THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to investigate the role of print media in conflict management in Kenya. The media has a unique position in society, and the obvious expectations of the audience would be for the media to inform, educate, entertain and be a watchdog, instead the media has been seen to propagate content of incitement and hate speech which has the potential of causing instability and tension among the its audience. The study focused on the conflicts which are ethnically motivated in nature and are instigated politically; such clashes manifest themselves during electioneering period. The research focused on handling three objectives that adequately address the research topic. There were attempts to understand ways through which the media addressed the issue of conflict, Again looked at the particular editorial policy for such media organization towards managing conflicts, last there was attempt to determine the influence of newspapers content on conflict management by the print media in Kenya. Firstly using Gate Keeping theory, the study examined to what degree editors manipulate content, this theory revealed the critical role an editor plays in shaping the audience perceptions and behavior. Secondly Agenda Setting, a theory grounded on the saying that audience see “the world outside and the images inside their minds”, this theory exposed how the media is capable of creating a world in our minds that over time becomes a reality. Thirdly Conflict theory, discussed how human beings by nature are in a conflict mainly because of some factors i.e. scramble for resources and thirst for power. The study accounted for the role of print media in conflict management. The study investigated the relationship between independent variable which is the print media and how is it an influence to the dependent variable is the conflict management. The outcome of the influence produces divergent scenarios, which if properly utilized can positively help in conflict management. The methodology used is descriptive survey to gather the data required. The study used questionnaire to obtain data from a selected number of respondents and content analysis. There were two groups of Newspapers that were selected through stratified sampling to separate National and of these within cities. Additionally random sampling will be used to pick a representative of the
Newspapers, the respondents were picked using purposive sampling so as to obtain respondents who have the information that the researcher is seeking. The anticipated outcome of this study was expected to reveal the significance of the print media in managing conflicts, but more so the role the print media plays stopping or fuelling such conflicts. Again the results of the study helped in determining whether it is a negative or positive role based on the current editorial policy applied as the study is being conducted.

**Key Words:** print media, conflict management, Kenya

**Introduction**

The media is a crucial cornerstone in building strong democracies, enhancing civic participation and good governance, and promoting justice and peace, equally a free press can be utilized as an instrument for conflict management. If properly managed in a conflict it has the potential of being an ambassador of peace and stability. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of the frontiers (Koven, 2004).

Media and journalism can be a great assistance in conflict management and peace building. However, the power they have is also limited, as they cannot eliminate armed conflicts altogether. The media can be a good tool in a healthy and functioning environment but more is needed than ethical and responsible reporting to ensure lasting peace and safety. The role of the media is twofold: on the one hand, the media report and reflect on pressing issues and can help to question established concepts and ideas. On the other hand, they can be used for propaganda purposes and instead of revealing truths, try to cover things up and by this curtail people’s freedom and right to information. Regardless, the potential of the media in conflict and post-conflict situations remains positive, and has been sadly underutilized to this point in time.

Koven (2004) argues that Journalism does not need justification for its existence. Its service to society is justification in itself. Journalism can not only help to distribute information but also counter hate-speech and create an environment of balanced opinions, information equilibrium. Mcquail (2005) says that media organizations tend to reproduce selectively according to criteria which suit their own goals and interests. These may sometimes be professional and craft criteria, but more weight is usually given to what sells most or gets highest ratings. The more that the same criteria are applied at successive stages of decision making, the more pre-existing biases of form and content are likely to endure while variety, uniqueness and unpredictability will take second place. Bias in the sense may mean no more than favoring products which are both easy to reproduce and popular with audiences, but it also differentially reinforces certain elements of the media of the media culture and increases conformity with organizational policy.
For the media it can be problematic to find a balance between preventing harm caused by speech and protecting individual expression. Being able to find this balance however is important especially in conflict situations. Responsible journalism does not just re-publish press releases but is truly concerned with a truthful, balanced and fair account of events. In order to achieve this journalists have to stay clear of judgment representations and describe reality without embellishment (Wolfsfeld and Gadi, 2004).

The definition of conflict and defining conflict areas is not easy and no two places are alike. Journalists need to know what they can expect on sight in order to define the objectives of their project (Deutsche, 2009). If democracy is to work properly, society needs access to news and information; analysis of the status quo, debate, practical information and exchange as well as entertainment are needed and provided by the media. There is the role that the media plays which is critical in managing a conflict, getting a clear understanding of the cause of the conflict is important finding a lasting solution. This form of awareness can be accurately be understood by the media on the ground. Broadcasting news by using community radios can help reach people in different areas, even with different languages more easily. This way people can be addressed directly and their own personal experiences and lives can be incorporated much better, than with foreign media. The danger of manipulation and inflammation of ethnic tensions, however, cannot be ignored. Another advantage of local media, especially radio is that in border areas it is possible to convey peace messages to passing fighters and refugees alike.

Internal conflicts do not occur spontaneously but tend to have a history. Local media usually have a deeper understanding of the existing political structures, the participants of the conflict as well as the changes preceding the outbreak of violence. The media can therefore not only influence society before the conflict by recognizing and properly addressing the issue but also afterwards. Unlike international media covering conflicts, local media are a recognized part of society with the ability to accelerate and magnify fears or reduce them. One should not forget that journalism can play a role in escalating conflicts, which also demonstrates the potential for positive purposes. The media have the power to defuse tensions before they even reach a critical point and keep a critical eye on government, opposition and society. By supplying credible information and reaching a large audience, the media help in managing conflicts and promote democratic principles. In the aftermath of a conflict, reconciliation and societal development can be encouraged as well (Westphal & Florian, 2004).

The media should offer a balanced analysis of the history of the conflicts, viewed from different sides and perhaps contributing to the recognition of injustices and associated historical wounds. Reconciliation after violent conflicts depends largely on a process of transactional contrition and forgiveness between the historical enemies. This process is crucial for the gradual establishment of a new relationship based on mutual acceptance and reasonable trust. The Media’s potential to reach and influence large numbers of individuals puts them in a position to become central actor in this process of reconciliation (Montville, 1991)
Rwanda genocide Case

Negative ethnicity which was politically instigated through the media is seen as the cause of the conflict in Rwanda. The media through Radio Rwanda and the private station Radio Television Libre Des Mille Collins (RTLM) contributed significantly to the polarization of the two ethnic groups. This broadcast was organized by journalist who fanned political tension and inter-ethnic hatred that led to the deadly conflict. The Rwanda Genocide was propagated by the press; the killers seem to have organized the militia using way back before this mass killing using the press. The Radio Rwanda is a classical evidence of how the press was used. The signal was given by broadcast on Radio Rwanda on 3 March, after which bands of militiamen and uniformed soldiers searched the area for Tutsi (Rakiya, 1995).

Internal conflicts under the banner of ethnicity have occurred in Ghana, Congo and Rwanda. Rwanda was the scene of the deadliest conflict in 1994 where up to a million people are believed to have been massacred between April and July that is in a space of three months. The subsequence take-over of power by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and the exodus of an estimated 2million people are refugees suggest a serious challenge to the settlement of conflict (Gunner, 1999).

The Rwanda genocide provides a good specimen for one to be curious of investigating how the media handled the conflict. Whereas the citizens expected the media to disseminate messages of peace and cohesion, use the media to coordinate the security agents, inform them of where tension is accumulating, the media was used to spread hate messages among the media, it is unfortunate this media was being used by elites. The media was widely condemned for being biased during the conflict, with a total disregard to journalistic ethics, some journalists decided to throw their lot in with the RTLM, before and during the killing. Many RTLM journalists used to work for Umurwanashyaka, the newspaper of the Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) which was of course also extremism. RTLM journalists are accused of having played a major role in inciting the people using the Press.

The situation took a deadly turn, and with military build up to separate the different factions in the civil war, there was need for a watchdog. Henry (1998) says the role of the press should never be under-estimated in any peacekeeping operation, and even more in a civil war situation such as that of Rwanda. Although the media was present, lack of positive objective in its reporting of the whole conflict led to the deaths of almost one million civilians, mostly women and children, a conflict that triggered mass exodus of 2million refugees to neighboring countries.

With journalists taking sides, it was only proper for one to counter that move, responding to the need for balanced and anti-inflammatory broadcasting a Non Governmental Organization (NGO), Search for Common Ground (SCG) established an independent radio studio in Bunjumbura which broadcasted the whole region. The goal of the studio Ijambo (Kirundi for “wise words”) was to produce programmes dedicated to peace and national reconciliation and
programmes which promote dialogue among polarized groups (Patrick, 2006). The media in Rwanda was widely accused of lack of objectivity, with journalists taking sides, and being bias in their reporting, the media propagated the conflict by spreading hatred messages dividing the public on ethnic faction.


The 2007 elections were held amid unprecedented media attention. The print and electronic media sought to outdo each other in election coverage from the campaign stage right through to the transmission of election results. The elections came at a time when the media arena had been fully liberalized. The consequence was the entry of exciting new players, mainly in the form of frequency modulation (FM) radio stations. Many of these went straight into interactive vernacular radio broadcasting complete with call-in facilities. Millions of anxious and excited Kenyans who for years had been only passive listeners to one state-owned radio station could now access a wide choice of radio stations including those that broadcast in their respective home languages.

The Kriegler report observed some form of bias in reporting and lack of objectivity by the media during the election period and during the conflict. The media did not have any elections policy to be developed, and guidelines for verifying data before going on air, vetting of live broadcasts and screening of paid-for advertisements, responsibility to announce accurate results and training of journalists on the Electoral Code of Conduct, and elections reporting and the manner of reporting on opinion polls. Lack of all this skills which the journalists needed to possess contributed greatly to misuse of the media during that conflict (http://kenyastockholm.files.wordpress.com/2008/09/the_kriegler_report.pdf).

The Waki Commission also pointed figures at the media although diverse views are held about where and how the spread of information through the print and broadcast media had contributed to the 2007 post election violence. The report produced observed that many recalled that some of the vernacular FM stations contributed to a climate of hate, negative ethnicity and may have incited violence. These included the vernacular music and negative ethnicity allegedly coming from Kikuyu FM stations including Kameme, Inooro, Coro, The Kalenjins’ Kass FM and others in different parts of the country (http://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/Reports/Waki_Report.pdf).

Accused of biasness, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), a State owned media, which was supposed to be fair and unbiased took sides and only favored the President political party in its reporting. Key provisions in the KBC Act pertaining to free access slots for party political broadcasts were to be clarified and precisely defined as to the rights of the parties and candidates in law; its demand came from the opposition which saw the KBC as a government mouthpiece. The Waki report concluded that it believes that speech in the media, including in vernacular FM radio stations, aiming to foment ethnic hatred and/or incite, organize, or plan for violence should
be investigated thoroughly in a timely fashion when it occurs. Submissions to the Commission called for legislative framework governing the Media to clamp down on media misconduct and against hate speech. In both of these reports, the media was mentioned, rightly to say the Waki Report choose to rebuke the media in its recommendations for failing to behave ethically. The Kriegler report gave recommendations which reveal gaps that need to be filled for the Kenya Media to be able to handle election contest soberly (http://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/Reports/Waki_Report.pdf).

**History of Standard Newspaper in Kenya**

The standard, founded in 1902 by Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee, is the oldest mass circulating newspaper in the history of Kenya (Business Week, 2010). Over the years, The Standard has changed hands. Two years after launching the Standard, Jeevanjee sold his interests to the partnership of Mayer and Anderson who renamed it to East African Standard, marking the beginning of the largest and the most influential publication in colonial East Africa. In 1967, Lonrho conglomerate acquired The Standard. Since Lonrho had a lot of business interests in Africa, the Newspaper served the vast business of packaging, breweries, agriculture, transport, mining and other ventures in different parts of the continent. Following Tiny Rowland’s death in the mid-1990s and the reorganization at the Lonrho headquarters in London, The Standard once again was sold to a group of Kenyan political businessmen who went ahead to gain control of the Kenya Television Network (KTN) and became The Standard Group. At one time, The Standard Limited published a Kiswahili daily newspaper called Baraza (Standard History, 2010). The Standard Group also acquired Toad Media Group in 2009 and renamed it Radio Maisha. The FM radio station broadcast across the nation and globally through the Internet (http://www.radiomaisha.co.ke). The Standard Group also has a Publications Distribution Services, an agency which acquires and distributes publications.

**Statement of the Problem**

The media has a crucial role to play during a conflict; experience has seemingly projected an image of its seeing the media as non objective, biased and portrayal of total disregard of the mandate it holds from the public interest position. The media has tremendously grown in the recent years, with majority of the audience depending on it for entertainment, information and expecting the media to be a watchdog. Unfortunately the media has been on the forefront dissemination content that has the potential of incitement and thus bringing tension among the people. The mushrooming of the vernacular stations was seen as a step towards freedom of the press, yet these stations are being used to spread incitements and messages of disharmony among the people (Melone, 1997). The media is expected to be impartial and remain balanced in its reporting, yet there has been cases where the media is seen as biased and taking sides especially during the electioneering period, either because the media houses are owned by politicians or have interest, this has created a situation where the media is not balanced and is biased in its
reporting that causing confusion and division in the public domain thorough hate speech (Koven, 2004). Media is priority for any successful society, yet in recent years, finding the right journalist, and media stations with the right intentions for the job remains a huge challenge. Advances for new stations have changed at a dizzying pace, leaving more and more players feeling dazed and confused. Partly because the expectation of the public is not met by the media, instead negative reporting has led to conflicts among the people. This research intended to investigate how the media has failed to remain professionally objective while discharging its duties to the public as a watchdog, again look at cases of how the media has practiced biasness, also investigate cases of lack of objectivity, inciting the public through inflammatory statements, and hate speech were investigated too.

**Research Objective**

The main objective was to examine the role of print media in conflict management in Kenya.

**Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate the ways in which the print media handles conflicts in Kenyan society,
2. To identify the effects of editorial policy applied during conflict by the print media in Kenya
3. To determine the influence of newspapers content on conflict management by the print media in Kenya.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Theoretical Framework**

This section provided the theoretical framework, and three key theories will be included in this study, namely Agenda setting, Gate keeping and Conflict theory. Apart from that, this section also looked at the media and conflict; the relationship that exist between the two terms, last there was a detailed focus on the empirical review of the topic.

**Agenda Setting**

The Agenda Setting Theory is based on the premise that we are given our “agenda” of daily information for discussion based on what the media wants us to be talking about. The things we see in newspapers and the things we hear on the radio are things that people all over the country are talking about. Agenda Setting was an early theory developed by Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz. These two men believed that media content set the agenda for public discussions (Wilcox, 2003). As a theory, agenda setting has a scholarly pedigree that is traceable to the early works of Lippmann (1922) who has been described as the “intellectual father of the agenda setting idea” (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p. 96). Situating his argument on the notion of “the world outside and
the pictures in our heads” Lippmann (1922) basically asserts that the political topography in which people live is so complex and apparently disorganized that it often involves some people making meaning out of the cobweb of activities and events for others to understand the goings-on around them.

Aware of this relationship between press coverage and public concern, researchers Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, in their now famous Chapel Hill study, having studied the 1968 political campaign, arrived at a proposition that says, “people learn from the media what the important issues are (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).” The primary and often underplayed result of the coverage of conflict by the media is that it leads to recognizing of the activities on the ground, especially those who are relatively prominent in such a violent conflict process. Covering the players including politicians and other stakeholders who are pushing for a divergent settlement brings them to the fore of public attention. For those players that are already in the “public domain”, media focus reinforces public attention to them. Roberts and McCombs’ (1994) position on this is that at the root of the debate is the issue of relative influence a medium has on the audience. Consequently, they assert that all media have an influence on the audience but even more importantly, there is the element of medium-to-medium influence in which political advertisements set off news reports and news reports also influence the content of political advertisements.

Agenda setting is considerably more than the classical assertion that the news tells us what to think about. The news also tells us how to think about it. Both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda setting roles. Central to the news agenda and its daily set of objects issues, personalities, events, etc. are the perspectives that journalists and, subsequently, members of the public employ to think about each object (McCombs, 1992).

**Gate Keeping Theory**

The concept of gatekeeper was first coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin. His theory of channels and gatekeepers was developed to explain the focal points of social changes in communities. Shoemaker (1991) provides the following definition of gatekeeping: Simply put, gate keeping is the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day”. Gate keeping in the communication literature is conceived mainly as a selection process. The literature treats the gatekeeper in a similar way to Lewin’s concept where it is applied to both interpersonal and mass communication.

The gate keeping theory attempts to explain the subjectiveness that goes with the news production processes. It creates a link between the choices of information that media give to the public to the powers conferred on the gatekeepers, e.g. editors and journalists. According to this
theory, editorial gatekeepers choose what news to use and how to use them and these selection procedures inevitably result in the reflection of the gatekeepers’ ideologies and organisational beliefs (McGregor, 1997).

Mass Communication inclines to address gatekeeping as a one-way direction and a top-down process (Shoemaker, 1991). The Gatekeeper decides what information should move to group or individual and what information should not. Here, the gatekeeper are the decision makers who letting the whole flow of news. The gatekeeper is having its own influence like social, cultural, ethical and political. Based on personal or social influences they let the information to the group. Through this process the unwanted, sensible and controversial information’s are removed by the gate keeper which helps to control the society or a group and letting them in a right path. Again, it can be argued that this is a function of gatekeeping, as “news gatherers” collect stories they believe will fit the frame of their specific news outlet and the news processor who decide what to accept from reporters and how to present a final product. The gatekeeping theory becomes relevant if applied to the approaches taken by media organisations in reporting events. It is recognized that newspapers report similar events all the time but take different approaches and positions to report these events. This arguably is determined by many factors such as social and political biases and economic demands of shareholders, advertisers, audiences and gatekeepers’ views.

Gate Keeping is seen as the process of controlling information as it moves through a gate. Activities include, among others, selection, addition, withholding, display, channelling, shaping, manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard, and deletion of information. Barzilai-Nahon (2004). In news medium editor play vital role. He has to decide what kind of news items will publish and what should not. Every day the news channel receives various news items from all over the world. The channel have its own ethics and policies through this the editor decide the news items for publish or aired. In some cases few news items are rejected by the editor due the organizations policy or the news items which are not suitable for publish.

Benkler (2006) claimed that the emergence of the networked information economy increased individual autonomy by increasing “the range and diversity of things that individuals can do for and by themselves and by providing “non proprietary alternative sources of communication capacity and information, alongside the proprietary platforms of mediated communications. Nevertheless, this growing autonomy in many cases is not translated into more freedoms or power due to users’ self-regulation of themselves or strong control by the gatekeepers that make the transformation from one gatekeeper to another an impossible mission.

Gate keeping is fundamentally a descriptive theory, with a normative bent that offers little if any predictive power. Its chief value comes in summarizing the various forces that come into play as news people make decisions about what messages will be selected to present to their audiences. It provides a framework researchers can use; it does little else. More recently, gate keeping has
contributed to the development of other key mass communication theories. Lasorsa (2002) identifies a number of widely accepted mass communication theories and how they relate to diversity-related content; it is not a stretch to find a relationship between gate keeping and many of the theories.

**Conflict Theory**

In general, Conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the general contours of conflict in society: how conflict starts and varies, and the effects it brings. The central concerns of conflict theory are the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power. Competitive and provocative public display of group identity symbols sets off rioting and violence as social tensions rise. To lower competition and uncertainty in ethnic relations, Identity Politics favors language and cultural autonomy, power sharing, diminishing the salience of ethnic identities and boundaries, and promoting a shared identity.

Kaufman, (2001) holds that in multiethnic societies, the root cause of ethnic conflict is a threatened change in the prevailing ethnic hierarchy of dominance and subordination. Sceptical of primordial ethnic identities, IP holds that social construction of group identities is explained by the social psychology of intergroup relations. There is a cultural tendency toward ethnocentrism and group self defence that is evolutionarily favoured, i.e. it is a normal, not a pathological aspect of group relations. Leaders create national and ethnic identities with powerful symbols and myths that have emotional appeal.

Violence breaks out during ethnic rivalry over control of territory and governance amid exaggerated fears of extinction. Unless ethnic relations are properly managed, divisive ethnic myths, symbols, stereotypes, suspicions, and fears resonate in the population and get activated in ethnic cleansing, massacres, and atrocities. In order to explore the consequences of territorial location and mixing of ethnic minorities for ethnic tensions and minority demands for cultural rights, political recognition, power sharing, and more radical demands for autonomy and secession. Conflict will also tend to have greater levels of violence when the goals of a group are seen to be transcendent. As long as the efforts of a group are understood to be directed toward everyday concerns, people will tend to moderate their emotional involvement and thus keep conflict at a rational level. If, on the other hand, we see the goals of our group as being greater than the group and the concerns of daily life, then conflict is more likely to be violent. However it is worth noting, that some scholars look at a conflict as an advantage in some situation. Groups require disharmony as well as harmony, dissociation as well as association; and conflicts within them are by no means altogether disruptive factors. Far from being necessarily dysfunctional, a certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life (Coser, 1956).
Empirical review

According to Mark and Monroe (2003), Mass media often plays a key role in today’s conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence. Which role the media takes in a given conflict, and in the phases before and after, depends on a complex set of factors, including the relationship the media has to actors in the conflict and the independence the media has to the power holders in society.

One consequence is that while some conflicts have acquired global attention through exposure in the media, others have failed to receive significant attention through neglect. Many of the African conflicts of recent times in which millions have died – whether it is the wars in the Congo since 1997, the renewed civil war in Angola, the inter-related conflicts in Sierra Leone, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia have passed almost without notice under the international radar (Mark and Monroe, 2003). The combatants in a conflict will usually relate to each other either on the battlefield or through the way they are represented in the media and this latter, as is evident in many recent conflicts, may often be more important to them than the battlefield. To use sociological terms, the media is both structure and agency. The idea therefore that they can be simple instruments of any point of view state or non-state is profoundly misleading and policy towards the media in conflict has to take on board the sense in which they play both interweaving roles (Villa, 1992).

Case of crime committed by ethnic minorities becomes the central evidence of the ungrateful ethnic criminal image drawn and they are perceived as a threat to national security and social well being. Instead of reflecting pluralism in the social and political structures and thereby contributing to the creation of an informed critical citizenry within a country, media often act as a mouthpiece of the ethnic circles. Thus a deliberate distortion of news coverage for particular interests easily exacerbates the tension between opposed factions and becomes a main trigger of violent conflict (Terzis, 2000).

Since the essence of conflict transformation is the transformation of mentalities, both within the society and the individual societies have to be involved from the top down and the bottom up. The media have the potential to be a gateway through which to reach the largest possible number of people (Melone, 1997). Understanding the media is important for anyone who wishes to build peace. It is not enough to focus on the actions of the combatants. Unless the underlying war economy is understood and challenged then peace will be merely a temporary cessation of violence. Any strategy to tackle the underlying causes must also recognize how the media are an integral part of the strategy of combatants, with acts designed to intimidate and terrify or appeal to the wider international community. Control over local media is an important objective of all
parties in conflict. Building an independent pluralist media must therefore be an objective of the peacemakers (Terzis, 2000).

The media cannot be neutral towards peace: while news journalists may react strongly against such a claim by holding their professional objectivity above everything else, they must realize that the way in which they report on and about a certain conflict can drastically affect the audience’s perception of the situation and thus may influence further developments. While no one would endorse such an idea, the news media may be controlled and used for specific purposes, even that of peace, the perception that journalist ought to be neutral countries (Hyden 2002). Efforts to realize the potentials of the media must be part of a concerted action by different actors to shift the political culture in which the media operate, away from mutual ethnic stereotyping, marginalization and power grabbing on ethnic bases towards a culture of open dialogue, mutual respect for different life styles, and controlled power sharing. Approaches limited only to the media often fail to address the structural factors that gave rise to the conflict in the first place. Thus efforts to transform individual and societal and mentalities should be extended to include governmental and nongovernmental organizations including the media owners, public opinion leaders and marginalized sections of the society (Terzis, 2000).

Research Methodology

Research design

Research design refers to the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure (Kothari, 2004). The design of this research was descriptive survey. A descriptive survey seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitude, behavior or values (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This study is preferred by the researcher because quantitative data in terms of frequencies mean and standard deviation helps in the understanding of the variables involved in the study. Since the study investigated the role of print media in conflict management in the media Company descriptive research design shall become instrumental in collecting data from a sample population, additionally. According Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive design is a process of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer the questions of the current status of the subject under study. The advantage is that, it is used tremendously to describe behavior, attitude, and values. Again the subject was involved in a completely natural and unchanged natural environment it was based on data gathered through questionnaires and personal interviews. The interference from the researcher was minimal as it is expected that the journalists were to continue running their normal duties.
Target population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), define a population as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. A target population is that population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study. The study targeted employees working in print media in Kenya and more specifically newspapers. The target population will be Seniors Editors and Sub Editors of these selected newspapers that will be used as a representative of the population. This is because Editors are directly involved in approving content before it goes to the public and play a major role in the gate keeping role for the organization. Apart from that, the researcher intends to collect materials (Media Content) of such Newspapers to be incorporated in the study; the Standard Newspaper and the Nation Newspaper shall be used for the content analysis within the three months from November 2007 to January 2008.

Sampling Frame

It is the source material or device from which a sample is drawn. It is the list of all those within a population who can be sampled, and may include individuals, households or institutions. There are 10 registered Newspapers in Kenya (CCK, 2013) (http://www.cck.co.ke). The researcher used purposive sampling to pick senior editors and sub editors from the list of population that had been formed from the 10 Newspapers. Using the same procedure, the researcher selected 4 Newspapers with geographical reach and 2 Newspapers from within the city, the Newspapers were selected based on the readership and circulation performance. To select from the sampling frame the researcher then selected the sample using purposive 60% of the population which were 6 Newspapers. Gay suggests that for correlational research, 30 cases or more are required; for descriptive studies, ten percent of the accessible population is enough (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In order to get representativeness sample, the researcher stratified the print media organizations. A stratified random sample is useful blend of randomization and categorization, which enables both a quantitative and qualitative process of research to be undertaken (Cohen, 2003). The researcher used stratified sampling technique in order to group the respondents into two groups; the Newspapers were stratified into those that have a national reach and those that circulate within the city. In stratified random sampling, subjects are selected in such a way that the existing subgroups in the population are more or less reproduced in the sample. This means that the sample consisted of two or more sub groups (Mugenda, 2003). The researcher then used purposive sampling to pick the representative of the population which was used for the research. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his or her study (Mugenda, 2003).
Purposive sampling aims at obtaining sample that has common homogenous characters from the respondents. Purposive sampling enhanced representative in terms of near accuracy of the target respondents. The sample of the study was composed of one senior editor from each selected Newspaper and two sub editors for each Newspaper who were selected through homogenous sampling. For the content analysis, the researcher obtained a representative using composite sampling. The method allowed the researcher to pick full newspapers for a whole week and pick a single newspaper for each week for the next day for each week, for example if the researcher picked a newspaper on Monday, the next week he/she would pick for Tuesday, then the next week pick for Wednesday and so forth, this was done for the period of three months. This method allowed for a representative sample for the research to be obtained. In total the researcher picked 25 newspapers for the two newspapers, a total of 25 newspapers were picked using composite sampling, this is equivalent to 27% of all the newspaper. In all, 452(four hundred and fifty two) news stories were examined, only those articles that had meaning based on the research topic.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used two methods of data collection, primary data collection instrument in form of a questionnaire was used to collect that from the senior editors and sub editors. The questionnaire had two sections; the first one was collecting demographic information while the second section was specific to objectives of the study. The researcher believes that questionnaires were very economical in terms of time, energy and finances. The second data collection instrument that was used to collect data was content analysis, where a representative of newspapers materials was selected to provide the data to be used for the study. These are designed questions to which respondents are expected to fill their answers. This method is advantageous in those respondents have sufficient time to supply the required answers. The method is suitable when the information needed can be easily described in writing and if time is limited. In this study the researcher provided enough time for the respondents to fill before questionnaires are collected. The questionnaire included both closed and open ended questions regarding the research topic. The first section of the questionnaire included questions on respondents’ demographics (age, gender and education). The second section included specific questions related to the topic of study.

The researcher also used content analysis to obtain content from the Newspapers that were collected from the university library. Content analysis enabled the retrieval of essential primary data that was useful for the study. Content analysis has been described as possibly the most widely used and fastest growing tool of quantitative research (Neuendorf, 2002). Several scholars have offered definitions of content analysis. This study, examined more closely the definition of content analysis as provided by Berelson (1952) who conceptualized it as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” Added to this definition is the contention by Riffe, Lacy and Fico
(2005) that just describing content is not enough, rather there is need to draw inferences about the meaning of communication. In this study, two of Kenya’s most influential newspapers, the Daily Nation, and The Standard, were be content analyzed on issues they promoted during this conflict, as well as how they portrayed elements of ethnicity, hate speech, incitement and investigate the editorial position of the Newspaper with the aim of deducing whether such elements influenced the conflict, and if yes, to what extent, with what impact. The justification for the choice of newspapers as a highlight of which is that both newspapers have national circulation coverage and command a huge readership in the country. The unit of analysis is an important aspect of content analysis. Stempel (1989) describes it as that which the researcher is actually interested in studying or measuring. For this study, the unit of analysis is the news stories and the editorials in both newspapers. The researcher picked 25 newspapers for the two newspapers, a total of 25 newspapers were picked using composite sampling, this is equivalent to 27% of all the newspaper. In all, 452(four hundred and fifty two) news stories were examined, only those articles that had meaning based on the research topic. The researcher was interested to discover three keys issues: (a) To ascertain whether the news stories promoted peace and to what extent content with violence connotation was published (b) to investigate the editorial position of this newspapers whether it controlled or triggered conflict. (c) Last the researcher investigated the level of presentation of the underlying issues being investigated.

Regarding Sample/Universe, Sampling is necessitated by the fact that the universe of available texts is too large to be examined as a whole (Krippendorff, 2004) Thus, in this content analysis the universe is quite large hence the need to use selected stories in the newspapers. However, in this content analysis the universe is quite large hence the need to use a sample. Content categories are at the heart content analysis, as they are essentially used for the classification of data. Such categories need to be exclusive and exhaustive, and have to relate to the objective of the study (Holsti, 1969). The nature of this study necessitates the creation of a single category which addressed the main research question. The news category had the following elements:

1. Peace
2. Violence
3. Balanced representation

**Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher sought permission from the respective newspaper houses that were picked to participate in the study for the questionnaires to be dropped, after he obtained the permission from the this media houses, the researcher dropped the questionnaire to the respective respondents by hand, each respondent was visited in person, the researcher explained the aim of the research, and a copy of the questionnaire was left for duration of two weeks, then the researcher went back and collected the completed questionnaire. The researcher also collected
data using content analysis to obtain data that was retrieved from the Daily Nation and Standard Newspapers’ materials that were used in the final analysis of the study findings.

Data Processing and Analysis

The study used both descriptive analysis techniques to analyze data. The initial stage of descriptive statistics included calculating, means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, and reliability to investigate the individual set of observed variables measuring demographic characteristics and strategies adopted. Analysis was done using SPSS a computerized statistical package by encoding responses from questionnaires and content analysis.

Discussions

Interestingly the editors acknowledge the unique role of print media of being an instrument of conflict management. Majority of the editors indicated awareness of the role to a large extent, this is good since it becomes easier for them to use their power to control content that trigger conflict. However there is a minority group of editors who expressed reservations on the same, (Table 3) indicated to be aware of that role to some extent. This is the seen to be true to those editors who look at their newspapers are tool of profit making and not as a tool of communication for the benefit of the audience, this constituted 8 editors which is equal to 44.44%. It is also noteworthy that each of the elements was positively framed on the list of issues associated with question.

There was an overwhelmingly agreement on observation of ethics by the editors, this is a key principle that can assist one speculate what kind of content to expect to be published. The editors indicated that there was a strong observation of ethics ;( Table 5) this carried 61.11% of the respondents. Still on an element related to ethics, a majority of editors agreed to observe the tension on the ground before reporting content. During a conflict situation editors ought to be aware the impact some content can have on the audience, (Figure 2) this is seen to be agreed upon, 77.78% of the editors observed the tension on the ground before reporting.

Regarding editorial policy, majority of the editors indicated that there organization did not have a separate editorial policy to be applied during a conflict situation. 72.22% of the respondents said indicated that there newspaper did not have a separate editorial policy for conflict application (figure 3). This shows that a general editorial policy is applied in every circumstance thus there is possibility that content that has the potential to cause violence would be circulated to the audience. Again regarding the question of whether the current editorial policy is effective in managing conflict, majority of the respondents indicated that it is very effective with a 66.66% mark for this part (table 6). Needless to say, there is room for content that can cause violence to reach the audience since a general editorial policy and too because some editors indicated that there editorial policy is just effective.
There was also a strong indication of independence among the editors to approve content that they feel is capable of causing conflict. 100% of the editors indicated that they were not coerced to approve content by their seniors. This is shown there is freedom to think and make decision regarding content that goes to the audience.

The Nation Newspaper had most of the news stories published during the period of November and December 2007 carry peace element with minimal content with violence. The researcher was able to discover a trend of gradual increase of content with conflict element during the period. This is evident from the drastic reduction of content with peace element and at the same time an increment of content with conflict element during the month of January 2008. This is seen when you compare the (table 7) and the (table 9).

There is high level of observation of code of conduct among the editors as it is evident from the house editorials published which adhere to rules during the months of November and December, and an overwhelmingly 69.44% content contain messages of peace and stability(table 8). This is maintained even when the conflict is still on during the January 2008, (70%). Although there was a slight increment of content with negative connotation, up from November to January 2008, (table 10).

Likewise the Standard Newspaper carried majority of news stories with peace element during the months of November and December 2007, (81.50%). The Standard Newspaper had the same trend of gradual increment of content with conflict element as you move towards January 2008. In fact by January 2008, the content for conflict element was much high compared the content with peace, (peace-38.23% and conflict- 47.05%) this is a dangerous observation because any element of conflict consumed by the audience has a negative outcome (table 13).

During the period of November and December 2007, the Standard carried house editorials that had peace messages (62.5%). However the messages with conflict connotation increased from 21% to 30% a dangerous precedent indeed. This is higher publication of content with conflict; (table 14) the impact of such content to the audience cannot be measured though over the long run, it can cause a lot of problem to the citizen.

There is no balanced representation of the issues among both Newspapers, there was definitely concentration on issues of the election, each media trying to calm the situation or flaming the violence through its content. Investigating other issues of importance such as health, agriculture, technology and entertainment, (table 7 and table11) there was minimal publication of such content during this period. At the end it is evident that the two newspapers had an increment trend of propagating content with negative connotation for the news stories while less for peace being reduced.
Summary of Findings

This study sought to establish the role of print media in conflict management in Kenya. In chapter one the statement of the problem is provided in a way that caters for the needs of the study. The study aimed at providing answers to three research questions which were formulated in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The study sought to investigate the ways in which the print media handles conflicts in Kenyan society, identify the effects of editorial policy applied during conflict by the print media in Kenya, and to determine the influence of newspapers content on conflict management by the print media in Kenya.

Literature was reviewed in chapter two which included theoretical framework, theories such as agenda setting was expounded. The Agenda Setting Theory is based on the premise that we are given our “agenda” of daily information for discussion based on what the media wants us to be talking about. The things we see in newspapers and the things we hear on the radio are things that people all over the country are talking about. The literature also included the gate keeping theory which points out that gate keeping theory attempts to explain the subjectiveness that goes with the news production processes. It creates a link between the choices of information that media give to the public to the powers conferred on the gatekeepers, e.g. editors and journalists.

According to this theory, editorial gatekeepers choose what news to use and how to use them and these selection procedures inevitably result in the reflection of the gatekeepers’ ideologies and organisational beliefs. This section also included the conceptual framework and empirical review.

The methodology was explained in chapter three. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 18 editors from the selected Newspapers. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the editors from this media organization. Data was collected using questionnaires. In addition, content analysis was conducted from the two newspapers in order to address the last objective. Data was analyzed using percentages and frequencies and presented using report tables and pie charts. Chapter four shows the analysis of data collected of the demographic information which included the age and gender of the respondents, then followed the specific questions that addressed the research objectives.

Conclusions

The study established that there is no comprehensive and progressive editorial policy in the print media in Kenya that is dedicated to conflict management. This is evidently by the question that sought to establish if there was a specific editorial policy applied during a conflict. This creates a situation where what is available can’t be used relied to effectively manage conflicts. This has created a situation where each print media house uses it own editorial policy which sometimes conflict with the other in the process of coverage of events or reporting. There is even the situation where a print media house uses one editorial policy for two newspapers against the
code of journalistic standards. The study established that most of the editors are well experienced and work without any influence from their superiors. This is a good observation since over 60% of the respondents have experience of 5 years and above. This is good since it can be a used as a base for consolidating the aspirations of a press that is independent in its reporting, and too editors being able to make decisions that are free without any influence from their bosses. The study established that most of the editors are well vast with the ethics and code of conduct of journalism since both Newspapers used for content analysis there was a very strong commitment of publishing stories with minimal content having violence related text. Observation of ethics is visible when a overwhelming number of editors confirm to strictly observing ethics. The study also established that there is a grey area in the news stories in that some of them had content with violence elements. This perhaps point out to the fact that there is no proper gate keeping from the editors, and much of such decisions are left to the reporters who go to the field for the stories.

**Recommendations**

There is need to develop a compressive and progress separate editorial policy that is aware of the realities of our society today. This recommendation comes at a time when the researcher has established that there is no single or a negligible percent of such policy is available. The researcher recommends that such a editorial should not be developed by the print media alone but it should include other stakeholders that has an interest in the matter such as government. The researcher recommends that gate keeping as a key tenet of conflict management should be enhanced by developing editorial structures that make sure there is proper gate keeping for sieving out any content that has the potential to trigger conflict the society. One observation the researcher has made is that fact that house editorial of the newspapers are very sound and responsive to the expectations of a stable society yet there are loop holes in the local stories that are perhaps not gate kept by a well trained editor. The media organizations government and other stakeholders should develop sound ethical guidelines so as to remove any elements of violence in the newspapers.

**References**


