



National University of Science and Technology

Think in Other Terms



**GENDER AND REPRESENTATION IN ONLINE MEDIA: AN ANALYSIS
OF THE COVERAGE OF WOMEN'S ISSUES IN *HER ZIMBABWE***

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study explores gender and representation in online media. This is done through an analysis of the coverage of women's issues in *Her Zimbabwe* website platform, the first female owned website in Zimbabwe. The research makes use of semi-structured interviews and content analysis to assess the coverage of women's issues. The study revealed that women who have often been found at the margins of mainstream media are allotted space on the online media.

The research found that online media deconstructs stereotypes that portrayed women negatively through the positive framing of stories in online media. The Empowerment frame represented the largest frame with 38% of stories speaking about positively empowering women. Framing of stories was due in part to ownership patterns of the medium which is the first female-led platform. Hence, the study revealed that the site challenges existing stereotypes through use of differing forms of storytelling to that of traditional media.

This study therefore recommends that there should be more stories that cover women in political positions even at grassroots levels which will ensure that women in all spheres have been covered. It also recommends that the site take into account rural women's in the framing of its news in order to ensure coverage of women in all respects.