education programs. Instead, it has been a systematic perpetuation

of a few players with the land and power to promote and market certain foods over other foods through the supply chain (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996, p.425).

With those above, it is essential to include a conversation about what indigenous food is to draw a complete picture of indigenous foods in South Africa. Here, indigenous food belongs to a specific culture of an ethnic group and should be consumed daily by the people (Banjo, 2013). Consequently, these foods carry meaning about a specific culture, and consuming these indigenous foods becomes a cultural symbol for the people (Charles & Kerr, 1988, p.98). Further, many scholars attest that when people are marginalised, whether by race, ethnicity, language, or religion, food often takes on distinct meaning as a vehicle for transmitting cultural traditions (Harbottle, 1996; Das Gupta, 1997; Jonsson et al., 2002; Kallivayalil, 2004; Devasahayam, 2005; Srinivas 2006).

The unpopularity of indigenous foods today is rooted in colonial historical events. These events suppressed the African people's way of life and their food systems in favour of the Western way of life and food systems (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996; The National Academy of Science, 1996; Devasahayam, 2005; Srinivas, 2006; Raschke & Cheema; 2008; Mayekiso *et al.*, 2017). In this light, Harbottle (1997) argues that maintaining food systems and habits serves as a cohesive and stabilising means to maintain the culture in a potentially threatening environment (Harbottle, 1997). Therefore, the advocacy of indigenous foods use, and promotion to combat NCDs in South Africa also brings the reimagination of indigenous foods afore in a popular culture where food has become an essential identity indicator, defining personality, social class, and defining of lifestyles (Stano, 2016, p.19). Thus, the conversation asserts indigenous foods in the main public agenda and further propels the acknowledgement of African people's way of life.

With those mentioned above, a collaborative study titled *Transforming the food system to fights non-communicable diseases* by Branca, Lartey, Oenema, Aguayo, Stordalen, Richardson, Arvelo, and Afshin pointed out that the rise in NCDs in lower-income countries is a result of poor food systems. They stated that poor food systems prioritise producing non-nutritious food at a low cost and inflating costs for safe and nutritious food (Branca *et al.*, 2019, p. 24). Further, the author august that the 21st century is characterised by efficiency, which has added to unhealthy eating habits, Branca et al. (2019) proposing that that to address NCDs in society, changes in what people eat, how food is produced, marketed, and consumed is important (Branca et al., 2019, p. 26). In response to NCDs, the South African government responded

with the *Strategic Plan for the Prevention, Control, and Monitoring of Non-Communicable Diseases* published by the Department of Health, spanning 2013 to 2017. The DH in SA proposed that to fight against NCDs; there should be a monitoring regulator on trans fats foods, increase tax on sugary beverages, and introduce legislation that bans the advertising of alcohol. Furthermore, encourage the media to promote indigenous foods consumption as they found healthy and accessible to low-income households in South Africa (Mayosi, Flisher, Lalloo, Sitas, Tollman & Bradshaw, 2009; Neugart et al., 2017; Aworh, 2018).

In conclusion, digital media has changed many aspects of our daily lives. Indeed, it is a well-studied field by scholars who are behaviourists, brain scientists, social scientists, media, cultural studies and other studies. Further, depending on interest and point of shed light on digital media's developments, its impact on society, impact society, and how food or recipes are c, and digital media plus and the discussion about indigenous foods with its position on combating NCDs in South Africa. Thus, this study is an overview of the discussion about food in digital media before exploring how IOL covers indigenous food to combat NCDs in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The following discussion will outline framework theories used for this study, namely agenda-setting theory, framing, representation and adding semiotics as a conceptual framework as the research looks at food articles on IOL, including the recipe images. First, the researcher will begin by focusing on agenda-setting theory and framing to build a clear foundation for this paper. Then, the researcher in this paper applies the framing theory as a sub-set to the agenda-setting theory. That is, framing theory further enables the researcher to explore other aspects of the subject explored in this paper and does not limit the researcher only to explore the main topic. In other words, framing is an expansion of agenda-setting theory which further adds that the media, through framing issues on the main agenda, then gives the issues specific meaning through its framing of events. Also, to offset the critique that agenda setting and framing are hierarchical and hence do not account for the agency of audiences, Hall's theories on representation will be considered in this chapter as part of the framework for the study.

3.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

It is crucial here to first state that according to Dearing and Rogers (1996), an agenda is a set of issues that are or will be communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a certain point in time, often in newsrooms. According to the authors, the hierarchy of issues places the stories written in the middle and the end as less critical news. Further, the term 'Agenda setting' was coined by McCombs and Shaw in 1972 to describe the media's capacity to affect the prominence of the headlines covered according to (Berger and Freeman, 2011, p. 4). For example, the decision to place a specific story on the front page, middle or at the end influences the readers' psychology as the front story is considered the most important story of the day when compared to other stories in the newspaper (Wanta et al., 2004, p. 367). Thus, editors, newsroom journalists and broadcasters play a significant role in shaping the political realities of people when selecting news for display in newspapers, radio or television (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p.176). Equally important, agenda setting also points out that the amount of

coverage given to a specific topic will set the importance of that topic. In other words, the media sets an agenda for all issues published or aired (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p.176).

For example, a politician's scandal will make the front page. However, the articles about food, obesity and chronic diseases will be on other pages (middle' newspaper or in some other food tab on the online newspaper). In addition, the agenda-setting theory rests on two assumptions. The first is that the mass media mediates and shapes people's reality instead of reflecting reality. That means news is not represented as received or according to the number of people affected by the stories but "rather in an order that a producer or editor determines to be the most "sensational," or most appealing to audiences" (Communication Online 2018).

The public attaches importance to issues based on the amount of coverage that the issue has been given (Simon, 2016, p. 367). According to Simon (2016), this argument is media agenda-setting. Further, the author states that early agenda-setting studies conducted around the 60s faced numerous difficulties regarding the conceptualisation and methodology of agenda-setting, including the confusion between cause and effect (Simon, 2016, p. 367). In addition, this period raised many questions, such as, "does the news set the audience agenda or editors and journalists have tailored their coverage to appeal to the political concerns of their readers" (Simon, 2016, p. 367). To find answers to these questions, researchers began tracing the increase and decrease of public interest in issues and events along with changes in news coverage patterns.

With the above mentioned, the research uncovered evidence necessary for media agenda-setting effects. Evidence included the addition that the level of media coverage determines the public agenda (Simon, 2016). In other words, news coverage influenced public interest. However, public interest did not influence the focus of the news. Further, political campaigns and public relations are significant sources of news and are some factors that influence media agendas (McCombs, 2018, p. 1). Other objects of attention that contribute to the news include public figures, political candidates, countries, public networks and corporations, utilising different research techniques and designs (McCombs, 2018, p.2). According to McCombs (2018), transferring salience from the media agenda to the public agenda is the first level of agenda setting.

Further, the first level of agenda setting includes attribute agenda. Here, McCombs (2018) refers to the characteristics and aspects of the topic or issue that complete a picture of the story

as attribute agenda. Further, "attribute agenda setting documents how the salience of the attributes of an object on the new agenda influences the salience of those attributes on the public agenda" (McCombs, 2018, p. 1).

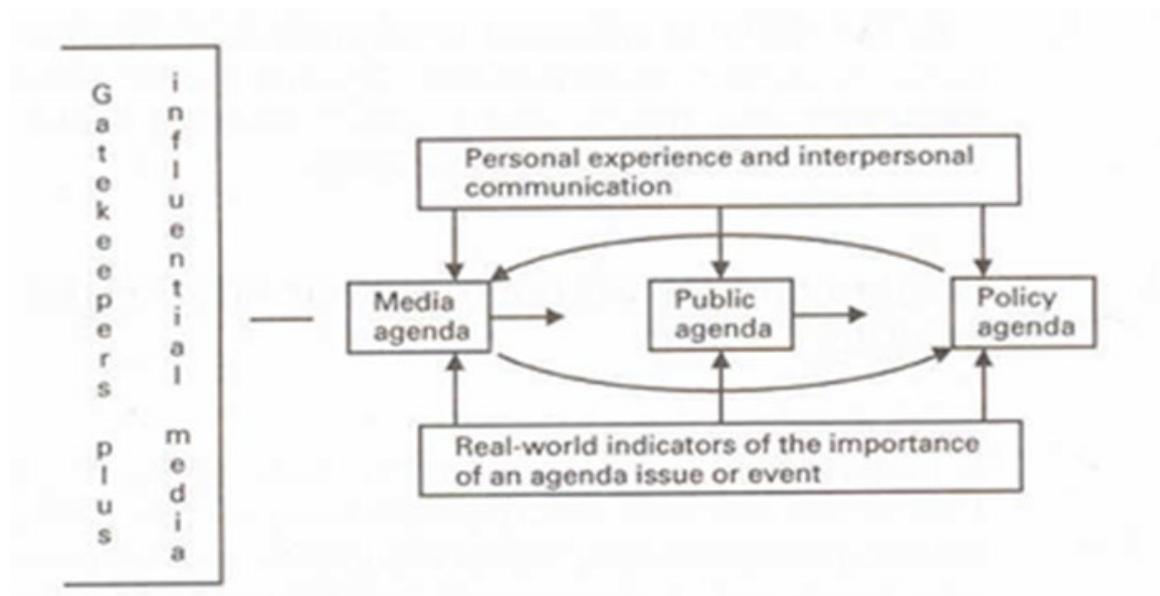
An essential part of attribute agenda-setting research explores the prominence of two parts of the attributes. First, this substantive part describes the characteristics of the issues and topics on the media and public agenda. The second part is essential for describing the tone of those topics and issues, whether positive, negative or neutral (McCombs, 2018, p. 1). The third level of agenda setting, according to McCombs (2018), is the intertwined relationship among objects and among attributes that is transferrable from the news media to the public (McCombs, 2018, 02). At the third level of agenda setting, McCombs (2018) argues that "bundles of elements are presented as networks where each element is connected to numerous other elements" (McCombs, 2018, p. 2).

"Agenda-setting explains why information about certain issues available, how other issues is available to the public, how that shapes public opinion and why certain issues are addressed through policy actions while other issues are not" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 4). Here, through agenda-setting theory, social issues constantly compete for attention from the media, the public, and the policymakers (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). To get issues on the public agenda means placing the issue on the public agenda in the form of opening conversations about the issue in the broader public to influence public opinion and affect public policymakers, as we have seen within the EFF on the 'land expropriation without compensation issue' (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). As a result, the topic gained public attention through public persuasion, and the EFF gained publicity and community support on the land debate. As a result, the political party has placed the 'land expropriation without compensation issue, a susceptible subject in South Africa, on the public agenda. Further, fostering the current ruling party (ANC) to establish a committee to draft constitutional amendments on land expropriation without compensation, according to (Daily Maverick, 2018).

There are three main components of the agenda-setting theory process. Namely, media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda, according to Dearing and Rogers (1996). These components are interrelated; media agenda setting is the most important of all the variables because to have an issue on the public agenda, the issue must be on the mass media agenda to receive awareness. A public agenda setting follows this component because the issue must be on the public agenda, 'engaging the public through conversations' (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The third component

in the process is the policy agenda -setting this as a response to the media agenda and public agenda, as seen with the 'land expropriating without compensation in South Africa'. The policy agenda leads to amendments or designing new policies that the government can pass to address and solve social problems. According to Dearing & Rogers (1996), the policy agenda is the key because it represents the media and public agenda's activity and influence (Rogers et al. 2014). In other words, the policy is the institutionalisation of responses to public challenges, and this is how the ruling government expand its governing because of this flexibility (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). As seen here, the public and the mass media are fostering change through political behaviour and thus influencing the policy agenda.

Figure 3.1: Communication model



Source: Rogers & Dearing, 1988

Figure: 1 showing how the media communication works in relation to the public agenda and policy agenda.

The model above illuminates how the stories or events selected by news editors and featured in the media influence the public agenda. Therefore, informing 'what people think is important', which in turn influences how people vote and think of policies because the media, according to Berger and Freeman (2011, p.4), plays a massive role in shaping personal/interpersonal beliefs.

The media focuses on specific issues and leaves out others (McCombs, 1976). In this light, Tewksbury & Scheufele (2005) state that the converse is also true in that the media, by not focusing on issues, allows us to ignore issues by absence from the public domain. This means that absence means a lot, especially in this study. Framing theory is an expansion of agenda-setting theory. It is relevant to this study as framing refers to how an issue is portrayed in the news influencing audience reception of that issue (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2005). Goffman (1974) was the first to introduce the theory of framing, and he argued that the world is so complex that audiences needed frames to reduce complex information into small 'bite-size pieces' to digest it.

Scholars studying agenda setting concluded that "agenda setting effects - the successful transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public occurs whenever there is a reasonably open political system and a reasonably open media system" (McCombs et al., 2013. p.75). In other words, democracy is a crucial aspect to contextualise the narrative when studying the effects of agenda setting because there is transparency in media. The language of exclusion and inclusion is applied in agenda setting during selecting attributes that best explain the subject under discussion (Reese, 2010, p.18). Attribute agenda setting and framing brings us back to the influence of the mass media on attitudes and opinions.

For example, to achieve a dramatic effect, movie directors may use black and white or sepia tones to get an emotional impact. That is when mass media include effects on telling stories; the pictures, background music or objects used can communicate strong emotions and feelings, such as opinions (McCombs et al., 2013).

With those above, it is essential to highlight that agenda-setting theory has evolved over the years to clarify further and consolidate the interrelations between traditional media, new media and audiences (Slavnic, 2016). The traditional media model, seen above in figure 1, suggests that the mainstream then, radio, television and newspaper set the public agenda, which is more of a top-down view of media communication (Weimann & Brosius, 2017, p.74). On the other hand, the new media operates on the internet with more defined audiences. These audiences are defined by their interests (individuals set their profiles on social media accounts to include their interests ranging from food, fashion, technology, movies and other entertainment products.) Which has resulted in a modified perspective on who sets the agenda for the public. In the era of social media, audiences are not only consumers of information but also producers through liking, commenting and sharing (Weimann & Brosius, 2017, p.60). In light of who sets

the agenda in the era of social media news, according to Weimann & Brosius's (2017) studies, there is a correlation between agenda setting between traditional media and new media (Weimann & Brosius, 2017, p. 62). In this light, the authors state that there is a transfer of agenda between the two (Weimann & Brosius, 2017, p. 75). Further, the traditional media's potential to set the public's agenda has partially diminished, leaving the new media to mediate the agenda's impact (Weimann & Brosius, 2017, p. 78).

3.3 Framing Theory

The working definition of framing is that verbal and visual symbols are combined to provide an understanding of the world that communicators and other sources attempt to share with people (Hänggli & Kriesi 2010, p. 11). Further, Hänggli & Kriesi (2010) say that "frames are organising principles that are socially shared and present over time, that work symbolically to structure the social world meaningfully" (Hänggli & Kriesi 2010, p. 12). In this light, the terms explaining frames, "organising, principles, shared, persistent, symbolically, and structure," each carries an in-depth understanding of how framing works (Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010, p.14).

The idea of framing in the mass media originates from the "assumption that how an issue is characterised in the news reports can influence how it is understood by the audience" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 09). For example, the words used for an issue can set a tone for the overall coverage of an event or an issue. Therefore, it influences how the reader takes on the subject covered. To effectively and efficiently communicate new information to people, primary frameworks are applied to categorise information and interpret it meaningfully (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Therefore, framing on the macro level refers to modes of representation, such as words or images that the journalist and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing schemas for their audience, e.g. on the food section, to present the recipes that the communicator is discussing on the issue, the communicator would use relevant images

For example, the below snapshot demonstrates how the IOL publisher has included an image to add context to the piece written:

Figure 3.2: A picture of a celebrity chef



[Champagne and red meat pairing? Yes, please!](#)

Champagne house Moët & Chandon recently hosted a intimate and unusual Moët Rosé and red meat pairing experience.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

The order in which a story is framed, in other words how a story has been presented, Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007 argue that it directly influences the choices people make about how they process the information encoded in the story. For example, using the above article that has use an image of a bottle of popular champagne amongst the upper-class individuals and a steak of meat. In this case a person who choses non-alcoholic beverages, when viewing the article, they might be more interested in learning if the publisher has shared any alternatives on the article. On the other hand, a person who consumes alcoholic beverages and is a vegetarian, they might be viewing the same article, however, thinking of their similar alternatives to steak on how that combination of the champagne with that alternative might work. Therefore, different audiences turn to consume media publications with different objectives based on what the publisher has used as supporting images for the article.

The history of framing has its roots in psychology and sociology. Kahneman, is one the first scholars who laid a foundation on framing theory from the psychology perspectives and won the economics Nobel price in 2002. Kahneman & Tversky (1979, 1984), explored the psychological origins of framing and Goffman in 1974 laid a foundation for sociological of framing. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), Kahneman & Tversky "examined how different presentations of essentially identical decision-making scenarios influence people's choices and their evaluation of the various options presented to them" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). On the other hand, on the sociology perspective the focus remains on

the presentations used by the media such as story lines, symbols and stereotypes to frame an issue or topic for the audience (Simon, 1995, p. 369). According to Simon (1995), the responsibility attached to political issues encompasses powerful psychological cue.

The basis of sociology framing is that, there is plenty of information around the world and there is continuous difficulty to interpret the experiences about the world therefore, people utilise interpretive schemas or primary frameworks' (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In this light, the media plays a role of suggestive answers to these questions. Frames can be divided into natural and societal frames: "natural frames help to interpret events originating from natural and nonintentional causes, whereas societal frames help to locate, perceive, identify, and label" (Scheufele, 2000, p. 21). For example, frames used to cover exotic desserts on food articles would include the jargon that is associated with relaxation, freedom of choice and would allow the reader to interpret the text as to locate and identify the individual socio economical class whom the issue is intended to. For example, the below image,

Figure 3.3: A picture of a dessert



Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Framing of news has various functions in the media text that Wolfsfeld & Gadi (1997) define as follows. Frames organise information. Here, the authors states that frames organise information although it may differ how the complete information is organised. This function is a continuous effort that is added to create meaning. In this light, the open questions include "how much meaning frames - some more ambitious than others attempt to organise information and how successful a frame in taking account social reality it attempts to decode " (Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010, p.1). An example of organising information through framing would be the choice of the editor to use an image that is related to the issued being covered. Therefore, for a communicator sharing a roasted chicken recipe, it only adds more meaning to attach an image

of a perfectly roasted chicken to organise this information better for the reader or audience. Thus, to further categorise the issue under food and recipes on the publication.

Framing can organise information in various ways however, here, the focus will be on the two ways of processing the idea of framing, which is in cognitively and culturally. According to Goshorn & Gandly (1995), through cognitive organising frames we are invited into thinking about social issues in a specific manner. This is completed through appealing to the general human biases (Goshorn & Gandly, 1995). Substantiating this idea by bringing in the research study about "the effects of information that emphasises positive or negative aspects, the individual or the collective and the episodic or thematic" (Goshorn & Gandly, 1995, p.12). Further, pointing out that when reporting on racial issues, the reports often focused on winners or losers in the conversation (Goshorn & Gandly, 1995, p.12). An example on food recipes would be where the publishers focused on how to make the recipe or the benefits of eating the food being discussed on an article. Other than, focusing on how the ingredients were acquired or the history if the spices used for the cuisine.

It is important to highlight that organising with frames at times might be limiting in attributing whether the issue is saving lives or speaks about death (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). For example, according to Iyengar's (1991) when comparing issues on the bases of episodic or thematic treatment. As a result, the author uncovers that the episodic story provides readers with an overall idea of events. Then, the individual can be rational on reception compare to a thematic based storyline that is more accurate (Iyengar's, 1991). Here, continuing with the publication of recipes, an example of a limiting perspective can be identified where the publication, writing about food recipes does not stress or highlight the health hazards associated with consuming excessive sugar when writing the recipe on how to make a chocolate cake.

Cultural frames not only organise one story, but they also bring us into cultural experience continuously above any current knowledge about the world. Cultural frames according to Reese (2010) can be regarded as strategic frames. In this light, frames operate beyond immediate reality to offer us other alternative methods, we can articulate in our social reality (Reese, 2010). Here, Wolfsfeld (1997) points out the notion proposed by Gamsons that frames can range from depth where this is classified as older, less popular and more general while shallow refers to more current and specific issues. For example, during the Vietnam war the media used the frames such as 'peace' through strength and 'Cold War' which are deeper than falling domino or unprovoked attacked (Reese, 2010). Here, the Cold War frame is rooted on many

different assumptions and gives picture of the global relations with that specific time. In relation to food recipes, frames such as ‘indulge’ ‘enjoy’ can be seen as cultural frames on food articles promoting the pleasurable moments of eating.

Frames produces summaries, as such the text differs from the original information. As a result, a frame is referred to as an organising principle that emphasises its abstract nature (Reese, 2010). The frame is distinguished from its symbolic origins because there are other layers that generate principles when framing a story. "Frames may be best viewed as an abstract principle, tool or schemata of interpretation that works through media texts to structure social meaning" (Reese, 2010, p. 14). Frames can be identified from the communicator, in the text, from the receiver and on culture (Reese, 2010). For example, when a communicator is writing about a roasted chicken recipe, the communicator will not expand on details of how to source or buy the chicken, where to ideally buy the spices, how the chicken will look after you have marinated as per instruction, but the recipe will just share a picture of the roasted chicken and give the ingredients. This is an example of the frame in its abstract form. Further proposing the idea that frames are principles of organising information and links to it can be identified from media discourse, individuals, within a community and from cultural practices (Reese, 2010). For the author, this should alarm consumers of information that within the text they read, there are interrelated, competing principles from the secondary source and the media professionals that produced the text (Reese, 2010). In other words, there is another side of the story to the story that is published and read by people. For example, the story of who bought the chicken and where they bought the spices, is the story on recipes that never get to be told.

Frames exist to simplify information for it to be successfully shared or communicated with the wider audience. Frames must be “shared in order to be useful and noteworthy or organising devices, we must question the extent to which they are shared” (Reese, 2010, p. 16). In this light, the authors bring light to the idea that frames exist to give a brief insight about a story however, frames outside contexts are not useful and serve no purpose. The question on the extent frames are shared may assist in determining whether the frames are personal and idiosyncratic, social and shared, or they are openly and deeply shared, with a specific culture (Reese, 2010). From here, the authors state that the frames can be regarded as a continuous process of obtaining and discarding organised information. Thus, depending on the amount of people that find them beneficial and share them (Reese, 2010). For example, Neuman et al., (1992) noted that when news media used conflict and powerlessness as tactical frames, it occurred that the audience through those frames interpreted them as human impact and moral

values. With the above mentioned, it should be noted that frames are not imposed on the audience directly however, for a frame to be valuable and shared depends on the readers acceptance of the coded text which brings the text to be produced with negotiated meaning (Reese, 2010).

The importance of frames depends on the consistence and recurrence that is repeated used over time. Here, Reese (2010) poses a question of what accounts for one frame persistence over another. In answering this question, the authors bring in Gitlin's definition that explains frames as a persistence and routine way of handling information, suggesting consistence patterns that resist change. For example, in media, food recipes are accompanied by images that are presented as final products. This is consistent with all the publication of recipes on magazines. The idea of routine in framing according to Reese (2010) suggests that frame has become second nature well imbedded into the way things are done, as seen on media when recipes of food are shared. This is evident from the local news when covering domestic protests and stories about violence (Reese & Buckalwe, 1995). Further, the continuous reports on these subjects indicate a routine and suggests that we have identified a structure that speaks to the complete picture of social issues. Therefore, "the more persistence the frame, the more likely it deserves examination" (Reese, 2010, p. 16). Also, this reoccurrence is seen with food coverage where images of food recipe takes primary of the text of how to follow through the shared recipe.

Frames are communicated symbolically. This means that frames are built and communicated in different forms through a combination of symbolic strategies (Reese, 2010, p. 17). For example, to communicate a recipe about how a roasted chicken is made, the publisher would use an image of the already roasted chicken, as opposed to sharing an image of an unroasted chicken. Therefore, symbolically representing a recipe with the already roasted chicken to draw viewers on the recipe. Further, what constitute a frame, Miller in 1997 examined specific vocabulary to identify and compare competing frames. From here, the authors stated that there was evidence of frames in media texts that create a record of verbal and visual features that signify a frame (Reese, 2010, p. 17). Furthermore, according to Pan & Kosicki (1993) there are other four structures imbedded on the news discourse namely: syntactical, script, thematic and rhetorical. In this light, Gamson & Modigliani (1989) proposed that they could measure framing devices through metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions and visual images. Framing symbolism is clearer when studying it independently from the text which might limit the focus of the story (Reese, 2010, p.10).

Frames organise information to give it traceable patterns or structure which may differ in its complexity. Here, according to Reese (2010) frames offer a structure to a narrative that is created by numerous symbolic devices which are available from the social world. For example, the main frame may not be present when the issue is still fresh to the wider public however, as the issue gains public attention over time an appropriate frame structure will begin taking its form in a complex yet cohesive manner (Reese, 2010, p.17). In other words, "the frame metaphor draws our attention to the issue by combining symbols, giving them relative emphasis and attaching them to larger cultural ideas" (Gamson & Stuart, 1992, p. 56). Further, the symbolic structure of a frame is embedded is based on the constructed ideologies and rules that humans apply to make sense of the world (Reese, 2010, p. 17).

3.4 Representation

Stuart Hall's (1997) foundational theories on representation are significant in accounting for the active audience. In this study, the researchers focus on representation and the discourses created around food. These discourses highlight particular aspects of food and render invisible other aspects of food. The media can create a consumptive mood meaning influence over audiences rather than suggesting a hypodermic media model.

Hall stated, "Representation connects meaning and language to culture. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture." (Hall, 1997, p.15). As this study focuses on representation rather than reception, denotation and connotation, preferred or dominant meanings, and negotiated and oppositional meanings are essential. Hall refers to Barthes's denotation as the first level of literal description. The second level is connotation which moves beyond the descriptive interpretation, "the completed sign [is interpreted] in terms of the wider realms of social ideology – the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society" (Hall, 1997, p. 38-39). Hence, the connotative meanings of online texts focusing on food are vital as it enables an understanding of the dominant values and ideologies driving the discourse around food.

Hall described dominant or preferred meanings (2007, 409) to refer to those texts which follow meaning and ideologies according to social and perhaps political hierarchies. However, Hall always maintains that these texts are never determinate as the process of creating signification is continuous in order to "win plausibility for and command as legitimate a decoding of the

event within the limit of dominant definitions in which it has been connotatively signified" (Hall 2007, 410). Hall referred to this work as encoding.

Hall also outlined three important and different ways audiences may decode the encoded media texts. First, the dominant-hegemonic position is where the viewer decodes the message in terms of the codes legitimated by the encoding process and the dominant cultural order. The negotiated position is a contradictory position where the viewer has the potential to adopt and oppose the dominant televisual codes. Finally, the oppositional position is where the viewer recognises the dominant televisual codes and engages with the content (Procter, 2004, p. 69 - 70). While these possibilities for decoding exist, Jessop (2004, p.159) advances an exciting idea of the cultural and political economy. He argues that semiotic elements can have a role in stabilising capitalist formations. This can occur by selecting particular discourses for interpreting events, legitimising actions, and representing social phenomena. The retention of some resonant discourse enforces insofar as procedural devices that privilege these discourses and their associated practices also filter out contrary discourses and practices (Jessop 2004, p.164 -165).

These ideas are significant for analysing food culture as it is encoded on online news sites in South Africa. The selection of particular food cultures repetitively results in retention and reinforcement. What will be important here is to observe what discourses are repeated to represent food culture in South Africa and what is not added to these representations. This study acknowledges that although the media communication model has evolved to be more inclusive and audiences viewed as more active, they are engaging with the text and contributing to creating news (Ytre-Arne & Das, 2019). However, the media continues to play a critical role in economic circulation whereby businesses use the media to advertise their product or services creatively in order to capture the eye of the audience who is a consumer in that context (Zhang, 2018).

Therefore, this study focuses on the representation of the products when they are publicised in the public domain as part of the agenda that IOL has decisively selected to maintain its content online. This process will be completed through agenda setting and framing theory as a theoretical lens to guide this study. First, the researcher will observe data which is food recipes that IOL published from 2014 until August 2018 to understand which recipes are commonly featured. Then, from these recipes, the researcher will study how these recipes are represented

to the audience, including how recipes are framed for readers and positioned on the 'digital website', also considering the creativity applied to those recipes and interpreting the underlying meaning of those efforts. This process will assist the researcher with reporting on the results about what food recipes are commonly promoted on IOL, how IOL represents food on their website, and analyse the overall narrative about how IOL represents and frames food in the South African context on their media channel.

It is essential to state that the media's primary function is to identify critical issues and topics for that specific time within a particular community. Afterwards, the media attracts attention to those key issues (McCombs & Funk, 2011). "People try to make sense of political issues by reducing them to questions of responsibility" (Iyengar, 1993, p. 45). Frames allow people to understand and create meaning about specific issues (Goffman, 1974). In this light, citizens deal with second-hand reality, a reality that is structured by editors and journalists who report about events and situations (McCombs, 2018). In other words, the media informs us of the latest events worldwide that are out of our immediate reach or experience, using frames to allow people to comprehend issues in a rapidly changing world. Agenda setting and framing theory form the critical theoretical framework for this study. Framing is a conceptual extension of agenda setting (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). From a theoretical perspective, framing allows us to unpack how the media influences reception. As Goffman famously noted, agenda setting influences what audiences think about, while framing influences how they think about issues raised (Goffman 1986). The following chapter discusses framing and agenda-setting in media and how these two concepts can advance our worldwide understanding of issues and topics.

Critiques of agenda and framing theory maintain that it needs to account for audience agency. In order to address this, the researcher incorporates Hall's theories on representation to accommodate the possibilities of audience agency. The researcher's focus in this research is strictly on representation and the consumptive mood it creates. However, this does not nullify the possibility of audiences receiving media texts in a negotiated or oppositional manner.

3.5 Semiotics

Lastly, the researcher applies semiotics as a conceptual framework that links agenda setting, framing and representation for this study. Semiotics according to Husain & Musfirah (2021), is broadly acknowledged as a study that includes all means of communication.

Semiotics can be in the form of words, sounds and other signs that can be communicated. French Philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure and American Charles Sanders Peirce are considered the founding fathers of semiotics, and others such as Roland Barthes, French essayists have been identified as early thought leaders who have put forward semiology as "the correlation between the signifier and signified which form a sign" (Husain & Musfirah, 2021). Here, the authors noted that language and semiotics are interconnected. "Each word in the language has a meaning, and symbols and signs simultaneously present it" (Husain and Musfirah, 2021, p. 3). The signs can be natural or artificial (Jadou and Muwafaq, 2021). The meaning derived from the signs and symbols can be interpreted differently according to different interpreters. As such, this study applies semiotics as a conceptual framework treating meaning as an interpretation derived from diverse perspectives that can be identified between a signifier and a signified.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed agenda setting as a communication model used in media and further certified that the model is appropriate to assess the news select by IOL, particularly recipe articles. Thus, the model indicates that the articles chosen were not selected or mentioned by default but with an intention to fulfil the needs of their audience. Further, the chapter touched on representation, describing that the media uses various means to communicate meaning applying the stand for instead of the actual item or thing that is discussed. Lastly, the chapter rounded the discussion with showing that the news is constructed for a specific purpose, with a specific intention to convey a specific message. These coordinated specifications are frames, which can be in the form of words or images in contents of this study. Therefore, here, the researcher shared a discussion that interlinks agenda setting, framing, representation and semiotics as theoretical frameworks that holds the medias communication strategy.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research methodology provides a systematic, logical and practical way to conduct the study to fulfil the research question(s) search. This chapter describes the methodology the researcher used to answer the study's research questions, gives a detailed description of the research paradigm that this study is based on and the methods utilised to gather and analyse data. The data for this study is the food articles covered and published by the IOL news website from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018.

4.2 Case study background

The Independent Online known as IOL, is a news website that covers politics, current affairs, business, lifestyle, entertainment, food, travel, sport, motoring and technology-related content. The news website also receives contributions from other newspapers such as *The Star* and *Pretoria News* in Gauteng, *The Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* in the Western Cape and *The Mercury* and *Daily News* in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as national business publications Business Report and Personal Finance (Independent Online, 2018). According to MyBroadband (2018), the IOL news website had over 3 853 266-page visitors and 20 820 241-page viewers in 2018, making the online newspaper the third largest online news website in South Africa.

As such, this variety of content contributions from different parts of South Africa was an exciting factor for the study because one can assume that with so much contribution from

publications around South Africa, there will also be a variety of food coverage inspired by these different publications. In conjunction with this, the researcher was interested in food coverage from January 2014 until August 2018 because this was during the implementation plan for the prevention and control of NCDs diseases in South Africa, scheduled to take place from 2013 until 2017. Furthermore, one of the key strategies outlined in the document included the collaboration between the media and the South African department of health to work together to promote indigenous vegetables. Thus, the researcher wanted to uncover the extent of the collaboration between the media, particularly the media coverage of healthy living and indigenous foods, as the DOH had previously pledged to fight NCDs in South Africa. To determine the extent to which, according to Ndinda et al. (2018), the promotion of physical activity and policies that target unhealthy diets, including salt reduction (2013) and trans-fats (2011) in processed foods are promoted in the media using the IOL as a case study.

4.3 Study Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative study approach uses “a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behaviour” (Black 1994, p.1). In other words, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to observe events in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or elucidate phenomena in terms of the meanings people assign to them (Denkin & Lincoln, 1994). In this light, this study observes the recipes published by IOL from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018 to explore media coverage of healthy food and indigenous food concerning combating NCDs. From this data, the researcher selects critical themes that form part of understanding if IOL covers food concerning South African dietary guidelines and if the online newspaper covers food concerning NCDs. This is achieved through filtering the qualitative data with the main themes and retrieving the frequency that occurs from the themes using Miner Lite.

This thesis uses Thematic content analysis as a method of data collection to address the problem under discussion. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) defined *qualitative content analysis* as one of the numerous research methods used to analyse text data. Qualitative research is “concerned with the quality and nature of human experience and what these phenomena mean to individuals. It seeks to understand and explain beliefs and behaviours within the context in which they occur” (Draper, 2004, p. 642). The objective of qualitative research is to observe events in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or elucidate, phenomena in terms of the meanings people

assign to them (Denkin & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore qualitative methods use “a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behaviour” (Black, 1994, p. 1). Advocates for qualitative research methods argue that perceived limitations of qualitative methods were born out of a misunderstanding of the methods. As such, it highlights the potential of qualitative research methods to explain and help understand complex health and nutritional issues where using quantitative methods has proven less effective (Black, 1994; Draper, 2004).

4.4 Research paradigm

This study takes an interpretive perspective. Interpretivism is referred to as relativism based on an individual’s perspective, which is unique to each individual’s experiences with the world (Scotland, 2012). Kelly et al. (2004) pointed out that interpretative research is based on firsthand encounters. The researcher attempts to interpret what has been observed from the study and shares the findings in the form of engaging interpretation. As such, the backdrop to interpretivism is that human beings create reality through language, objects or acts that carry the meaning given by the creators (Kelly et al., 2004). In this light, Schwartz-Shea & Yanow (2013) added that, with the interpretive perspective, the meaning could be interpreted differently by other people from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, the researcher can interpret the findings using knowledge deconstruction tools to reach a new perspective from the observed information guided by their research question to reach a different perspective. For this study, the researcher interprets results derived from Miner Lite software based on the coded themes that have been added by the researcher, informed by research questions. The researcher further interprets the patterns created by the occurrence of the themes in the space of 4 years and eight months to answer the study’s central questions.

4.5 Research approach

This research uses a qualitative approach to meet the research objectives and answer the research question. The qualitative research approach is essential for the researcher to understand and document human behaviour because it allows the researcher to uncover the motives behind people’s behaviour towards things such as different subjects in life. In other

words, why do certain things happen the way they do in a community, or do people think a certain way. Thus, it is common to hear about ‘Motivation Research’ within qualitative research (Kothari, 1990, p.3). In this light, through qualitative research, Kothari (1990) shows that various factors influence individuals to act in a specific manner, to like or dislike something, and their attitudes and opinions can be understood using the qualitative approach.

Qualitative research is centred on the idea that includes quality of a certain kind (Kothari, 1990, p.3). In other words, qualitative research is concerned with understanding human behaviour (Kothari, 1990, p.3). “This type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in-depth interviews to reach an understand and other techniques of qualitative research are word association tests, sentence completion tests, story completion tests and similar other projective techniques” (Kothari, 1990, p.3). For instance, this research focuses on how IOL has framed the words to describe the food recipes the website shared from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2017 to understand how the recipes shared how are geared towards promoting a healthy lifestyle.

A researcher observes events in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or elucidate, phenomena in terms of the meanings people assign to them when using a qualitative research approach (Denkin & Lincoln, 1994). Also, it is essential to state that with this approach, the researcher is positioned as the primary instrument whereby the researcher collects and analysis the information (Denkin & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, the qualitative approach uses “a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behaviour” (Black, 1994, p.1). In this study, the researcher intends to observe IOL food recipes published from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018 to gain knowledge of the popularity of indigenous food coverage from the paper.

4.6 Study design

This study adopted a case study design. A case study design is a form of qualitative analysis that includes an in-depth and comprehensive observation of a social unit (Kelly et al., 2004, p.113). In other words, the case study design allows a researcher to single out an aspect from a life setting of a group, institution or an individual for comparison with another group for

analysis of its interrelations (Kelly et al., 2004). Further, research experts share that with a case study strategy, the researcher can keep real-life events' holistic and meaningful characteristics. The real-life events include individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations and industries' maturation, offering an unmediated observation (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Furthermore, the case study design is beneficial in situations where the contextual conditions of the events being studied are critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Thus, the case study in this research is the Independent Online newspaper food articles presented under the recipe category on the news website from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2021. The study reviews the Independent Online newspapers' coverage of indigenous food to combat NCDs. Therefore, the case study strategy allows the researcher to gather articles from IOL for analysis without meeting IOL journalists or editors for commentary, which may influence the study.

4.7 Data collection method

Secondary data was collected through the published stories on food on the IOL website from 1st January 2014 to 31st August 2021. When secondary data is collected through desktop research, the researcher depends on the current information, known as secondary data, that can be accessed with a computer to complete the study and answer the research questions (Largan & Morris, 2019). Secondary data is information that has already existed and has been collected by other researchers, scholars, journalists, experts and writers and made available through different digital sites (Largan & Morris, 2019). This information includes census data, life statistics, online journals, articles, E-books, websites, ecological and demographic data, and personal documents, such as diaries, autobiographies, letters, and case studies available online for public use, which a researcher use to complete the study (Largan & Morris, 2019). For this study, the information used for analysis was extracted from the IOL website under the food category. In addition, as mentioned above, other online resources were used to guide the literature review and build a comprehensive study to answer the research questions.

4.7.2 Data collection instruments

There are two instruments that a qualitative researcher can use to collect information. The first is when a researcher is a critical instrument in conducting a qualitative study, and the second is the interview guide, whereby the researcher uses interviews to collect data (Largan & Morris, 2019). For this study, the researcher collects information from pre-existing events and organises the information in order to analyse the results to answer the research question.

4.7.2.1 Researcher as key instrument

This study used the researcher as a pivotal instrument to collect the data. The researcher is someone with interest in indigenous foods and health-related subjects. The researcher is keen on exploring IOL healthy living and indigenous food coverage to see if the online newspaper publishes indigenous recipes, especially after the DOH pledged to work with the media to promote indigenous foods as part of a healthy diet to combat NCDs in South Africa. In a summative approach to qualitative content analysis, data analysis begins with searches for occurrences of the identified words and themes by hand or computer. Then, word frequency counts or themes are identified and interpreted. The source or speaker is also identified with the help of keywords and themes that the researcher and her interest determine.

4.7.3 Pilot study

Non-communicable diseases were previously seen as western diseases, affecting only high-income countries. However, in recent years, research has shown a growing number of non-communicable diseases in developing countries, including South Africa. In response to this, the South African health department held a summit in September 2011 to discuss the strategic plan that can be executed between 2013 and 2017 to prevent and control non-communicable diseases in South Africa. For the South African department of health strategy to work, the department took advice from non-governmental organisations, academics and other experts, agreeing that the department would work with the media to promote a healthy lifestyle and the consumption of indigenous vegetables for a nutritious diet to combat non-communicable disease. With those above, the researcher was keen to observe how the department has collaborated with South African media platforms to promote indigenous vegetables as part of a healthy diet.

4.7.4 Data analysis

This study applies thematic analysis (TA) as an analysing data tool for the IOL food recipes. TA analysis is generally known as identifying themes and patterns from a set of qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3351). A physicist and historian of science, Gerald Holton, first developed TA and clearly articulated the processes of applying the method; thus, it was accepted late in social science as an analysis method for qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.178). Furthermore, TA has been used in media, communications and creative studies as the analysis method (Herzog, Handke & Hitters, 2019, p.12). According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), “TA consist of the analytical construction of (a) codes (b) themes in qualitative verbal expression (c) patterns of recurrence, evaluation or association with these patterns themselves” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3351). In other words, TA is the process of making meaning based on how the data has been organised, which is guided by the study’s main objectives. As such, the main objective of the TA is to identify themes or patterns from qualitative data that are essential to answering the research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3351).

TA includes seven phases in its application, starting with transcription, reading and familiarisation, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalising the analysis (Clarke, 2016). The data extraction methods guide these steps and the type of data analysed. For instance, this study focuses on recipes published by IOL from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018, specifically on how IOL covers the use and promotion of healthy living and indigenous foods to combat NCDs in South Africa. This data is already online. However, the researcher has to use a QDA tool to precisely select and measure the main themes that speak to this study’s main research questions. Therefore, only coding the themes to the QDA tool apply and the finalising of the analysis.

Here, it is essential to state that coding is the process of identifying the critical information to the research questions and labelling that information concerning the objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.206). A code is a word or brief phrase that captures the essence of why you think a particular bit of data may be useful” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207). Finally, the researcher manually completes the coding process or uses a computer data management tool to organise the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207). Further, the authors mention that this process is followed by identifying salient features from the data, which will be at the core of answering the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207).

With those mentioned above, for this study, the researcher manually creates the codes based on the main themes of this study which are IOL food recipes specifically that mention the following themes: South African dietary guidelines, Non-communicable diseases, indigenous vegetables, indigenous fruits, healthy, health, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat, chips, dessert, cake, chocolates, sweets, ice-cream from 1st January 2014 until 31st August 2018. These themes will clearly indicate IOL coverage of healthy living and indigenous foods to combat NCDs in South Africa. In addition, other themes have been added for comparison between the foods recommended for daily consumption and the foods considered unhealthy.

With the themes added to QDA Miner Lite, the researcher will observe the frequency of these themes from the recipes published between 2014 and 2018 to determine which themes were the most salient throughout the years. Further, from this observation, the researcher will interpret the reoccurrence and draw patterns for further interpretations to answer the study's main questions.

4.8 Trustworthiness of the study

For the study to be measured as trustworthy, it should be credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable through accepted research methodologies that are used for the study (Olsen, 2011). Therefore, the study's trustworthiness is about detailing the phases the researcher followed to conclude. Here, the researcher shares with the reader all the steps taken for the study to assure the audience that the research outputs are worth considering academically as they have followed academic procedures before concluding (Olsen, 2011).

4.8.1 Dependability

According to Shenton (2004, p. 71), "in addressing the issue of reliability, the positivist employs techniques to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and the same participants, similar results would be obtained". As such, the researcher in this study shared a detailed explanation of each step in the data collection, sampling, coding and analysis to ensure dependability.

4.8.2 Confirmability

The idea of confirmability of a study, is “the qualitative investigator’s comparable concern to objectivity” (Shanton, 2004, p.72). In other words, the ability of the researcher to use scholarly or academically approved instruments and not based on the researcher’s biases or knowledge to conduct the research. This study has detailed the academically acceptable instruments on the methodology section.

4.8.3 Credibility

Credibility is determined by the interconnectedness of the study findings with the reality against which it is studied (Largan and Morris, 2019)—further stating that the credibility of the study is dependent on whether the study included as many stories during the time of the study (Largan and Morris, 2019). Also, the authors stated that the stories must have been from a variety of angles, although possible to be broken down into frames. This study broke down the main themes for analysis, not limiting the themes to indigenous food however, including what should be accepted as part of a healthy diet and added ‘codes’ themes of the foods that are regarded as unhealthy to show both sides of occurrences of these themes from 1st January 2014 and 31st August 2018.

4.8.3 Transferability

The transferability of the study is about the extent to which the findings can be applied to other similar situations (Shanton, 2004). However, Babbie and Mouton 2001 argued that it is impossible to reach the same context of the same study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this light, the researcher must have demonstrated an effort to single out the context of the study, including the frames concerning the media environment and the political representation in the online newspaper. As such, for this study, the specific main themes guided by the research questions applied in this study assist in generating a more detailed picture of IOL coverage of indigenous foods concerning combating NCDs in South Africa.

Therefore, any researcher can filter the data based on the main themes of a different study to understand the pattern created by the themes and interpret that within the study context.

4.8.4 Self reflexivity

Self-reflexivity in research is defined as “a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of the author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself” (Macbeth 2001: 35). Therefore, reflexivity becomes vital because it has the potential to offer the understanding of the research and the research process itself (Watt 2007). In this study, the researcher has experienced first-hand consuming healthy indigenous vegetables and viewing IOL as a news source and a platform to explore different recipes to try weekly. The researcher, a South African from a low-income household, is also affected by the current economic status and South Africa and how the media promotes and covers food recipes. The researcher believes that the media has significantly promoted other foods and recipes that have further contributed to unhealthy eating habits.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology used for this study to answer the research questions. The chapter also explained the reason a qualitative research paradigm is suitable for this study, discussing the interpretative approach, the method used for data analysis, the trustworthiness of the study, study dependability, confirmability, credibility, transferability and self-reflexivity, which all give this study its unique entry point to the discussion about indigenous foods use to combat NCDs. The next chapter discusses the findings and shares the thematic analysis of the data retrieved from the QDA tool, Miner Lite, when using the central theme of this study which are: South African dietary guidelines, Non-communicable diseases, indigenous vegetables, indigenous fruits, healthy, health, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat, chips, dessert, cake, chocolates, sweets and ice-cream.

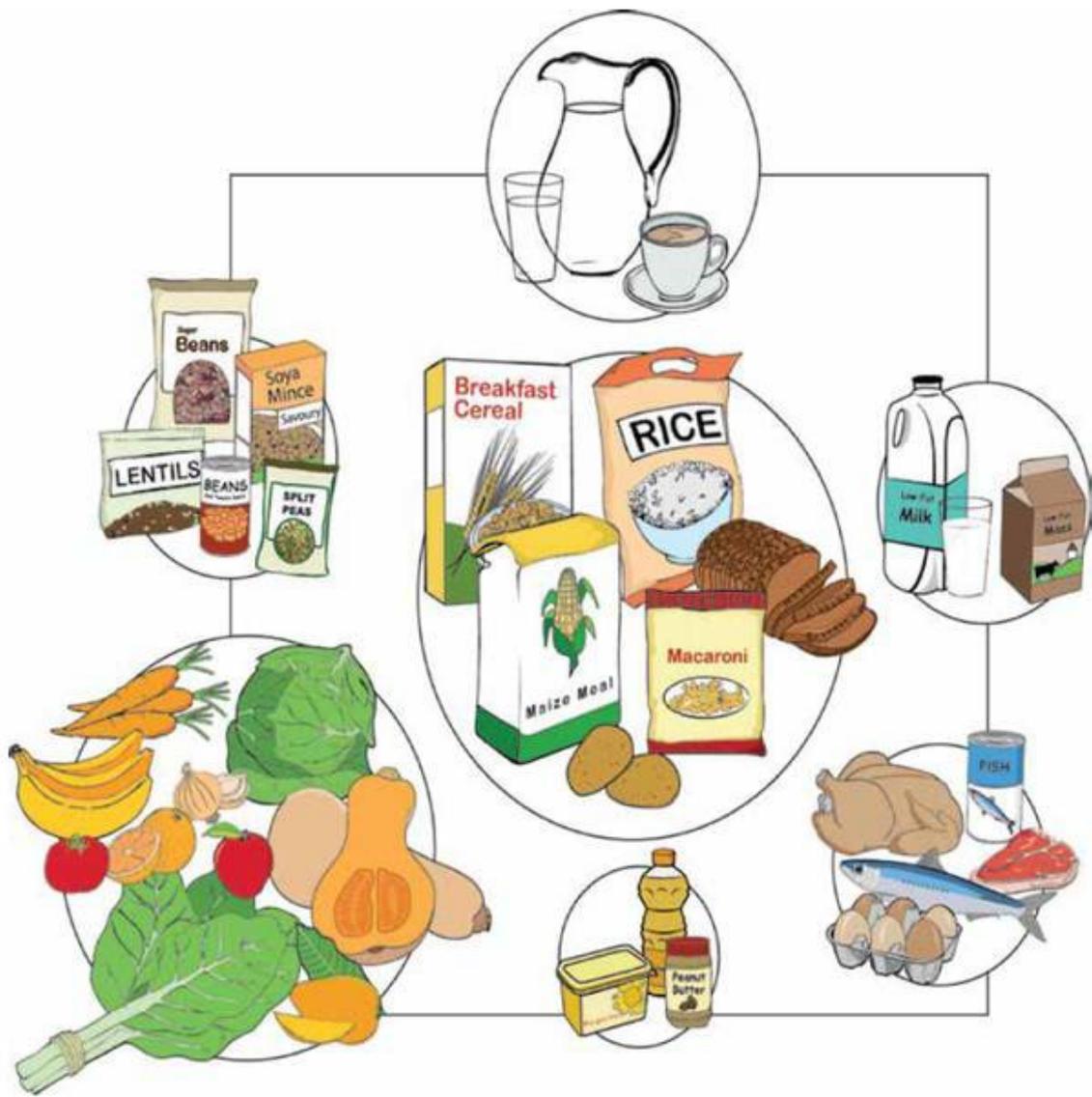
CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The following is an analysis of food recipes published by IOL from 1 January 2014 until 31 December 2018. The analysis will draw from the images of the recipes published and use semiotics and simulacra to deconstruct the meaning embedded to give a complete analysis and interpretation of the recipes. Firstly, it is vital to start by mentioning that a healthy diet should include a balance of energy, calories, vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients to assist with the functionality of metabolism according to the continuous evidence from health experts' research and chronic disease scientists (Nestle, 2003). The daily food choice should be as follows starting from the bottom: includes (bread, cereal, rice and pasta) followed by (fruit and vegetables) followed by (milk, yoghurt, cheese and meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group). Lastly are the fats, oils & sweets) used sparingly on food as per the South African Food Guide Pyramid).

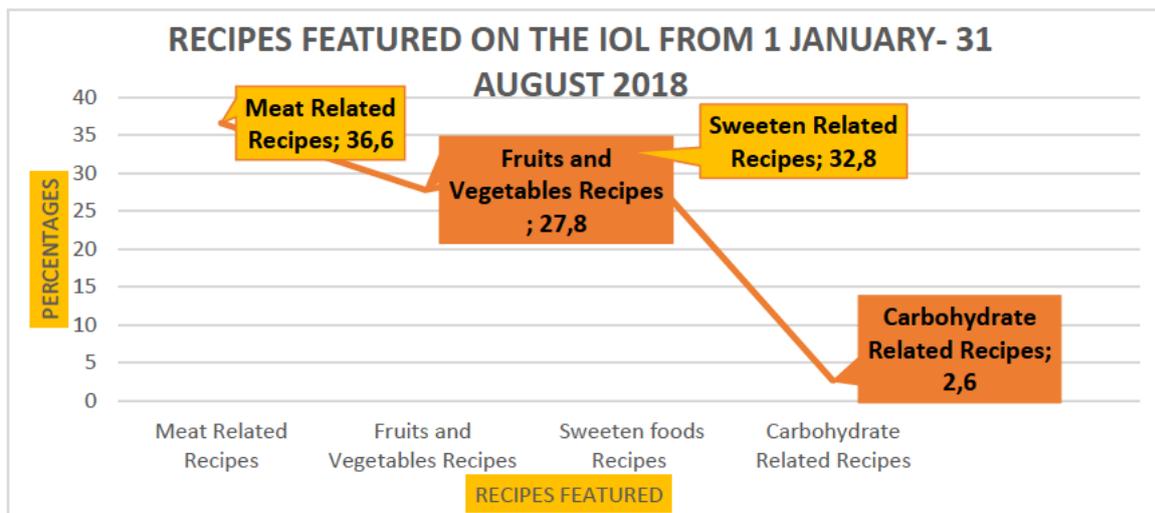
Figure 5.2 South African Food Guides



Source: Food and Drug Organization website

The following graphs depicts different quantities of recipes published by IOL, counting backwards, starting with 2018 and moving back to 2014. There are five graphs in total where each year depicts the overall number of recipes published during that year and categorise these recipes according to the food pyramid seen above.

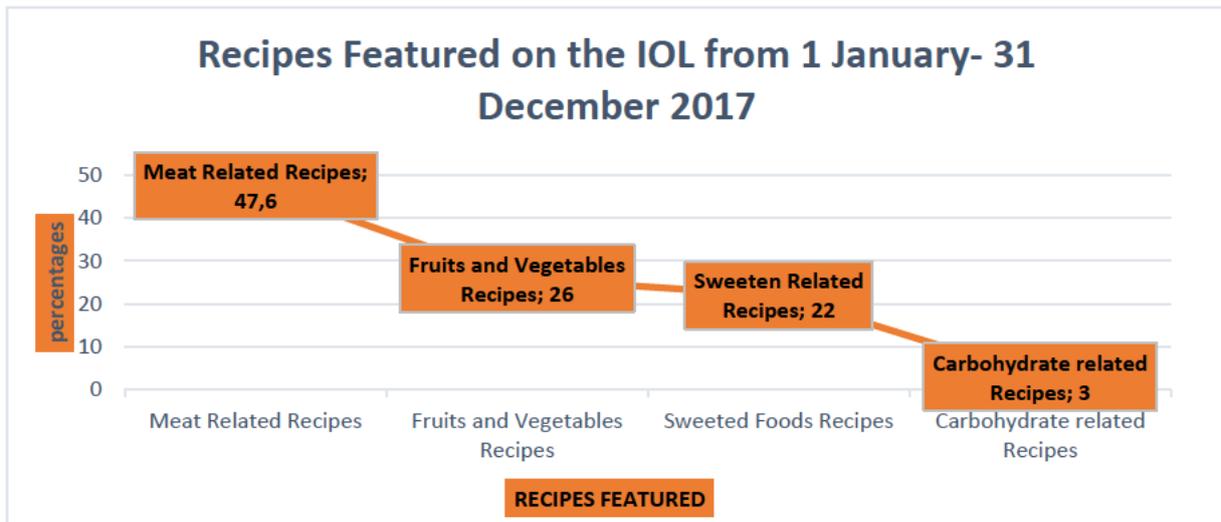
Figure 5.2: Graph showing recipes published from 1 January until 31 August 2018



Source: Researcher

From 1 January until 31 August 2018, about 474 food articles were published by IOL. From the results depicted above on the graph, meat-related recipes, which include chicken, beef, mutton, pork, and game meat, were the most publicised, accounting for 36.6 % of the recipes published within the period indicated by the researcher at the beginning. These articles were followed by the sweetened food recipes, which included cakes, muffins, pancakes and desserts, which accounted for 32.8 %. Further, these recipes are mostly followed by fruit and vegetable recipes (Cabbage, spinach, avocado, mushrooms cucumber, tomatoes, pumpkins, beetroot, broccoli, carrots and fruits, apple, pear, banana, pineapple and other highly commercialised fruits) at 27.8%. There were no indigenous vegetables published during this period. In fourth place were sweetened food recipes at 2.6 %.

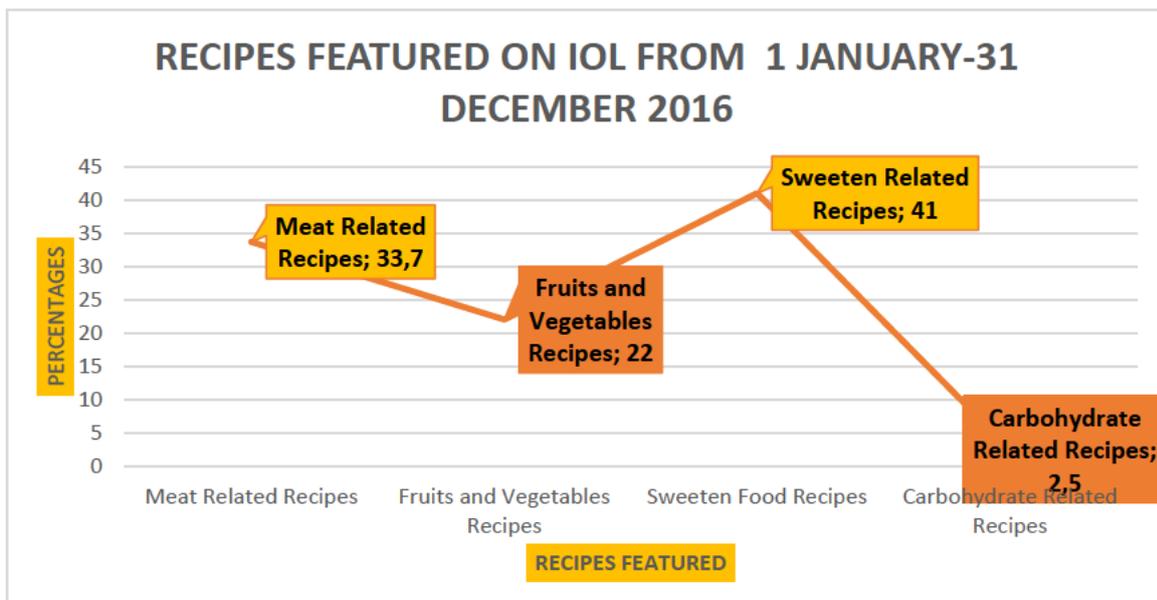
Figure 5.3: Graph showing recipes published from 1 January 2017 until 31 August 2017



Source: Researcher

For 2017, out of the 1278 food articles published, the above graph shows meat-related recipes as the most published at 47.6 %. They are followed by fruits and vegetables at 26%, and from those fruits and vegetables, non-were indigenous or traditional to African people at 0%. Then in third place were sweetened food recipes 22 %, and lastly, carbohydrate-related recipes 3% (which is pasta with meat mostly).

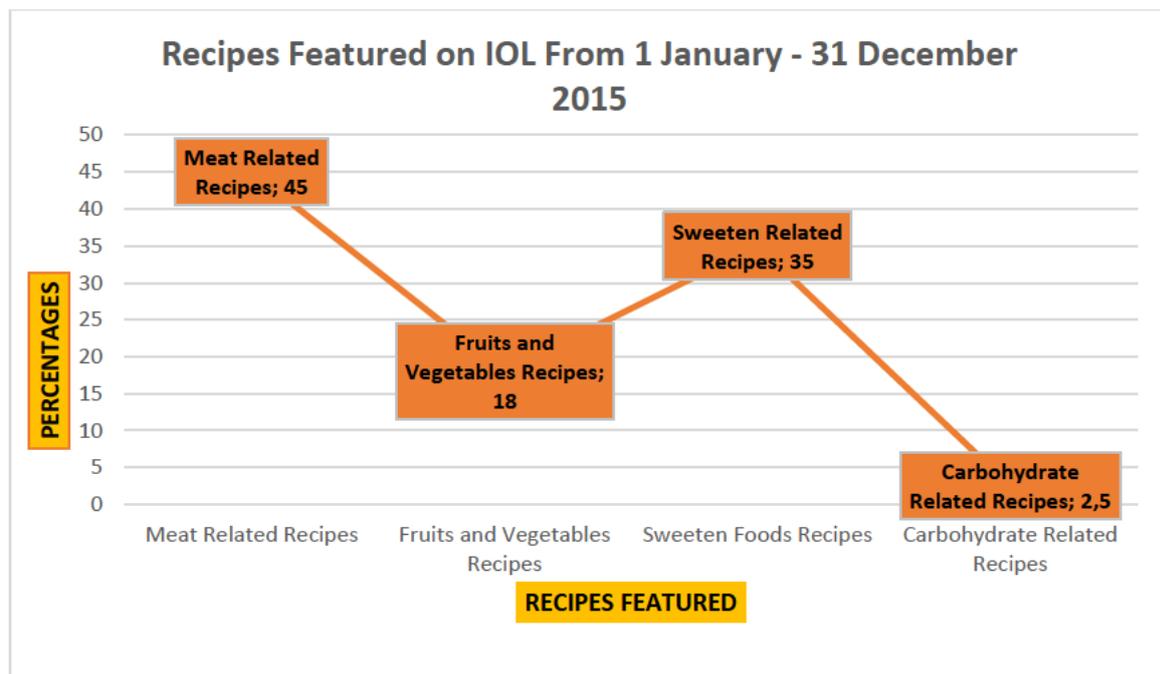
Figure 5. 4: Graph showing recipes published from 1 January 2017 until 31 August 2017



Source: Researcher

Out of the 259 recipes published in 2016, 41 % of published articles were sweetened food recipes —followed by meat-related recipes accounting for 33.7 % of the publications. Further, these recipes are mostly followed by fruits and vegetables at 22 %, and none of the indigenous vegetables was published during this period.

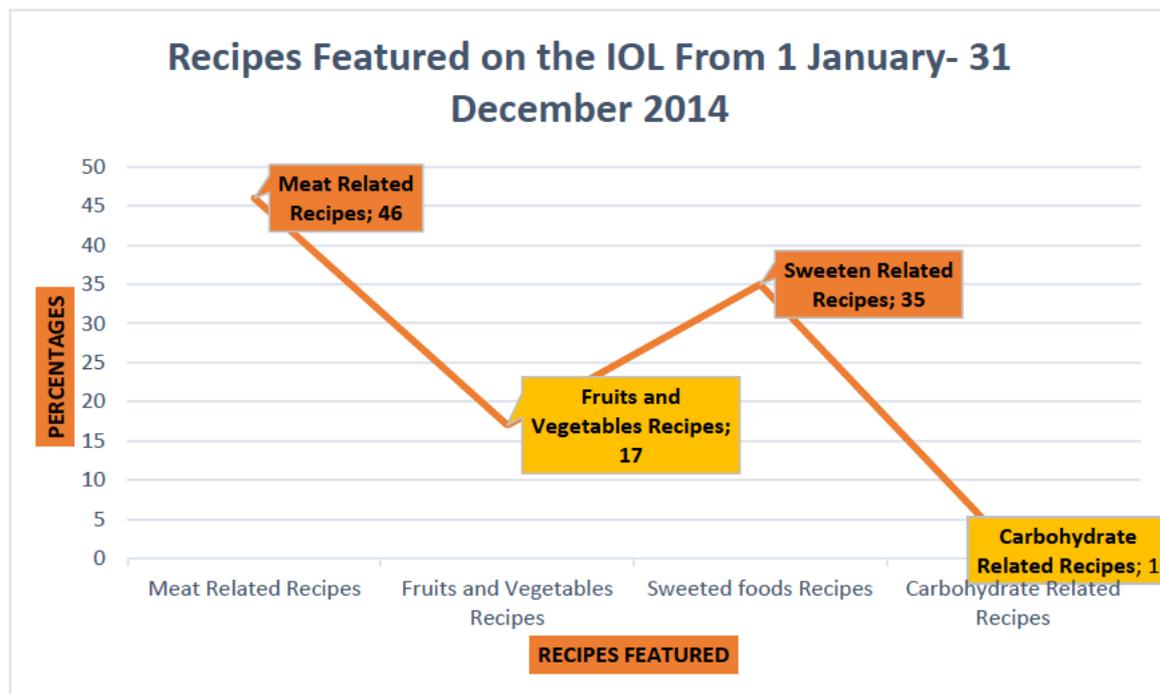
Figure 5.5: Graph showing recipes published from 1 January 2015 until 31 August 2015



Source: Researcher

For 2015, from the 321 recipes published, meat-related recipe articles were about 45% when converted into percentages. Sweetened foods follow them at 35%. In the third place, fruits and vegetables non-were indigenous were at 18 %. Lastly, carbohydrate-related recipes at 2.5 % are pasta served with meat.

Figure 5.6: Figure 5.6: Graph showing recipes published from 1 January 2014 until 31 August 2014



Source: Researcher

The year 2014 is similar to 2015 statistically. From the 221 published food recipes, the above graph shows that meat-related recipes are the most published at 46 %. Sweetened foods follow this category at 35%. In the third place, fruits and vegetables non-were indigenous were at 17 %. Lastly, carbohydrate-related recipes were at 1 %.

5.2 Thematic Analysis of the recipe articles from IOL

The internet has rapidly changed how people consume news and how journalism is practised as a profession (Stassen, 2010). For news organisations to reach their audience, traditional news organisations have embraced this change by creating news websites and participating in social media channels where organisations publish news and interact with the audience (Stassen, 2010). According to Caple and Knox (2015), the internet is a very ‘crowded marketplace’; therefore, to attract their audience and retain them, using visual resources as part of storytelling enriches the users’ experience when interacting with a news website. An image in this light “assumes the position of a model which represents the process of constructing, maintaining and transmitting meaning” (Road, 2008, p.36). From here, it is crucial to introduce semiotics and further discuss how images work within semiotics. Semiotics focus on symbols identified as text, object, image, gesture and colour (Tsotra et al., 2004). Further, the meaning that is

carried by the symbol can be interpreted differently based on the individual's cultural background, norms and values (Tsotra et al., 2004).

Many definitions and terminologies describe signs. The current study uses the model introduced by De Saussure in the form of a dyad. The model consists of the signifier and the signified (Hasyim & Kuswarini, 2020). On the one hand, the signifier or the sign includes objects, backgrounds or lines. On the other hand, the signified is the concept in a person's mind when they encounter the signifier (Tsotra et al., 2004).

Further, anything the sign denotes can be physical and abstract (Yong, 2019). Semiotics regard language rules within human science as essential to uncovering meaning embedded in online content (Tsotra et al., 2004). Further, in semiotics, culture plays a central role in defining how individuals communicate. It shapes individuals' world perspectives (Tsotra et al., 2004). Thus, due to the digitisation of news media, images overtake the traditional storytelling space, and the images can tell stories (Caple & Knox, 2015). According to Yong (2019), the image represents what is in the image and carries with it a second set of representations through connotation. Therefore, for internet content to target a specific group of people, marketers employ many signs, including images, to attract and retain their intended viewers. Also, consider the cultural background and experiences that shape the viewer's preferences (Tsotra et al., 2004)—in other words, using signs that are relevant to that particular market segment group. Marketing within this interactive space, the internet, and publications online from media houses serve more than creating product or service awareness. However, it includes benefits for viewers to exercise self-selectiveness, interactivity, and full integration of various media that target specific people, countries and cultures (Wehling, 1996).

Digital texts on websites have interactive sites or signs that enable users to reach the text online (Adami, 2013). In this light, the website is signs adopted to indicate that a site is a place semiotically. Further, the signifier (site) in the digital environment could be verbally translated as 'here you can act and obtain some effects' (Adami, 2013). These options are on the web server as signs. Here, "signs in a text are usually meant to be interpreted, images are meant to be observed, writing language is meant to be read, to reproduce its effect" (Adami, 2015, p. 04). Within the digital interactivity space, websites may use hyper textuality on digital texts to access other networks of texts, allowing readers to 'travel' (Lemke, 2002). The user can click the links here to access other texts or information. Digital space users can create their reading paths, provide feedback (on the comment or rate space), and transfer texts to others where there

are (share or forward) options. This is evident on the IOL recipes page, where users can scroll through many different recipes and click on hyperlinks to access the ingredients of the selected photograph of the cuisine.

The following thematic analysis analyses the figurative and cultural elements of food recipes selected from IOL food agenda to take through the recurring themes/ signs showing from the recipes. This will be accomplished by examining the background, colours, objects and text on each selected food recipe for analysis.

5.2.1 Analysis of food articles

From 1 January 2014 until 31 August 2018, IOL published about 2553 food recipes from their online website. Within this period, IOL published about 1015 meat-related recipes, 790 fruit and vegetable-related recipes, 687 sweetened recipes and about 61 carbohydrate-related food recipes. During the same period, no African indigenous vegetables were published. The type of food that the Independent Online newspaper has selected to publish can be studied from the perspective of reading the symbolic meaning and identity meaning that is embedded in the cuisines featured. Here, the trend can be observed from most to least published recipes. Thus, this study uses thematic analysis to analyse the signs and interpret the connotative and denotative meanings embedded as frames within the published food articles from IOL food agenda starting from January 2014 to 31 August 2018.

There are different systems that make-up food. The first system involves substances, practices, habits and techniques used during preparation and consumption that are part of a system of differences in signification (Barthes, 1997). In recent years, food has become more of a communication system and expression of cultural identity that embodies images and protocols of its consumption during different events and occasions (Barthes, 1997). Further, food is part of a sign system. Because semiotics focus on the signifier and the communication process, the approach offers significant insight as an effective analytical tool to understand food-related practices, rituals and beliefs (Parasecoli, 2011). In this light, the images add context to the recipe article.

5.2.1.1 Coverage of meat related recipes

There were various categories of meat, which include the following; chicken (n=182), beef (n=56), steak(n=21), mince(n=15), fish n=72, mutton n=5, pork n=44, turkey n=29, duck n=7, sushi n=2, wors n=5.

5.2.1.1.1 Braaiing meat as a symbol of national identity

Braaiing, which means grilling meat over an open fire, is often associated with ceremonial events across cultures in South Africa. This practice has become a part of South Africa's national cultural identity (IOL, 2017). In other words, *braaiing* is a symbol of national identity whereby the practice of *braaiing* is a signifier of unity and celebratory moments amongst South Africans (signified). Through contextualising and promoting this practice, the media in South Africa has succeeded in popularising braaiing as part of 'national food identity' (IOL, 2017). For example, IOL articles showing Miss South Africa 2017 being crowned written,

"She said she loves braai, and she also said she loved the bunny chow and that the hype about it was real. And dessert? She loves milk tart! All these are proudly South African foods, and now that she is based in New York City,"

"As South Africans, we love nothing more than lighting up a fire, gathering around it, beer in hand and cooking up a couple of juicy steaks" - 15 September 2016

The speech marks above signify how braaiing has become part of South Africa's cultural identity. Further, it is essential to note that this practice is often represented by men, taking from images IOL selected and articles depicting the *braaiing* culture. For example, on the above speech marks, beer is referenced as a standard drink suggesting the presence of men since beer-drinking individuals are socially identified as men. Beer adverts worldwide attest to this idea (Mager, 2010).

In contrast with the contradiction of foods in the South African context with the dominant perceptions, the *braaiied* meat- and *amagwinya* (fat cakes) are known as signifiers of 'South African heritage' in IOL food recipes the braaiied meat and fat cakes are positioned as the national food identity that represents all the cultures in South Africa. *Amagwinya*, also called *vetkoek*, are some of the cheap sugary staples common in low-income households because of their high sugar density and the few ingredients required. Ironically, it can be argued that IOL represented meat (red meat) and *amagwinya* as part of South Africa's heritage metaphorically to represent the existing income inequalities within the country. Therefore, meat in this context signifies comfort and stability in terms of income, and *amagwinya* denotes poverty and a struggle to make ends meet, a form of juxtaposition used to compare and contrast

existing disparities. To elaborate on the above statement, the researcher takes from the common saying among the Nguni people in South Africa, who refer to the city of Johannesburg as *Kwanyama ayipheli*. The Nguni saying translates to ‘City of abundant meat’. Figuratively, the meat is a signifier of the riches and opportunities promised by the city.

In contrast, *amagwinya* signifies a staple low-income household breakfast, typical among people who cannot afford to buy bread and resort to making *amagwinya* from home because it is cheaper to buy flour. The flour can produce many *amagwinya*. Therefore, *amagwinya* represents the poor in this context. Further, with South Africa’s national identity attached to the ideas of a rainbow nation, placing meat and *amagwinya* at the centre of our heritage is a metaphorical representation of the imperfect South Africa where the rich and poor must live at peace.

The coverage of ‘South Africa’s favourite’ recipes, which the name used to label the recipe is in Afrikaans and translated into English, culturally excludes a large portion of South Africa that speaks other vernacular languages. Here, the chosen food names represent only two languages from nine other official languages. This coverage indirectly speaks to individuals from educated backgrounds with roots in townships where codeswitching between Afrikaans and English is the norm. In this light, it is an immediate indication that the coverage was intended for the White Afrikaner people and the Black African middle class. Below are the images of the fat cakes and the context in which IOL has contextualised these recipes on their publications online, including the hashtags to populate further as it is common and the use of hashtags to solidify and cement the narrative online.

Figure 5.7: Picture of vetkoek



[#Recipe: Easy vetkoek](#)

August 30 was vetkoek day, here's an easy recipe for this old South African favourite.
31 August 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.8: Picture of vetkoek



Today is #NationalVetkoekDay.

Today is National Vetkoek Day!

Vetkoek, literally meaning fat cake, is one of the most loved traditional dishes in South Africa .

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.9: Picture of vetkoek



[#HeritageMonth: How to make a twisted koeksister](#)

This sweet treat is a South African favourite.

Source: Independent Online newspaper

5.2.1.2 Genderification of meat related recipes

The most recurring recipes are meat-related, as per the findings observed from 2014 to 2018. Notably, from the recipes of meat (red meat) featured in the IOL newspaper, a prominent feature is that men are featured in articles relating to meat, which alludes to a ‘classic case of braai culture’. Moreover, from the articles, it is primarily men that are braaing the meat. This is evident from the pictures featured in articles in September on the 22nd and 28th, 2017.

Figure 5.10: picture of people around a braai stand



[Peri peri chicken livers wrapped in bacon: Recipe](#)

Ultimate Braai Master finalists, Team Muttonheads' Peri peri chicken livers wrapped in bacon recipe

Source: Independent Online Newspaper

In this context, men are seen standing around the *braai* stand holding a fork; in the first part, a woman is holding a bowl. The connection between masculinity and eating meat continues within publications from IOL. This representation is not new in South Africa. Media has a long history of signifying eating meat as part of manhood (Fiddes, 1991). Further, “meat has long stood for man’s proverbial muscle over the natural world” (Fiddes, 1991, p.65). Therefore, eating meat represents men’s domination over nature and animals (Mycek, 2015). This relationship between masculinity and meat is a recurring theme within publications from IOL. For example, are the images below and starting with one with the title ‘*Man size Texas steak*’ on the article published on 16 September.

Figure 5.11: Picture of a steak



[Man size texas steak - recipe](#)

Braai up a storm on National Braai Day with this meaty recipe from Angela Day.

16 September 2016 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.12: Picture of a man braaing meat



[#BraaiDay: May the wors be with you!](#)

Impress all your braai buddies with grill skills on Heritage Day.

22 September 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.13: Picture of a man next to a braaing stand



[Step up to the braai - recipes](#)

Cooking over an open flame is part of SA's ethos, writes Myrna Robins who has some Heritage Day ideas.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.14: A picture of a man braaing meat



[On Heritage Day, these chefs are on fire](#)

Eyadini Lounge owner Jabulani 'J Money' Zama and Oyster Box exec chef Kevin Joseph share their braai secrets

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Considering the above images, by using images of men in these articles, IOL is promoting the representation of masculinity as part of eating meat and being involved in preparing the meat. This reinforces the status quo discussed above and does not in any way educate the male audience about the importance of a vegetable diet in a country that is already heavily affected by the diabetes epidemic (Pheiffer, Pillay-van Wyk, Joubert, Levitt, Nglazi and Bradshaw, 2018). Another example where IOL utilises a man as the main image representing meat-related food articles also includes a township-based sandwich called *kota*. For this particular article, the size of the *kota* (larger) on the image suggests the continued frame of reference, linking a large portion of eating with men. Whereby men eating plenty of food further represents the ideas of masculinity.

Figure 5.15: Picture of a man holding two township sandwiches



[Watch: How To Make a Kota](#)

A Kota is a very popular sandwich in the townships of Gauteng; little did we know that one day it will be part of the Durban street food scene.

23 September 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

The association of the *kota* with townships in Gauteng and other main townships in South Africa is loaded with two primary meanings, as the article suggests. Firstly, it directly points to the diet typical in low-income households discussed earlier in the literature review. There, it was stated that processed and nutritionally dense food becomes the first choice for low-income households because it is affordable. Secondly, the popularity of *kota* in townships around South Africa indicates how low-income households have created their own ‘traditional food identity’ given their limited resources. In other words, *kota* has become a form of township symbolic food which it must be said that it is made up of processed meat and French fries.

5.2.1.3 Fruits and vegetables related recipes articles

IOL featured a variety of fruits and vegetables. The following were featured from 1 January 2014 until 31 August 2018; carrots (n=16), cabbage (n=12), butternut (n=25), spinach (n=25), lettuce (n=1), cucumber (n=9), corn (n=42), beans (n=21), potatoes (n=84), and tomato (n=51). In terms of fruits, the following were featured; apple (n=46), orange (n=19), pineapple (n=11), grapes (n=9), banana (n=27), strawberry (n=10), apricot (n=8), peach (n=2). The word healthy appears 53 times in the space of 4 years and eight months, indirectly indicating the limitation of the articles written within the context of health or health-promoting recipes.

5.2.1.3.1 Genderification of eating fruits and vegetables

Recipes featured on the IOL website from 2014 to 2018 relating to fruit and vegetable diets mainly featured images of women on those as models. This setup on the IOL food agenda researchers have said this is common in modern society's diet preferences between men and women (Pérez-Cueto, Aschemann-Witzel, Shankar, Brambila-Macias, Bech-Larsen, Mazzocchi, Capacci, Saba, Turrini, Niedzwiedzka and Piorecka, 2012). The authors further attest that women in general often engage in healthier eating habits than men (Pérez-Cueto et al., 2012). Evidently, this is visible from IOL food agenda whereby the online newspaper uses images of women when discussing recipes that include fruits and vegetables. Metaphorically, vegetables denote what is seen as the less desirable characteristics referring to lean or like a vegetable, as in passivity or dullness of existence, monotonous or inactive (Flynn et al., 2008). Further, Flynn et al. (2008, p.256) maintain that "once vegetables are viewed as women's food, then by association they become viewed as feminine, passive". This closely relates to Brillat-Savarin's (1826) theory that says, 'you are what you eat' here used to refer to women indirectly.

Therefore, if one eats a vegetable, one is a vegetable, and by association, one becomes woman-like, which is signified as passive. Using women to pose in vegetable-related recipes, IOL reinforces this stereotype and excludes men from the conversation about the health benefits of eating vegetables. The association between women and healthy eating is depicted in the images below. These articles are about Mother's Day in 2018; the main title is 'Go for green this Mother's Day'. Contrary to that, for Father's Day, the title is 'Biltong and Jalapeno Cream Cheese Dip'. This means that it is acceptable and should be encouraged for mothers to eat healthily while fathers can eat dry-dipped meat and drink beer on Father's Day. Thus, this

juxtaposition validates the media's tendency to reinforce stereotypes and thus perpetuate unhealthy eating habits. The following recipes point to the genderification of vegetables and healthy eating habits taken from IOL.

Go for Green this #MothersDay

[FOOD & DRINK](#) / 7 MAY 2018, 07:00AM / LUTHO PAYISO

Figure 5.16: Picture of Steak and broccoli stir fry



Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Mother's Day never tasted so good - particularly when you have some inspired recipes to serve your lady of the hour on her upcoming special day.

Figure 5.17: Charred Carrot Dogs

Use carrots to replace the sausage for veggie "hotdogs" [RECIPES](#) / 29 MAY 2018, 07:30AM / JOE YONAN



Source: *Photo by Jennifer Chase, food styling by Lisa Cherkasky - The Washington Post. You can replace the meaty wors at your next braai with carrots for a tasty vegetarian twist.*

#FathersDay: Biltong and Jalapeno Cream Cheese Dip

[FOOD & DRINK](#) / 15 JUNE 2018, 8:00PM / WAYLAND GREEN

Figure 5.18: A picture of beers and biltong



Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Biltong and Jalapeno Cream Cheese Dip. If you are looking for something local and lekker this Father's Day, try this recipe

5.2.1.4 Sweeten food recipes coverage

Sweeten food recipes here include ice cream, cakes, yoghurts and desserts. From the recipe titles, the word sweet appeared 173 times, while chocolate appeared 172 times. For these recipes' analysis, we observe a photograph from Barthes's (1997) lenses of interpretation. According to Barthes (1997), a newspaper photograph is a product of selected ideological norms and professional artwork construction, which assigns meaning to the photograph (Barthes, 1997). Further, several other decisions structure the meaning carried by the photograph, such as lighting, focus and angle (Carter, 2018). In the contemporary era, food photography is popular on social media and has become an extension of self-expression -art (Calefato et al., 2016). In other words, the artificial replaces the real. This is well presented by Lister et al. (2008), simplifying Jean Baudrillard's (1988) work on simulacra and simulations. Lister et al. (2008) state that simulacra are the representational image or presence that deceives because they share with reality. Here, the author asserts that the image has no relation to reality (Lister et al., 2008). For example, cuisine names include cheesecake, lemon madeira loaf cake, chocolate protein pancake, sponge cake, and rainbow cake. These different types of cake names identified from IOL have no direct meaning or relation to the actual things they are named after; however, we have accepted the new hyperreality that the names create in our mind, that of an exotic cake.

Mass media influences how signs are interpreted and use symbols as agents of representation, not communication (Felluga, 2015). The images below convey a status symbol or, in other words, a luxury signature because, firstly, they indicate or signify that the baker has the luxury of time to bake. Secondly, the intended viewer of the image is suggested to have the excessive income to buy the various ingredients needed to bake the cake. Further, the image denotes that the intended viewer has all their basic needs met because a cake is not stable but luxury food. Lastly, the images promote the baker's artistic skills, a more solidifying message that the recipe is intended for viewers from an affluent class who might be interested in food art. In this way, a person who views these recipes simulate the lifestyle portrayed by IOL using these images. This is part of finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. With the above image examples, everyday ingredients are added or turned into food art. Taking, for example, regular desserts such as ice cream or cake to create a piece of artwork that takes another meaning to specific individuals who have the luxury of securing the ingredients and will be interested in showing the final product to others. This will be an exemplary interest to an individual, perhaps with an

interest in food art, who has access to the latest technology. This profile signifies an individual from a middle class because a low-income individual will not be interested. In other words, the images below depict the high social status symbol expressed in the form of food art.

The signs create a new culture of signs, images and codes without referential value and are exchangeable (Caspé, 2015). Consequently, people interact with these signs without the ability to differentiate between what is natural and simulation (Felluga 2015). Felluga (2015) states that today's reality is continuously being replaced by signs that 'remodifying' supersedes the real. Felluga (2015) states, 'Simulation precedes and determines the real' (p. 89). For example, eating well-presented food in artistic form takes a symbolic meaning of wealth and stability.

Further, this does not reference the primary purpose of eating: nourishing the body and providing it with nutrients. From these artistic food images, a rewarding theme is seen taking over the narrative of food recipes. In this light, Herman (2017), referring to Barthe's (1997) body of work talking about food in mythologies, states that for the upper class, protocol, flavours, colours, and aesthetic factor becomes more critical, which is different from the proletarians, who work long hours and the mind occupied by the idea of putting bread on the table.

5.2.1.4.1 Sweeten foods

Research has shown that the human mouth craves sugar, including the palate, where recipients connect to the taste buds that transmit sweetness to the brain's pleasure zone (Moss, 2013). Considering this, it is said that food manufacturers deliberately work with scientists who specialise in human senses to understand tongue map folly. This collaboration with specialists is for manufacturers to use the research base knowledge about human appetite to produce foods that will be appetising for people. "The industry has learned that it can be used to pull off a string of manufacturing miracles, from doughnuts that fry up bigger to bread that will not stale to cereal that is toasty-brown and fluffy" (Moss, 2013, p.4).

In sweetened food recipe articles, the use of bright colours on the food images is consistent across the years from 1 January 2014 until 31 August 2018. Notably, there was an increase in coverage of these recipes during public holidays. It is reasonable from the evidence that the intended viewer was an individual with a family and children in their company to make these foods for them. Further, colours such as yellow, white, red and blue were mainly used on

recipes that accompanied content during Easter and December holidays. During these holidays, schools are closed in South Africa, and most parents take time off work to spend with their children. Consistently, IOL publishes more sweetened food recipes that are also extensively colourful. Therefore, IOL strategically sets their recipe content, using food recipes that include colours to attract individuals with a high income to afford the ingredients and have the time to decorate as seen in the recipes.

The human mind influences taste perception, and researchers argue that it is not biologically inherited (Allen et al., 2008). Further, observing the effects of colour on food appearance and appetite, scholars pointed out that yellow and pink are appetite-stimulating colours and are associated with energy and happiness (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2014, p.168). Similarly, King, Kilburn and Christian (2019) stated that colours influence our appetite for food. As a result, marketing food trends applied by major manufacturers and producers are influenced by colour (King, Kilburn & Christian, 2019). This is evident from the sweet food recipes published on IOL and the selected images below.

Sweet food recipes are the third most published from the data (2014-2018). In the sweet food recipes category, images of these foods appeal to the eye because the foods' images encompass many bright colours. Downham & Collins (2000) point out that colours in food such as white, yellow, orange, pink, red and brown are the most common colours in food images. Thus, food is processed to create visually appealing food that tastes good and that can be consumed by anyone in their respective setting (Downham & Collins, 2000). Further, Paston-Williams (2007) added that colours suggest flavours one can anticipate when eating or drinking the food. Bright colours often signify flavour that we know from our natural fruits and vegetables, for example, orange papaya, pineapple, apricot, pumpkin, peach, carrot, sweet potato, and orange corn (Paston-Williams, 2007, p.7).

Evidently, in those articles that featured sweetened foods, the text that described the recipes included words such as 'spoil yourself', 'indulge', 'treat', 'get into the festive mood' 'enjoy guilt-free. These words signify that the person who is intended for the content is at home, health-conscious and because of their financial status, they can try one of these recipes and not feel guilty because they are rewarding themselves. In other words, the use of language is suggestive of the viewer's lifestyle, in this case, a working-class individual with excessive income and who has met all the basic needs. Also, the narrative coded in these recipes treats sweetened foods as a reward for people. Ironically, this rewarding theme does not include the

health risks associated with consuming sugary foods and therefore, consuming this food is pushed to viewers as a reward, whereas it is a slow poison in the body. The mass media's obsession with what appears beautiful points to the media websites' attempts to create image galleries online; this is done to keep viewers scrolling. Thus, these pictures of cuisines become more artistic, simulating the intended viewer's economic status.

Figure 5.19: Picture of a cake with rainbow lines



[Recipe: Rainbow Cake](#)

Brighten up your day with Rainbow Cake and take a bite out of the latest food trend
20 April 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.20: Picture of a loaf cake



[Delicious pistachio & lemon madeira loaf cake - recipe](#)

The Great South African bake off is back and this time around the amateur bakers are ready to show the nation what incredible bakers they are.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.21: Picture of pancakes



[#Healthy2018: Chocolate protein pancakes](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.22: Picture of a cake



[It's International Cake Day! Today you can your cake and eat it](#)

Get your sweet slice of the action, with this Victoria Sponge cake with apricot and jam filling.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.23: Picture of two muffins



[A baked ricotta cheesecake that's not too indulgent](#)

Enjoy a guilt free indulgence with this cheesecake.

23 December 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.24: Picture of ice-cream



[How to make roasted carrot ice cream](#)

Roasted carrots lend their sweetness and a lovely colour to this ice cream, which is graced with a terrific crumble.

18 November 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.25: Picture of a cake



[5 festive season bakes - recipes](#)

It's not too late to make Christmas cake and puddings. Angela Day has options for those with dietary restrictions.

7 December 2015 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.26: Picture of a dessert



[Berry good from the freezer - recipes](#)

Angela Day has delicious recipes to use frozen berries.
16 November 2015 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.27: Picture of chocolate bars

19 May 2016 | [RECIPES](#)



[Choc-a-block with delight - recipes](#)

Indulge your sweet tooth with these decadently rich chocolate treats from Angela Day.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.28: Picture of two cups filled with cream



[Cracking the Crème Brûlée - recipes](#)

A sugary topping and a smooth velvety custard is a heavenly way to end a meal. Angela Day has the recipes.

5 February 2016 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.29: Picture of a dessert



[Sweet treats for coffee time - recipes](#)

Angela Day has two ideas for sweet treats for a coffee date with that special someone.

26 February 2016 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.30: Picture of a dessert



[More ways to use pomegranates - recipes](#)

Pomegranates are the perfect ingredient to perk up your cooking and baking - and they are healthy too, says Angela Day.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.31: Picture of plums with cheese



[Last Minute #ChristmasDessert: Grilled plums with goat cheese and honey-thyme](#)

You probably have all these ingredients in your fridge.

25 December 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.32: Picture of marshmallow and chocolate chips



[How to make a festive marshmallow Croquembouche](#)

Take your Christmas favourites, and add a twist here and there?

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.33: Picture of a pudding with grapes and a pear



[A must-try luxury festive pudding](#)

Christmas pudding with toffee grapes and dark rum butter sauce.

14 December 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.34: Picture of a ginger house bread



[#FestiveRecipe: Make your own gingerbread house](#)

Get into the festive spirit by making your own gingerbread house.

11 December 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.35: Picture of chocolate dessert

Food as art



[Chocolate crepes filled with strawberries, brandied bananas and chocolate sauce.](#)

Granny Mouse's culinary artist, Wayland Green, shares his go-to Valentine's Day recipe. Date: 13 February 2018

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.36: Picture of pine cone cheese ball



[How to make Margaret Hirsch's- Pine Cone Cheese Ball](#)

Margaret Hirsch hosted a Festive cooking demonstration of her favourite recipes
8 December 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

5.2.1.5 Carbohydrate food recipes

Carbohydrate food recipes that were published on the IOL newspaper website include wholegrain pasta (n= 1), pasta (n=74), brown rice (n=6), and bread (n=81). It is important to note that these foods featured on IOL serve as a base or secondary to the meal advertised. This is evident from the less feature of carbohydrates foods and related recipes compared to other recipes featured on IOL. Further, what was more evident from these recipes is that pasta-based recipes had an international twist in terms of the words used to describe the recipe. In this light, pasta recipes were framed as an international experience cuisine, and these were given origins from European countries and excluded other continents.

Indeed, pasta has no origins in Africa, yet Africa has some highly nutritious carbohydrates, such as *Amabele* recipes, which sets Africa apart. As such, excluding African cuisines from the recipes in IOL publications in favour of European recipes directly reveals favouritism and bias from the publishers. The following are just a few examples of the carbohydrate recipes shared by IOL.



[5 ways you are ruining your pasta](#)

If there's a chef in the US who can offer advice on the subject, it's Missy Robbins of Lilia in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighbourhood.

6 May 2018 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Figure 5.37: Picture of a pasta dish

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.38: Picture of a pasta dish



[#WorldPastaDay: Do we actually cook it properly?](#)

Classic Italian secrets to turn your staple into a show stopper
25 October 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.39: Picture of a past dish



Pasta with sardines and fennel

Pasta con le sarde, one of the most famous Sicilian dishes that employs wild fennel. At its best, this frugal dish is a perfect interweaving of sweet and savoury.

26 June 2018 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

5.2.1.4.1 Consuming the other as a status symbol

The commodity of international experience is salient in IOL food recipes. This presence of international cuisines indicates that South Africa opens borders to the world. Further, it indicates South Africa is part of the global community that embraces other national unique cuisines, although none were attributed to African countries. However, in a country with eleven official languages, each with its unique traditional cuisines, IOL excluded this diversification in their publications from 2014 until 2018. Instead, IOL promotes a single narrative in their food representation, where all South Africans recognise braai as their cultural food, which is further away from reality. Therefore, the cultural cuisines of most South Africans are not presented. Here, the words used glorify and encourage European foodways as the ideal food; this indirectly discourages African food cuisines from the online space in favour of Europeans. The following image shows some recipes published by the IOL newspaper originating overseas.

Figure 5.40: Picture of a cooked chicken breast



[Supreme chicken - recipe](#)

In French cuisine, a supreme de volaille is a whole chicken breast. So Tony Jackman roasts some with bone and all.

25 November 2015 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.41: Picture of a dessert



[Let's have a French affair - recipes](#)

Angela Day prepares decadent classic French desserts.

21 July 2015 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.42: Picture of different dishes



[Make a French connection - recipes](#)

Try these French dishes brought to you by Angela Day to celebrate Bastille Day.
16 July 2016 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2015

Figure 5.43: Picture of a fruit tart



[James Martin's Fruit tart: Recipe](#)

Following in the footsteps of his hero Keith Floyd, food columnist James Martin serves up classic French dishes from his new TV show and book

1 February 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.44: Picture of a toast



WATCH: A cheesy french toast mashup

It might get a bit messy but this cheesy french toast mashup is well worth it
20 June 2018 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper

Figure 5.45: Picture of a chicken dish



[Recipe: Delicious Korean-style chicken](#)

Add some Korean flavour to your chicken!

17 January 2018 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.46: Picture of a lamb curry

How to make a Greek-style roast leg of lamb [RECIPES](#) / 7 DECEMBER 2017,
2:00PM / NIRIT SABAN



Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.47: Picture of Jollof rice and black eyed peas



[#AfricaDay: Jollof Rice with Black-Eyed Peas- Recipe](#)

Nigeria or Ghanaian? Maybe both are really great. So try this recipe to see which one you prefer

25 May 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

5.2.1.6 Obsession with efficiency and speed theme

A close thematic analysis of text construction used on the recipes is tailored for people working under the fast pace demands of the 21st century, the working class. These people have some formal education because they can read English and afford the internet to view news online. This approach of targeting the audience is seen from the choice of words the often-used such as ‘fast n-57, quick n-64’ and easy n-162 in total, which was generated searching the words using Microsoft word, the word ‘quick’ appears about 84 times in the space of 4 years and eight months. These two words used in recipes on IOL suggest the constantly demanding life of the twenty-first century, where everything must be ‘quick’.

For example, the following texts copied from IOL show the titles given to the recipes which depicts the fixation about quick:

**Looking for a quick sweet fix? Angela Day has the perfect decadent solution*

3 November 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

**A jar of pasta sauce in the pantry is heaven-sent when you lack time or energy. Angela Day has some quick dishes-* 16 August 2014

**Having spotted Devil's Peak ale, Tony Jackman decided to cook with it, quickly, before they change the name.*

2 July 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

**Fritters make a delicious snack. Try these quick and easy recipes from Angela Day.*

13 March 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

**Fast and fabulous kebabs – recipes- Sosaties are an integral part of most South African braais. Try one of these meaty recipes from Angela Day.*

10 November 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

**Enjoy these quick and easy loaf cakes with a cup of tea, writes Angela Day.- [9 FEBRUARY 2015](#),*

**In a preview of her new book, #Recipe Shorts chef and author Andrea Stewart offers fun, fast ideas sure to inspire your culinary creativity...*

15 May 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

[*#Ramadaan2017: Chickpea and Artichoke Tagine- Recipe](#)

Cooking good food fast is key for Ramadaan - 29 May 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

[*Fluffy Buttermilk Pancakes](#)

With only a handful of ingredients, you can have fast, fluffy pancakes any day of the week.

18 May 2018 | [RECIPES](#)

5.2.1.7 Cultural events and binge eating

Food is ingrained in our cultural practices. It is given that when an individual attends an event, the person will be offered food or drink as a sign to acknowledge their presence. Food is offered in abundance during events, and people can choose from a wide variety of options. The variety

triggers binge eating. In other words, people would overeat compared to their regular eating portions. Text published by IOL presents meaning to “enable users to act at given sites and achieve some effects” (Caple & Knox, 2015, p.2). The links, buttons and other forms of interactivity found on websites are signs creating meaning on the page, and they are also sites of actions that produce a change in the text (Caple & Knox, 2015). The links and buttons can be associated with using hashtags by IOL to create an online footprint on the main themes IOL is promoting. Main events are promoted hashtags to mark and direct their contribution online on that event theme. Hashtags of these events link the recipe articles with the international community, utilising the same hashtags on the subject online. Here, IOL generates their content through symbolic events. These events become part of a recurring theme within the publication of IOL from 2014 until 31 August 2019. These events include Christmas, Easter holidays, Halloween, Valentine’s Day, Africa Day, and Heritage Day. IOL used specific pictures as symbols and well-tailored wording to represent these social events. They express these events with specific or defined images set to form the language (narrative), tone and mood to complete the overall narrative about the actual day of the event.

(i) Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s is the day marked with a symbolic number 14 on February’s second month of the year. The frame meaning that is derived from this day is that lovers celebrate their love. The exchange of gifts and food forms the overall meaning of this day. Dominant colours on this day are red and white. Research indicates that “red-yellow colour is applied in food to harmonise with our body chemistry that prepares our body before eating” (Spence, 2016, p.37). This is also evident from several articles published on Valentine’s Day (14 February). The narrative of spoiling loved ones is widespread and often captured in the articles published during that period.

Further, according to the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute, red is a powerful colour that increases blood pressure and heart rate. These colours produce feelings of intimacy, energy, passion and sexuality (Rohm & Paint, 2004). From the pictures and the narrative portrayed sweetened foods, the message is that people should be rewarding themselves and that food is ideal for self-love. In this light, IOL also represents Valentine’s Day through publishing content related to the day’s feelings that are well captured by words that express leisure, sex and other

words suggesting pleasure. The following examples capture the feelings suggested by IOL used as headings during Valentine's Day;

Share the love today with this whiskey cocktail - 14 February 2018 | RECIPES

Ways to Valentine's pleasure – recipes - 11 February 2015 | RECIPES

Love me tender - Valentine's Day recipes - 11 February 2016 | RECIPES

Easy DIY Valentine's Treats - 14 February 2017 | FOOD & DRINK

No romantic dinner is complete without a decadent, chocolatey dessert made for two.-5 February 2018 | RECIPES

Valentine's Day is a week away. Impress your Valentine with these exclusive rose cocktail recipes - 7 February 2018 | RECIPES

Nothing says 'I love you' like a simple but sensuous meal you've made yourself

12 February 2018 | RECIPES

Figure 5.48: Picture of a whiskey and a glass



[#ValentinesDay whiskey cocktail](#)

Share the love today with this whiskey cocktail!

14 February 2018 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2018

Figure 5.49: Picture of a dessert



[Sweets for my sweet - recipes](#)

With Valentine's Day around the corner, these delectable treats that will earn you brownie points with your loved ones.

10 February 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

Figure 5.50: Picture of two glasses filled with dessert



[Making whoopie in the kitchen - recipes](#)

Show your loved one how much you care by preparing this delicious Valentine's Day meal from Angela Day.

13 February 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

Figure 5.51: Picture of a glass filled with a red drink



[Valentine's Day Cocktail Essence of February: Recipe](#)

Make this Valentine's Day more special by making your loved one delicious cocktails
14 February 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

(ii) Christmas

Christmas is a symbolic event celebrated by Christians, as the day Jesus Christ was born, 25 December. The main frame this day is that families celebrate Jesus' birth, and this day means that families must come together to eat a feast. Represented by snow and an old White man dressed in a red overall, or when set as decoration, the theme is represented by green, red and white as per the image below published on 13 February 2014. Turkey has become one of the favourite iconic meals during Christmas. The size of the turkey reaffirms the symbolic event, which suggests that many people will be eating. Along with the recipes for 'leftovers', which indicate that there was more than enough food made for the day and, as a result, the food can be finished on the following day.

Figure 5.52: Picture of a pita bread



[Pita Bread](#)

Are you stuck with leftover turkey, leg of lamb or chicken after Christmas lunch? Try this pita bread recipe to give your leftovers a makeover.

28 December 2016 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.53: Picture of a Christmas decorated table



[Wondering what desserts to make for lunch this Christmas? We have the solution for you](#)

Well you can impress your friends and family by cooking these amazing Christmas feasts inspired by Southern Sun's Elangeni and Maharani's The Grill Jichana Executive Chef, Prenolan Naidoo.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2016

Figure 5.54: Picture of turkey biryani



[#Christmas leftovers: Turkey biryani with red onion and coriander](#)

This hot biryani is ideal for using up roast turkey or chicken, left over from the big day.

25 December 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.55: Picture of a butternut stuffed with rice



[#FestiveRecipe: Baked butternut stuffed with nutty cranberry-spiked rice](#)

If you might be in danger of serving up plain, boiled vegetables alongside your turkey, turn to Christmas king Jamie Oliver to help you transform your festive feast

21 December 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.56: Picture of a Christmas gift



[Gifts from the kitchen - recipes](#)

Making your own festive presents for friends and family shows thoughtfulness. Angela Day has some great ideas.

1 December 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

(iii) Easter

Easter is a holiday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus from death. As a sign of respect for this day, many countries, including South Africa, celebrate Easter. As a holiday, Easter is represented by colourful eggs known as Easter eggs.

This holiday marks the influence of Christianity and its dominance because most people in South Africa are Christians; this is based on the colonial history of the country (Comaraff & Comaraff, 2008).

Figure 5.57: Picture of a baked cake stuffed with sweets



[Baking for Easter - recipes](#)

Angela Day has four sweet ideas for the Easter weekend.
14 April 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

Figure 5.58: Picture of two chocolate Easter eggs



[If it's Easter, it's chocolate - recipes](#)

Indulge yourself this Easter with these delectable chocolate treats from Angela Day.
17 April 2014 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

Figure 5.59: Picture of three cup cakes



[#EasterWeekend Bunny Bum Cupcakes](#)

Treat your kids to these colourful bunny bum cupcakes this #EasterWeekend.

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2014

The above narrative often perpetuated during events is the opposite of warmth, family and a good time. Here, it is essential to state that sugar and sweetened foods are some of the foods that cause and contribute to high blood pressure and other food-related diseases (Steyn & Temple, 2012). These illnesses are not part of or ideal for self-love as portrayed in the recipes. IOL sets its content with the intention of providing a variety of food choices during these events. Consequently, doing so indirectly encourage unhealthy eating habits during holidays in South Africa. This is problematic because, during this time, families are together, and it is an ideal time to target the audience's attention on healthy eating habits. This indirectly encourages parents to create these meals, and this will have a direct influence on children's food choices because they are being exposed at an early age that this is what holiday eating is and these are the foods eaten for the day (Neumark-Sztainer, Story, Perry and Casey, 1999).

[\(iv\) Africa Day](#)

Africa Day is celebrated annually, commemorating the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity on 25 May 1963. IOL attempts to incorporate African dishes through their campaign, highlighted by their hashtags as #Africaday. The results for this campaign only show that there were only three published recipes. There were two in 2017 and one in 2018, whilst Africa Day's celebration started in 1963.

Interestingly, one of the recipes in 2017 is attributed to the most common base meal for most Black households in South Africa, known as pap. The pap represented on IOL is highly attributed to the international audience as the chef stuffed this favourite base for most African people with ingredients such as parsley, coriander, green peppers, garlic, bacon etc. These

ingredients are not authentic to the African recipe for pap. Therefore, the reimaged version of pap is a symbol of remaking this known source of calcium for most poor households. The following is the capture of the representation created by IOL in celebration of Africa day.

Figure 5.60: Picture of Jollof Rice and black eyed peas



[#AfricaDay: Jollof Rice with Black-Eyed Peas- Recipe](#)

Nigeria or Ghanaian? Maybe both are really great. So try this recipe to see which one you prefer

25 May 2017 | [FOOD & DRINK](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.61: Picture of maize meal cakes



[#AfricaDay: Siba's Pap Cake- Recipe](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.62: Picture of small spoons lined up



[#AfricaDay: How a South African fell in love with African cuisine](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

Figure 5.63: Picture of sorghum



[How to cook sorghum](#)

Sorghum, a whole grain that has been a staple food in Africa and India for centuries

19 September 2017 | [RECIPES](#)

Source: Independent Online Newspaper, 2017

5.3 Conclusion

The recipes featured on IOL how they are framed on the food agenda show a repetitive symbol indicating European influence more than the local diverse foods available in South Africa. Another factor to mention is that, there was a continuous use of similar frames to give themes for the national events. As such, this effort directly points to a planned food agenda by IOL. That is to say, all the food recipes published were planned and given specific themes to directly communicate with the intended reader. A worth noting factor from the analysis is that, IOL included one recipes dedicated to diabetes in November 2015. In the same light, the word healthy appeared about 53 times between 2014 and 2018. Whereas the word sweet appeared over 173 times in the same period. This imbalance indicates that there was more content-detailed as sweet compared to recipes about healthy food or healthy lifestyle. The above argument supports the results depicted in the graphs. Furthermore, that is not to say IOL, did not promote any healthy lifestyle content on its food agenda. IOL marked Monday as a meat-free day. The campaign encouraged healthy eating habits by swapping meat, dairy products and eggs for plant base meals. The online newspaper also used hashtags to promote meat-free Monday in 2017. However, it has only been the main heading for about 35 articles out of the 52 Mondays within the year 2017, the only year the campaign was active in online records for IOL.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion on the overall study

This study explored the media coverage of the usage and promotion of food for healthy living, especially in combating chronic diseases: A Case Study of the Independent Online Newspaper (1 January 2014 to 31 of August 2018). The study was based only on documented literature by experts including scholars who have completed both qualitative and quantitative research on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), indigenous vegetables, nutritional content, and the function of media in society. The results of this study are therefore based on the secondary data. In conclusion, this study reviewed literature from peer reviewed journals, books, monographs, health documents, government health policies, social media blogs and IOL websites to address the study's key research questions.

The study highlighted how unregulated food chain contributes to chronic diseases in South Africa because food manufacturers do not always adhere to nutrition guidelines when manufacturing products. Further, the study revealed how government policies in South Africa are not adhered to even by the same department that passes policy. The study reflected on the nutritious status of indigenous vegetables and health benefits of indigenous vegetables. Here, the research shows that *Amaranthus*, one of the plants with health properties that are anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, cardiovascular health, healthy vision, anti-aging and skeletal health which unfortunately does not feature in the pages in the period under review.

Further, detailing how land deposition also brought indirect dietary changes to indigenous people and how settlers also disrupted the foodways of indigenous people through promoting their food at the expense of Africans' food. The study also found that indigenous vegetables are as highly nutritious as non-indigenous vegetables and more affordable yet they are not part of the mainstream food chain in South Africa because of stigmatisation and the corporatization of the food system in South Africa, owed to colonization. Further, the study shows that indigenous vegetables are not part of the mainstream media in South Africa. Although there is overwhelming evidence that indigenous vegetables are healthy yet the media particularly IOL,

does not feature these vegetables by comparison to the exotic vegetables that are popular in the market today.

Non-communicable diseases can continue to be a burden, claiming more lives and weighing heavy on the South African health budget if progressive measures are not taken by the government. That is, the policies passed by the government must be a living document that directs and regulates the food system in South Africa. Food manufacturers, farmers, and big retailers play a significant and direct role in the food system, deciding the availability of food on the shelves and pricing of food in South Africa. Such control without strict regulations places livelihoods of many South Africans in uncertainty because these players are focused mainly on profitability than the overall health of people in general.

The IOL, as a web agglomeration of different print newspapers in different parts of the country has a spread and influence that has the potential to influence consumer behaviour. However, this has not been taking up and presents an opportunity for brands that promote healthy living such as insurance companies and family friendly brands to promote them. The lack of centring healthy living as an agenda of the publication is because the publication is influenced by the advertisers who are in turn influenced by the demography of the audience.

6.2 Limitations of the study

This study is based only on information obtained from IOL digital newspaper and does not include the voices of the people who are consumers of food published on IOL, consumers of indigenous food and IOL was not contacted to verify their publication agenda on food to get their views.

6.3 Recommendations

Non-communicable diseases can be preventable and monitored through diet and exercise to extend life expectancy in South African. The fight against NCDs encompasses scrutiny and collaboration between food manufacturers, supermarkets, learning institutions, bloggers and the media in South Africa because they each play an interrelated role in how people choose the food they eat.

The government of South Africa should play a leading role in popularising indigenous vegetables as an alternative diet to combat NCDs on the public agenda and coordinating the national dialogue on indigenous vegetables. Further, higher learning institutions can contribute to the national agenda by producing more laboratory publications on indigenous plants, health

properties and add indigenous food in conversations around decolonisation in Africa. In this light, higher learning institutions should also consider increasing scholarships offered to students who express interest on indigenous food research.

The study proposes an incentive-based approach to all who are compliant with the government models, policies and practices that are set to respond to NCDs. In this light, the government can offer grants to indigenous vegetable farmers to continue farming, supplying supermarkets and have monitoring agents consistently assessing the projects and publicise the process. Here, media houses that produced 60% of their publications which included content about variety of indigenous vegetables recipes, success stories of farmer and indigenous vegetables diet benefits, the government can offer 20% discount on their yearly taxes.

Food bloggers on social media play an influential role in how people choose and prepare their food today. The ministry of health should consider bringing popular bloggers on the table to fund their indigenous vegetables recipe books and their projects on making indigenous food fashionable in popular culture. Lastly, the study proposes the creation of spaces in urban areas that enable open markets for indigenous farmers to sell their vegetables to the public around the country. To ensure the success of these spaces, the government should promote the market day to the public for many people to participate through television advertisements, radio programmes, and social media. This market strategy is proven to be a success in the United States of America with the Oakland Farmers market. These farmers gather every Saturday to sell their organic vegetables to the community.

The DOH can partner with different publications to promote their guidelines for healthy living and sponsor events such as the indigenous plant fairs organized by the Botanical Society of South Africa.

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Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVTbtHRIkSA>

APPENDIX

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GIZXxBOyDggPTgto3zg93mzNBL7ULAKzFKadYtPAatY/edit?usp=sharing>

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JdwJvkVG7_7cO_7VD9n6QstmrkzLn_3P?usp=sharing