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THE CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF *ISOLEZWE* AND *I'SOLEZWE LESIXHOSA*

ABSTRACT

The fall of *Isolezwe* newspaper from being South Africa's second best-selling daily newspaper signals a challenging period for indigenous language newspapers in the country. Both *Isolezwe* and its sister newspaper *I'solezwe lesiXhosa* are significant as they represent a return of indigenous language newspapers in the country. These newspapers reversed a trend of inconsistency that has dogged indigenous language newspapers in South Africa, which have been characterised by opening and closing at a rapid rate. Historically, funding was identified as the biggest factor leading to the demise of indigenous language newspapers, but *Isolezwe* and *I'solezwe lesiXhosa* were founded by a media conglomerate that initially protected the newspapers from a lack of funding. Utilising qualitative research methods and a case study approach, this article examined the challenges and successes of indigenous language newspapers in South Africa, focusing on *Isolezwe* and *I'solezwe lesiXhosa*. The study investigated various aspects of the newspapers' operation that may have had an impact on their sustainability and success. These aspects include the impact of capital funding, the style of management, revenue generation, and the impact of cultural identity on the circulation and sales of the newspapers. The findings indicate that capital funding is key, as it provides the newspapers with an appropriate foundation for success and cushions them against external financial instability such as recessions, high inflation and economic downturn or slow economic growth. It was also found that the management style of the newspaper and their cultural identity have an impact on their operations.

Keywords: critical political economy, indigenous language newspapers, *Isolezwe*, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*, cultural identity, newspaper management, South African newspaper industry, SDG 10

BACKGROUND

Currently, South Africa, as is the case globally, is witnessing a haemorrhaging of newspapers, including indigenous language newspapers (BusinessTech, 2024). In Quarter 2 of 2024, the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC, 2024) reported a year-on-year decline of 18%. In terms of indigenous language newspapers, the *Isolezwe* newspaper dropped out of the top two in terms of sales and had to combine its Saturday and Sunday editions to form a weekend edition. The newspaper lost more than 81% of its readership between 2014 and 2024 (MDPMI, 2025). *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* celebrated a decade of existence by starting a restructuring process that might see it retrenching its already small staff component and further reducing its print frequency from being a weekly to a monthly newspaper. This is highlighted by Salawu (2013), who writes that South Africa had 19 registered indigenous language newspapers in 1930, but now – nearly a century later – most of these no longer exist.

Ilanga is the only surviving indigenous language newspaper that was established before 1994. Although numerous indigenous language newspapers have been launched since 1994, their existence has been short-lived, and they have also been inconsistent. Indigenous language newspapers that became prominent include *The Sunday Times Zulu Edition*, which was launched in 2010 by Avusa (now Arena Holdings) in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, and *Indaba/Indabazethu*, an isiXhosa newspaper also launched by Avusa in the Eastern Cape. Mokapela (2018) writes that the indigenous language newspapers in circulation are known to only a few people; thus, creating a dilemma in terms of the number of indigenous language newspapers in South Africa.

However, the establishment of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* in 2002 and 2015 respectively, and their longevity in the market, restored hope for indigenous language newspapers. The two newspapers sit at opposite ends of the market. *Isolezwe* is one of the top selling newspapers in the country (Breitenbach, 2025) with over 15 000 copies being sold daily on weekdays. On the other hand, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* distributes 20 000 copies per month for free. The difference in the sales and distribution of the newspapers or how their respective target markets receive them is important to understand, because it shows that although these two indigenous language newspapers are sustainable, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* faces certain challenges that might threaten its existence as it has started a restructuring process. These challenges include distribution, reliable advertising revenue and cultural identity, which lead to a lack of interest in the newspaper among certain sections of the target audience.

The survival of indigenous language newspapers is vitally important as they give a voice to indigenous communities in rural areas, most of whom are largely ignored by the prominent English and Afrikaans print media. Indigenous language speakers who are adversely affected are those who cannot speak, read and write in English and

Afrikaans. Indigenous language newspapers enable indigenous language-speaking communities to tell their stories in a language they understand, while also providing coverage to issues that affect them; thus, ensuring they reach a wider audience. Publishing and distributing indigenous language newspapers to native tongue communities also brings forth opinion pieces and letters to the editors, allowing readers of indigenous language newspapers to express themselves in their mother tongue, and in the process contributing to the diversity of the South African media landscape.

The state of indigenous language newspapers in South Africa

The state of indigenous language newspapers in South Africa remains bleak as these occupy a small space in the mainstream and community newspaper market. South Africa has 12 official languages; nine of these languages are indigenous languages. Of the nine languages, mainstream newspapers are available in only one – isiZulu. The isiZulu language further dominates the community newspaper market with more than ten newspapers, while the isiXhosa language has one well-known community newspaper, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*.

Mainstream newspapers in indigenous languages include one daily newspaper, *Isolezwe*. Other mainstream newspapers include *Ilanga* (published twice per week) and *Ilanga LangeSonto* and *Isolezwe ngeMpelaSonto*, both published on weekends. In the community newspaper market, there are 11 weeklies, including *Ugu Eyethu*, *Zululand Eyethu* and *Umlazi Eyethu*, which are part of the Eyethu KwaZulu-Natal group, and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*. Of the four mainstream newspapers, three are owned by Independent Media, and form part of the *Isolezwe* brand. The other two newspapers are part of the *Ilanga* flagship, owned by Mandla-Matla Publishing.

In the free newspaper market, the Eyethu KwaZulu-Natal group has 11 newspapers, while Independent Media has one. It is also important to note that all four of South Africa's indigenous language mainstream newspapers are located in KwaZulu-Natal. Eleven of the free newspapers are also found in KwaZulu-Natal, while one indigenous language newspaper is found in the Eastern Cape. KwaZulu-Natal is the only province with several indigenous language newspapers that are thriving in mainstream and community media. All the newspapers mentioned are audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), with *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* having an on-and-off relationship with the ABC.

Isolezwe was launched in 2002 and is read by isiZulu-speaking readers who are based mainly in KwaZulu-Natal. The publication has since become South Africa's leading indigenous language publication (*Isolezwe*, n.d.). IsiZulu is spoken by 80% of the population in KwaZulu-Natal (Mokati, 2023; Statistics South Africa, 2025). In addition, according to Breitenbach (2025), *Isolezwe* is the third biggest daily newspaper in South Africa, with a total circulation of 18 930 copies per day. The number one spot is held by *Daily Nation* at 53 450 copies (Breitenbach, 2025).

The launch and success of *Isolezwe* was followed by *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* 13 years later. According to *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* (n.d.), the newspaper was "first launched on 30 March 2015, as South Africa's first ever daily Xhosa (language) newspaper". In 2025,

the paper amended its description to “*Isolezwe lesiXhosa* liphephandaba lesiXhosa elipapasha iindaba yonke imihla kumnatha wonxibelelwano. Singooqal’azive abahleli babeza iindlebe ngeenjongo zikuphakela wena, mfundi wephepha, iindaba ngukukhawuleza nangobunjalo bazo”. This new description states that it publishes news online daily. According to Statistics South Africa (2025), 81.8% of the population in the Eastern Cape has IsiXhosa as first language.

The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges and successes of indigenous language newspapers in South Africa by investigating the following:

- ◆ how *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* generate revenue;
- ◆ the extent of resource investment by the parent company and the impact of management style on the sustainability and running of *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* and *Isolezwe*; and
- ◆ the impact of cultural identity on the sales and distribution of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholars have researched the topic of indigenous language media. These studies include Kaschula (2006), Prah (2007), Ndlovu (2011), Wasserman (2014), Malatji (2014), Salawu (2013; 2015; 2021), Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015), Cakata (2015), Motsaathebe (2018), and Tyali (2018). Notably, Malatji (2014) investigated the development and sustainability of indigenous African language newspapers, focusing on *Seipone*, *Nthavela* and *Ngoho News*. Malatji (*ibid.*) concludes that indigenous language newspapers face multiple challenges, including marketing, finance, and proper business structures, especially in the form of corporate governance. Salawu (2021) argues that various reasons may be responsible for the short lifespan of indigenous language newspapers, which include the apathy towards indigenous languages in Africa, which results in low patronage in terms of copy sales and advertisement placement.

Motsaathebe (2011) argues that publishing in indigenous languages is at a disadvantage due to the hegemonic domination of foreign languages, the obsession with Western and European content, a lack of writers, a lack of interest in indigenous writing and reading, escalating production costs, and poor distribution systems. Motsaathebe (*ibid.*) further highlights the lack of political will to support indigenous language publications, the lack of visibility of publishers, and publishers’ increased calculated reluctance to take risks, which translates into inhibited growth.

Malatji (2014), Salawu (2021) and Motsaathebe (2011) state that there are various issues that indigenous language newspapers must contend with for these publications to survive. This study focused on three issues, namely, (1) revenue generation, (2) the impact of capital funding by the parent company and the style of management, and (3) the impact of cultural identity. The domination of foreign language newspapers, especially on online platforms, has a ripple effect on the viability of indigenous

language newspapers because most readers have been exposed to foreign language newspapers for too long. As a result, readers have become accustomed to and are loyal to foreign language newspapers, which then results in advertisers preferring foreign language newspapers, with a heavier bias towards English language newspapers. With more advertising revenue going to foreign language newspapers, indigenous language newspapers become a less attractive investment for businesses. Ultimately, the diminished appetite from investors for indigenous language newspapers is likely to lead to minimal availability of capital funding to operate indigenous language newspapers.

Capital funding

The operations and ownership of a newspaper, as with most companies, are linked to capital funding that is injected in the initial stages and/or as and when funds are needed. Indigenous language newspapers are not exempt from this process. According to Leuridijk, Slot and Nieuwenhuis (2012), newspaper publishing is characterised by high sunk costs (for investments in printing presses, ink, paper, and labour) and low marginal costs; therefore, market entry barriers are high. According to Malatji (2014), in earlier decades, indigenous African language newspapers were not owned by the media conglomerates that dominate print media in South Africa; this was detrimental for these indigenous publications because they did not enjoy the collective platform of mainstream publications.

In post-apartheid South Africa, big media companies started buying indigenous language newspapers. *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* are both owned by Independent Media. In fact, most South African newspapers are owned by four big media companies, namely, Media24, Arena Holdings, Caxton, and Independent Media. *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* are part of the subsidiary model of ownership, which is when an indigenous language newspaper exists as a subsidiary product of a foreign but dominant language media organisation (Salawu, 2021).

Generation of revenue

After injecting capital into any business, shareholders expect a return on investment (ROI). Although regarded as the watchdog of society, this principle of ROI also applies to newspapers. According to Cilliers (2008, in McQuail, 2011), the overriding objective of all media businesses is to make a profit. Newspapers generate revenue in two forms – advertising and consumer revenue – with advertising revenue coming before production, while consumer revenue is seen after the newspaper has been produced (McQuail, 2011). Income from advertisers is the most important source of income for newspapers and there is a connection between the circulation of a newspaper and its advertising income.

McQuail (2011) asserts that advertising-based media entities are assessed according to the number and type of consumers (who these consumers are, and where these consumers live) who are reached by media messages. Circulation, readership and reach and/or ratings are measures used to attract clients and to determine the rate at which these potential clients would be charged. On the other hand, the market

performance of the media content that is paid for directly by the consumers is assessed by the income received from the sales and subscriptions to the services that are being provided by the entities (*ibid.*). In South Africa, most advertisers use information from the ABC for the assessment of the circulation figures of various newspapers. The ABC is a non-profit company registered in terms of Section 8 of the Companies Act, based on a bipartite agreement between advertisers and advertising agencies and media owners.

Cultural identity

This study probed whether cultural identity has an impact on the sales and/or distribution of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* by examining how they are received by readers, and whether the newspapers have content that promotes the culture of their readers. People who uphold their culture are not easily swayed, and that has an impact on whether they read indigenous language newspapers or not. Cultural identity has been identified as one of the key factors that are crucial to the performance of newspaper, as is the case with *Isolezwe*'s success. Ndlovu (2011) contends that "Zulu" media outlets, in political and cultural terms, are relatively dominant because of the historical pride of the *amaZulu* (Zulu people) towards *isiZulu* (the language). "This manifests in pride towards (isi)Zulu as a product of cultivation of *ubuZulu* or 'Zuluness' (sense, characteristics, positive consciousness of being an *umZulu*), over the years, for diverse cultural and political reasons" (Ndlovu, 2011). This domination can be confirmed by the success of *Isolezwe* and the more than ten isiZulu community newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal. Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015) argue that *Isolezwe* is popular because it resonates with and reinforces the internalised lived cultural identity in terms of ethnicity and language. According to Wasserman and Ndlovu (*ibid.*), the margin between *Isolezwe* and other publications for indigenous language mother tongue speakers is large enough to explain the success of newspapers that are published in isiZulu. Also, the success cannot be attributed to a case of appealing to readers who cannot access English language publications, as *Isolezwe* seems to have lured readers away from English language media (Salawu, 2013).

McQuail (2011) argues that media audience composition and behaviour (practices around the choice and use of media) are always culturally patterned before, after, and during the media experience. The influence of the cultural identity of *Isolezwe* is well documented by Ndlovu (2011), Salawu (2013) and Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015), among others. The researchers investigated whether cultural identity or the lack of it has an impact on the sales of *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*, and on how *Isolezwe* continues to maintain and improve cultural identity. The researchers also investigated the impact of cultural fragmentation in the societies where *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* operate because of localisation.

Butsch (2019) posits that culture happens when people gather in places and engage in situations where they interact, create, and express that culture. In relation to *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*, this study focused on the cultural identity differences in the Eastern Cape and their impact on *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*. Butsch (2019) argues that spaces are fixed to a particular location, and that certain and/or various situations are portable, albeit to

the degree to which a particular space is inessential to the interaction(s). Cultures are even more portable as different peoples carry cultures into a situation. *Isolezwe* has readers in provinces such as Gauteng and Mpumalanga who identify with the newspapers; thus, meaning that these people may have carried their culture from their places of origin. This indicates the extent and impact of cultural identity of and on indigenous language newspapers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used the theory of critical political economy to respond to questions about revenue generation, the extent of resource investment by the parent company, the impact of the style of management on the sustainability and the operations of *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* and *Isolezwe*, and the impact of cultural identity on the sales and distribution of the newspapers.

Advertising is the main source of revenue for newspapers, but the role of advertisers is sometimes viewed with suspicion. As stated by Hardy (2014), critical political economy is concerned with supporting mechanisms, such as advertising, and how it influences and affects the media's behaviour and content. According to Mosco (2009), when critical political economists think about the commodity form in communication, they tend to start with media content. From this point of view, the process of commodification in communication involves transforming messages, which could range from bits of data to systems of meaningful thought, and finally, forming into marketable products.

Ownership is probably the most readily identified concern of critical political economy, and at its broadest it is an effort to understand the changing nature of media businesses (Hardy, 2014). According to Wasko (2014), the primary concern of the critical political economists is with the allocation of resources within capitalist societies. Through studies of ownership and control, critical political economists document and analyse the relations of power, class systems and other structural inequalities, as posited by Wasko (2014).

The availability of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* adds to the diversity of languages in South Africa's newspaper market, which is dominated by English and Afrikaans content (Molale & Mpfu, 2022). Ultimately, this is in line with the critical political economy, which, as argued by Salawu (2015), is against the limitation of language in the media to enhance efficiency and the consumption of particular goods and services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study made use of qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and document analysis. In-depth interviews generate descriptions and interpretations of people's social worlds (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014), while documents are conduits of communication between the author and the reader, and they contain meaningful information (Given, 2008). Interviews were conducted with the editors of the newspapers, while the documents included annual reports, the websites of the newspapers, and editorial content. The study followed a comparative approach

(Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013) to understand the challenges and successes of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*. The use of two methods for data collection, as well as the comparative data analysis, ensured triangulation, which provides diverse ways of looking at the same phenomenon and adds credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The data analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis and documentary data analysis.

FINDINGS

The findings focused on the three areas that were investigated, namely revenue generation, the extent of resource investment by the parent company, the impact of the style of management on the sustainability and running of *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* and *Isolezwe*, and the impact of cultural identity.

Revenue generation

Both *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* generate revenue primarily through advertising. *Isolezwe* performs well in this regard, as the newspaper not only generates revenue but is also able to invest in the growth of the organisation. On the other hand, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* deals with revenue generation on a month-to-month basis, although the publication can sustain itself. Significantly, the food retail industry is the biggest advertiser in both newspapers. The findings also indicate that *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* face challenges in terms of systematic discrimination from the advertising industry, which is typically directed at indigenous language media in South Africa. This discrimination manifests in many forms, which include racial discrimination, obscure class profiling, and being discriminated against because of the political affiliation profile of the publication's owner. These forms of discrimination are not isolated to the indigenous language newspaper industry only but are a societal challenge. While both *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* experience this challenge, *Isolezwe* is less affected due to its success.

The class discrimination by advertisers is linked to apathy against indigenous languages, ostensibly because most of the people who read indigenous language newspapers are seen as not have the spending power that would normally attract advertisers of luxury products. Moreover, controversy surrounding the owner of Independent Media (Iqbal Survé through Sekunjalo Holdings) (Wilson, Cronjé & Wicks, 2024) is thought to have an impact on the limited advertising revenue streams of *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa*. The refusal to allow indigenous language newspapers to translate advertisements from English and/or Afrikaans by some advertisers can also be viewed as a form of indirect discrimination. This places indigenous language media in a compromised position: if they do not accept English advertisements they lose revenue, which impacts sustainability. The study found that this form of structural discrimination by some advertisers holds a threat to the sustainability of the two newspapers.

The findings indicate that *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* received adequate funding from Independent Media. However, it appears that *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* was disadvantaged in resource allocation compared to *Isolezwe*. This was due to senior

staff members with extensive knowledge of the newspaper industry and indigenous language newspaper environment being pulled out after the launch, returning to their previous positions elsewhere in the organisation. This left *l'solezwe lesiXhosa* with staffers who had limited understanding of the newspaper market.

The level of financial investment in the newspapers is reflected in how *l'solezwe lesiXhosa* moved from a subscription model to a free weekly and later a monthly publication due to the decline in the newspaper's sales. This could have easily led to the closure of the newspaper without significant financial backing. The financial investment has enabled both *Isolezwe* and *l'solezwe lesiXhosa* to remain sustainable through difficult times.

As stated earlier, South Africa needs indigenous language newspapers. As such, media proprietors must ensure a solid financial foundation to ensure that the newspapers can survive possible financial storms and also enable them to grow, like *Isolezwe*. The study found that capital funding for newspapers that are not owned by conglomerates is a challenge, as it is expensive to start a newspaper and sustain it. Because of the societal imbalances in South Africa, black people did not have the financial muscle to start indigenous language newspapers. Additionally, indigenous language newspapers also tend to struggle to secure funding from international donors. The challenge of a lack of capital among black people is not isolated to indigenous language newspapers, though, and the study also found that the business sector in South Africa and indigenous language newspaper proprietors should not look for special treatment. This is because funding is regarded as a challenge for all black proprietors, regardless of the sector. Government support similar to that offered to community radio stations and forced advertising are seen as potential solutions to the challenge of a lack of funding.

Style of management

The study found that history has shown that black managers have generally excelled in managing indigenous language newspapers, but these managers were made scapegoats when things went wrong. Black managers do not only deal with external factors, such as structured discrimination by advertisers, they must also deal with leadership challenges from within the organisation, especially in the case of newspapers owned by conglomerates, as is the case with *Isolezwe* and *l'solezwe lesiXhosa*. Challenges include the refusal to distribute the newspapers in certain areas, using crime as basis for the decision. Management style has an impact on the success or failure of an organisation, and indigenous language newspapers are not immune to this impact.

Impact of cultural identity on sales and distribution

The study found that cultural identity has an effect on the sales or distribution of the newspaper. Due to the broad nature of the identification of culture, this impact manifested in different forms. Cultural identity in the form of access to information in an indigenous language, which establishes interdependent cooperation and collaboration, leads to a loyal readership. Cultural identity also manifests in editorial content, which

identifies with and reflects readers' day-to-day lives. It is further expressed through a focus on readers' culture, traditions, and customs.

Isolezwe benefitted from the minimal cultural fragmentation among isiZulu-speaking people. On the other hand, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* faced the challenge of cultural fragmentation in the Eastern Cape province. Although isiXhosa is the language that is most commonly used in schools in the Eastern Cape, communities also communicate in languages such as isiMpondo and isiBhaca, among others. The difference in language is accompanied by a difference in culture. This leads to the exclusion of potential readers as they cannot culturally identify with the newspaper. This is further exacerbated by the dialects within the isiXhosa tongue itself, and the apathy towards culture and tradition. Although *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* publishes diverse content, it has neglected content that is part of the cultural identity of the wider Eastern Cape population, including sporting codes such as boxing, rugby, and cricket.

The apathy of readers towards indigenous languages leads to the low consumption of indigenous language newspapers. However, there is hope in the form of a growing number of young people embracing the "decolonisation movement", which seeks to re-embrace the love and pride of one's culture and tradition. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* should consider investing in a language style guide as part of dealing with cultural fragmentation, informed by publications such as the *IsiXhosa Gender Terminology Dictionary*. *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* has to identify its cultural audience as it cannot be the proverbial "all things to all people". The focus should instead shift to building a relationship with communities and to improve its reporting on cultural and traditional issues that transpire in the province. The study established that cultural identity is key to the success or failure of an indigenous language.

CONCLUSION

The study found that capital funding plays a major role in establishing an indigenous language newspaper, as this helps to capacitate the publication by employing the best talent for the job, and providing the resources needed for the optimal and profitable running of the newspaper. Adequate capital funding also cushions the newspaper against unexpected financial challenges. Moreover, the style of management has an impact, like in any other organisation. With indigenous language newspapers, though, black managers tend to be used as scapegoats for failure and face many leadership challenges, both internally and externally.

Cultural identity is multifaceted and is crucial for the success of indigenous language newspapers. Cultural identity could be attained through the language, content that identifies with the daily lives of the publication's core readership base, and specific or niche reporting on the culture and traditions of the target audience.

Revenue generation remains the biggest obstacle to the sustainability of indigenous language newspapers, with advertising being the biggest source of revenue for newspapers, despite the challenge of structured discrimination. This apparent bias often leads to the failure of indigenous language newspapers, and it also discourages

black people from investing in indigenous language newspapers, as such entities are seen as being high risk projects.

It is important to note that, since the completion of this study, two other Isolezwe products, *Isolezwe Ngomgqibelo* and *Isolezwe ngeSonto*, merged to form *Isolezwe Ngempelasonto*. This further reduced the number of indigenous language newspapers in the country and also underlines the turbulent nature of the indigenous language newspaper industry. In addition, the editors of both *Isolezwe* and *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* who participated in the study no longer hold these positions. Furthermore, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* has reduced its printing to once a month.

Recommendations for further research

Isolezwe lesiXhosa's move to digital provide an opportunity to investigate the online environment of indigenous language newspapers.

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