

**OBJECTIVITY AS AN ETHICAL PRINCIPLE IN THE PRACTICE OF
JOURNALISM IN THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA: THE CASE OF TWO
NEWSPAPERS IN KENYA**

BY

NZIOKA PATRICK KILONZO

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES,
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLISHING, JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM**

MOI UNIVERSITY

2023

DECLARATION

Declaration by the Student

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. No part of this Thesis may be reproduced without the prior written permission of the author and or Moi University.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Nzioka Patrick Kilonzo

SHRD/PGJ/006/16

Declaration by University Supervisors:

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors:

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Erneo Nyakundi

Department of Communication Studies

School of Information Sciences,

Moi University

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Matu Nguri

Department of Communication Studies

School of Information Sciences,

Moi University

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my late Dad Jones Nzioka Mutua and late Mum Beatrice Mueni Nzioka for imparting in me from an early age the importance of intellectual attainment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All glory to God for the gift of life, good health, ideas, finance and time to write this thesis. I had no doubt in my mind that in the fullness of time, I will complete this project. God's timing is the best.

Am grateful to my supervisors Dr Erneo Nyakundi and Dr Matu Nguri for their patience and guidance in the course of this project.

Sincere gratitude to all my respondents for their time and for giving me insights on the subject of this study as well as their understanding of the media in this country.

To my cohort at the Moi University, Nairobi Campus whom we have walked this journey together and who provided a shoulder to cry on when our phrase "In the fullness of time" seemed a mirage.

To my beloved spouse Dorcas Syombua and daughter Betty Mueni for their encouragement and for pushing me when the going became tough.

And finally, to my late dad Jones Nzioka Mutua and late mum Beatrice Mueni Nzioka for teaching me to believe in myself.

ABSTRACT

The expansion of the democratic space and the freedom of the media in Kenya has offered consumers choices on the access to and the content to consume. The alternative media has found acceptance amid criticisms they do not adhere to objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism. The aim of this study was therefore to study the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly* and establish whether objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism is applied in the alternative media. The key research questions were: What is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly*; What is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the two newspapers and how do practitioners address challenges they face in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism. The study was premised on the Social Responsibility Theory which specifically addresses ethical principles. The research adopted the qualitative approach while the research design employed was the multiple case study. Purposive sampling was employed to identify 10 participants with sufficient knowledge about the media that included two editors, two reporters, two leaders of journalism bodies, two academics, one independent commentator and one representative from the regulatory body. The data was generated through in-depth interviews and document review. Thematic data analysis was employed to analyse the data to establish similar themes with data presented in a narrative form using quotations, summaries and paraphrases in conformity with the themes. The findings were: knowledge levels on the importance of observing objectivity in the practice of journalism in the alternative media was high but not the same can be said about adherence; sticking to facts, fairness and right of reply were more critical to strive for; and lack of resources was the weakest link in alternative media and should be addressed to enhance compliance. The conclusion was objectivity was not something that alternative media practitioners should be obsessed because there was no media that was objective while the principle was termed as ambiguous, subjective and altogether unattainable. The recommendations were the regulator should strictly enforce training for practitioners than is the case now; periodically review the code of conduct while creating awareness among practitioners and set up a fund to support alternative media outfits in distress and at the same deal with malpractices in line with each media house editorial guidelines and the laws of the land.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction to the Chapter	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	1
1.3 Context of the Study	3
1.3.1 Academic Context of the Study	3
1.3.2 Social Context of the Study	4
1.4 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.5 Objective of the Study	7
1.6 Research Questions.....	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	8
1.8 Rationale of the Study.....	9
1.9 Summary	10
CHAPTER TWO	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 The Concept of Objectivity.....	12
2.2.1 Alternative Media	14
2.2.2 The Weekly Citizen Newspaper	14
2.2.3 The Sun Weekly Newspaper.....	16
2.2.4 The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya	17
2.2.5 Overview of the Media in Kenya.....	18
2.3 Situating the Topic within Communication and Journalism Studies.....	19
2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study	20
2.4.1 The Social Responsibility Theory.....	20

2.5 Review of Related Previous Research	22
2.6 Rationale for the Study Based on Literature Review.....	26
2.7 Summary	27
CHAPTER THREE.....	29
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Philosophical Paradigm	29
3.3 Research Approach	31
3.4 Research Design.....	33
3.5 Sampling	36
3.6 Data Generation Techniques and Process.....	38
3.6.1 In-Depth Interviews	38
3.6.2 Document Review.....	40
3.7 Data Analysis	41
3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study	43
3.8.1 Credibility	43
3.8.2 Transferability.....	44
3.8.3 Dependability.....	44
3.8.4 Confirmability.....	45
3.9 Ethical Considerations	45
3.9.1 Negotiation of access	46
3.9.2 Informed Consent.....	46
3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity	46
3.9.4 Protection from Harm	47
3.9.5 Honesty	47
3.9.6 Summary	47
CHAPTER FOUR.....	48
DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.....	48
4.1 Introduction.....	48
4.2 Status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the Weekly Citizen and the Sun Weekly.....	48
4.2.1 Journalism Practice	48
4.2.2 Alternative Media	50
4.2.3 Code of Ethics.....	51

4.2.4 Overview on Adherence	52
4.2.5 Adherence to the Code of Ethics by Alternative Media	53
4.3 Place of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in Journalism Practice	55
4.3.1 No Media is Objective	55
4.3.2 How Content is Generated	57
4.3.3 Challenges to Objectivity.....	59
4.4 Addressing Challenges on Objectivity by Practitioners	61
4.4.1 Dealing with Challenges in Applying Objectivity.....	61
4.4.2 Training on the Code of Ethics	63
4.5 Summary	64
CHAPTER FIVE	66
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND	
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	66
5.1 Introduction.....	66
5.2 Summary of Key Findings	66
5.3 Discussion.....	68
5.3.1 The status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism in the two newspapers	68
5.3.2 The Place of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in the Practice of Journalism by the Newspapers.....	70
5.3.3 How do Practitioners Address the Challenges they face in the Application of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in Journalism	71
5.4 Conclusion	72
5.5 Recommendations.....	75
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research	76
REFERENCES	78
APPENDICES	80
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form	80
Appendix B: In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Guide for The Editor and Staff of The Weekly Citizen and The Sun Weekly	83
Appendix C: In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Journalists' Rep, Correspondents Rep, Scholar, Independent and Regulator.....	85
Appendix D: Sample Transcript of In-Depth Interview	86
Appendix E: Letter of Introduction.....	91

Appendix F: Research Permit	92
Appendix G: Letter from NACOSTI	93
Appendix H: Letter from University.....	94
Appendix I: Plagiarism Certificate	95

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings 66

ABBREVIATIONS

AWC-	African Women and Child Feature Service
FDGs-	Focus Group Discussions
GOK-	Government of Kenya
ICT-	Information, Communication, Technology
KCA-	Kenya Correspondents Association
KMPDC-	Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council
KUJ-	Kenya Union of Journalists
MCK-	Media Council of Kenya
NACOSTI-	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
R-	Respondent
RSF-	Reporters Without Borders
SG-	Secretary General

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter examined objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers in Kenya; *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sun Weekly* drawn from the alternative media. It also provides the context and objective of the study, the problem statement, research questions, scope and rationale of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

This inquiry is basically to study objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly* for richer data as well as to develop an understanding (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2020) with a view to establish whether objectivity as a crucial ethical principle in the practice of journalism is observed in the alternative media. Alternative media here will primarily mean newspapers produced by those outside mainstream media organizations. Any online media either print or broadcast is outside the scope of this study.

The study adopts the meaning of a professional journalist as set out by Kadhi (2012). He defines professionalism in three aspects: well trained, an understanding of the nuts and bolts of writing a story and adherence to the ethical principles which he argues differentiates the various levels of uprightness in the profession. This therefore means that a professional journalist will be taken to mean a practitioner who encompasses all of the above.

The study acknowledges observations by various scholars that the concept of objectivity is a controversial one. Munoz-Torres (2012) is one of those who argues that there has been contestations by both communication scholars and practitioners on the

main notions embedded in the theory of objectivity despite it being a cornerstone principle in journalism. No other concept has simulated as much controversy as the concept of objectivity. He ably identifies the problem when he says:

"One of the greatest problems in any discussion of objectivity in journalism is the ambiguous and elastic nature of the concept. Rarely do we bother to identify the aspects or elements of reporting to which the concept of objectivity can be applied. In other words, there is considerable confusion as to what, in journalism, is supposed to be objective ...The idea that is rejected is not a clear, easily identified notion, but rather a vague intuition: the object under attack never precisely defined".

In an article in the *Columbia Journalism Review Journal* in 2003, the then editor Brent Cunningham captured the dilemma around the concept of objectivity by arguing that you will get different answers from different journalists on what objectivity entails.

Maras (2013) on his part says defining objectivity in journalism is not straight forward. Based on the understanding above, this study adopts as the definition of objectivity to mean the lack of bias and not injecting personal feelings in a published story as set out by Ochieng, Gachoka and Mureithi (2014). This definition is in line with Maras (2013) argument that objectivity is the reporting of reality as nearly as it can obtain without the injection of prejudice, bias and personal opinion or feelings.

Ethical principles or issues will be used inter-changeably with journalistic/professional ethics to mean prescribed standards that regulate the activities of the media and which the professionals are expected to operate within. These standards have taken the form of what is referred to as the Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism as set out by Ochieng et al. (2014).

1.3 Context of the Study

This study is from the mass communication discipline and ethical principles in the practice of journalism practice as a subject. The research used the two newspapers to study the objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media with the study taking place in Nairobi where the newspapers are published, where the publishers are domiciled and where the newspapers enjoy wide circulation.

1.3.1 Academic Context of the Study

Ethical principles which are the norms of responsible journalism can be traced back to the beginning of modern journalism in Europe during the 19th Century. Scholars documents that from as early as 1900s to the middle of the 20th Century, ethical principles and specifically objectivity was a dominant ideal for mainstream newspapers in the United States, Canada and beyond. As a result, major journalism associations adopted formal codes that called for objectivity in reporting, independence from government and business influence and a strict distinction between news and opinions. In essence, this is the time the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press found its place in the field of Communication. As Ochieng et al. (2014) found out in a study on the adherence to the Code of Conduct in the Kenyan media, of the four theories of the press, only the Social Responsibility Theory calls for a trajectory towards ethical principles and that it is in this theory where ethics comes into play.

Worldwide, research in alternative media has burgeoned since the turn of the millennium with the majority of the studies examining the political and social dimensions of alternative media and with a focus on the media of social movements (Atton 2015). Atton (2015) argues that such research begun to examine the relationship

between alternative and mainstream media practices particularly examining how the former offer ways of rebalancing media power and how ordinary people are able to represent their own lives and experiences and concerns in ways that are often ignored and marginalized by the dominant media institutions.

A key issue to note is that the definition of alternative media in the western world is different from the way it is understood in Kenya. While there is no doubt about the differences in the definition of alternative media between the western world and Kenya, scholars in Kenya have been at pains to differentiate between alternative and mainstream media. Nyabuga (2011) points out that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between what is alternative and what is mainstream and that given the fact that even alternative media require capital and technology to operate, means they are not radically different from the mainstream. This study adopts this view since most of the people working in the alternative media may at one time have worked in the mainstream media and adopted the practices from those media houses.

1.3.2 Social Context of the Study

Since the 1990s, the country has seen an expansion in the democratic space which in turn led to an expanded freedom of the press (Government of Kenya (GOK) 2012). The country further witnessed growth in the information, communication and technology (ICT) sector with an increase in the number of internet users leaping from 200,000 in 2002 to 14.5 million in 2012 (GOK 2012). Investment in the mobile telephony sector grew from Sh19.1 billion in 2002 to 34.5 billion in 2012. The growth in the sector resulted in Nairobi being recognised as an African Tech Hub. This growth did not escape the world with *The Economist*, an authoritative global business magazine commenting in its August 25, 2012 edition:

"Three factors helped Nairobi to become an African tech hub. The first is the supportive government. Second, Kenya has undergone a revolution since 2007 when M-Pesa (a mobile phone payments system) was launched. Third, since 2010, Nairobi has had a place for local techies to get together and exchange ideas".

In the media sector, the country took bold steps to guarantee the freedom of the Press (GOK 2012). The Media Bill was enacted in 2007 creating the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) as a professional body and leading institution in the regulation of media and the conduct and discipline of journalists in Kenya. It was amended in 2013 to align it with the new constitution passed in 2010.

As Nyabuga (2011) observes, doubts have however arisen in Kenya on the commitment of the mainstream media to public service. He argues, in essence, the concern is that the mainstream media hardly considers an issue of public interest unless there is potential for business, or that whatever product they offer would attract buyers in what has become a highly competitive marketplace. As a result, a section of the Kenyan public in Kenya may feel left out leading to the rise of the alternative media.

Nyabuga (2011) captures this situation when he says:

"Corporatism, and marginalisation can be said to have facilitated the rise of alternative media. As an agency oppositional to the status quo and the dominance of mainstream media, alternative media is seen as critical to the mainstreaming of issues concerning the marginalised and disempowered".

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The media in Kenya is going through a difficult period as captured by Nyabuga (2017) who states the media in Kenya is going through a crisis of trust and related concerns about their credibility and reliability. According to him, there are concerns that the media are not objective and that their reports are not balanced. Such a blemish on such key journalistic principles means people start to look at the media with suspicion.

From a social perspective, adherence to ethics is a real issue with critics arguing that conformity and adherence is problematic both in the alternative and the mainstream media Ochieng et al. (2014). They point out that the print media is particularly culpable in violating these guidelines due to its non-transient nature adding, more recently, questions of ethics and ethical practice(s) have become of substantial concern to professional practitioners, audiences, media students and scholars.

Consequently Nyabuga (2011) points out that this state of affairs makes it difficult to differentiate between the alternative and the mainstream media in Kenya because both are guilty of disregarding ethical issues although such criticisms lean more on the side of the alternative media. It is against this background that this inquiry set out to study the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism at the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly* with a view to confirm or disabuse such criticisms. Such criticisms raised by colleagues in the profession as well as ordinary Kenyans could only be answered through a research like this seeking to establish whether the criticisms are true.

From an academic perspective, Kenyans want a media that can respond to their needs as ably captured by Mbeke, Ugungu and Okello-Orlale (2010) when they argue consumers want a professionally run media that promote respect and adhere to the fundamental principles and global standards of journalism practice, they yearn for media that promotes professional behaviour in newsrooms.

This is a tall order especially in a situation where there is a lack of empirical knowledge on a subject as is the case in Kenya as observed by Ochieng et al. (2014) who established that there is little research on adherence to ethical principles. The situation is complicated by the fact that the little there is on the subject covers the whole spectrum of ethical principles in journalism and not on a single principle like objectivity. They

attribute the state of affairs to media institutions who should otherwise be funding research but who instead concentrate more on the bottom line and therefore reluctant to commission research on adherence to media ethics.

The major contribution for this work was in creating knowledge and at the same time narrow the gap that currently exists for lack of enough research on the application of a single ethical principle in the practice of journalism. It will go a long way to inform the formulation of laws and regulations on the media in this country while students and scholars in communication and journalism will find the study useful in assisting them to identify areas for further research.

While the alternative media is accepted in other jurisdictions as a real alternative to the dominant media institutions, the reverse is the case in this country until recently. Part of the reason for this in the opinion of the researcher is because it is a recent phenomenon which may also explain the reason why very limited research has been conducted on the subject locally. This study has therefore contributed in narrowing the knowledge gap that currently exists in regard to the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media.

1.5 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the two newspapers representing the alternative media.

1.6 Research Questions

- i. What is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly* newspapers?

- ii. What is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the two newspapers?
- iii. How do practitioners address the challenges they face in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study took place in Nairobi City where the two newspapers are published as well as where the respondents were found. It is also in Nairobi where the two newspapers enjoy wide circulation. However, in the course of this study, the *Sun Weekly* ceased production of the print version and converted to an online newspaper. As a result, the study discarded documents review in generating data because hard copies of the newspaper for the period covered by the study were not available. It was also established that the online version of the newspaper was not a carbon copy of the print version and therefore some stories in the print version were missing online because the target audience was not the same. Further, the website was not frequently updated meaning some editions were completely missing. This did not in any way impact on the study because the researcher had collected more than enough data through interviews and achieved a thick description. Reliance on interview technique as a single technique is anticipated in qualitative research as observed by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2020) when they argue that qualitative researchers may solely rely on interviews for particular projects depending on their focus and as a result of constraints they may be facing and still yield very useful data.

This study focused on interviews with 10 respondents purposively selected because of their expertise, experience and accessibility with a view to establish the status, place of objectivity and how to mitigate the challenges faced in the application of the ethical

principle of objectivity in the alternative media with a focus on *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sun Weekly*

Key among the limitations encountered was access to the editors and writers of the two newspapers and especially the *Weekly Citizen* whose offices had on previous occasions been raided by police because of what they published.

The application for a licence to conduct this research from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) was initially rejected after the officials confused this project to be a medical study because of the use of the word ethics. This was however reversed and a licence issued after the researcher explained what was referred in the study was journalistic ethics.

Another limitation that was not envisaged was that in the course of the study, the country like all other parts of the world was hit by an outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic leading to a shutdown of most activities including education institutions. Further the government imposed restrictions on movements making it difficult to access the university library as well as respondents. The only way left was online libraries with its attendant financial burden for internet bundles and poor connectivity. This was however resolved by investing in a high-speed Wi-Fi internet connection.

1.8 Rationale of the Study

This study is important as it came at a time when the alternative media is gaining acceptance in Kenya (Nyabuga 2011). It provides findings on whether or not the application of objectivity as a journalistic ethical principle is respected and stands tall in the alternative media.

As observed by Ochieng et al. (2014), there is very limited research on adherence to a single ethical principle in this country partly because media institutions who should ideally fund research activities concentrate on the bottom line and thereby are reluctant to commission research. The little there is, involve the whole spectrum of ethical principles and not specifically on a single ethical issue like this inquiry. It therefore goes a long way in narrowing that gap.

The study is important to policy makers based on its findings that no media in this country or elsewhere was objective with the term objectivity being described as ambiguous, pretentious, subjective and altogether unattainable. Objectivity was therefore not something that practitioner should concern themselves with as long as they were factual, fair and offer an opportunity for the right of reply as important values that underpin journalism. This is important in the process of formulating laws and regulations on the media in which case the study becomes necessary.

The study is significant to journalism practitioners both in the alternative as well the mainstream media who now understand the place of the values that underpin journalism in their practice. The findings of this study are of immense importance to students of journalism, scholars and researchers in communication as they find the information contained herein quite useful and inspirational.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has given a general overview of the study which is the application of journalistic principle of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media. It has also operationalized key terms in the study among them alternative media, professional journalists, objectivity and ethical principles as well as stating the statement of the problem in the study with a focus on its relevance, central

focus of the study and its findings as well as the study's significance and the benefits to be derived. It has clearly defined the scope as well as the rationale of the study and the overarching objective of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework employed in the study, situated the topic of study within communication and journalism studies as well as critically looked at existing works that are significant to this study. The chapter gives a rationale for the study by identifying the research gap that it set out to fill based on the literature review as well as a summary.

2.2 The Concept of Objectivity

The central role the media plays in society cannot be gainsaid. In discharging such functions, it has to play by certain rules that underpin journalism. Udomisor and Udoh (2015) capture this when they argue that the enormity of the functions of the press makes it imperative for guiding principles or Codes of Ethics. It is therefore important that media at all times value, uphold and apply objectivity in all its reportage by separating facts from comments.

Writing in the *American Press Institute Journal*, a journalism trainer, Walter Dean quotes Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel observations in their book; *The elements of Journalism* and observe that one of the great confusions about journalism is the concept of objectivity.

Dominick (2011) traces the origin of the term objectivity as an American invention. The term was not applied to journalist work until the 20th Century. The term emerged out when it became obvious journalists were unknowingly full of biases. Objectivity therefore demanded journalists adopt a solid method of testing information so that personal and cultural biases do not impact on the accuracy of their work.

Later on, journalists came up with realism rather than objectivity to mean if reporters establish the facts and present them in an orderly way, truth would emerge naturally. This coincided with what came to be referred to as the inverted pyramid in which a journalist lines the facts up from the most to the least important in the hope that it will help audiences understand things naturally.

However, doubts began to emerge about the notion of realism after journalists recognized the place of human subjectivity as a result of the emerging place of propaganda and press agents.

Later in the 1920s, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz wrote a critique of how cultural blinders had distorted the coverage of the Russian Revolution. As a result, Lippmann embarked on coming up with options on how an individual journalist could be liberated from prejudgments in observing, understanding and presenting the news.

After declaring that the good intentions or honest efforts by journalists were not enough, Lippmann argued for journalists to adopt the scientific approach. Lippmann meant that journalism should aspire to what he referred to as a common intellectual method and a common area of valid fact.

In addition, Lippmann felt the fledgling field of journalism education should be transformed from trades schools but instead make the study of evidence and verification its cornerstone. Later journalists have improved Lippmann's idea privately regarding reporting routines.

Maras (2013) defends objectivity despite the criticisms it has suffered saying objectivity continues to play a central role in media and journalism in linking concepts of truth, accuracy, impartiality and independence (P.205)

Because of lack of what one can call a clear definition of objectivity, this study as mentioned earlier adopts the definition of objectivity by Ochieng et al. (2014) to mean the lack of bias and not injecting personal feelings in a published story.

2.2.1 Alternative Media

Scholars have tried to distinguish mainstream media as a concept from alternative media without much success. Atton (2015) argues that the challenge in defining alternative media has led some critics to argue that there can be no meaningful definition of the term. He continues to argue that the most conspicuous arguments put forward by both proponents and antagonists of the alternative media are inadequate, since neither offer a sophisticated understanding of the phenomena and proposes a model in defining the term which should be concerned with how it is organized within its socio-cultural context as with its subject matter.

Atton (2015) therefore conceptualizes alternative journalism when he defines the meaning of the term ‘amateur journalism’ to mean the kind of journalism produced by those outside mainstream media organizations.

This study adopts Atton (2015) argument as stated above that alternative media in Kenya as pertaining to the kind of journalism produced by those outside the mainstream media organisations, are small-scale and underfunded news outlets which is the case with the two newspapers. While those who practice such kind of journalism on the internet or radio can still qualify as alternative media, they are however outside the scope of this study.

2.2.2 The Weekly Citizen Newspaper

The Weekly Citizen is a 23-page newspaper and states its mission as to provide information for the masses and public quickly, accurately and reliably as it serves as a

baseline and source of continued civic education. *The Weekly Citizen* is published by Headlink Publishers. The newspaper is available countrywide starting on Mondays and has an online presence at www.weeklycitizen.co.ke through which it disseminates news, information and advertising. The website has links to all the major social media platforms. The website is however never updated regularly and is not a carbon copy of the print version.

Ongowo (2011) says that the paper was established in 1997 as a four- page A4 size underground leaflet or alternative press circulating in Nairobi and its suburbs at the height of the clamour for multiparty politics in Kenya. During the period, the regime of the late President Daniel Moi muzzled the press and restricted media freedom. Investigative stories of corruption could not be published in the more established quality newspapers. The press was constantly watched and monitored while several laws relating to Official Secrets Act and Libel laws made it difficult for the press to operate independently (P.22).

However, democratisation that was sweeping the country led to increased political competition thereby widening the space for popular expression that in turn led to increased demand for the alternative sources of information (Ongowo 2011, Mbeke et al .2010). This saw *The Weekly Citizen* gradually grow its pagination to eight and eventually to a 23-page tabloid format newspaper by the year 2018.

While independent circulation figures regarding the newspaper are lacking, following a telephone interview with the editor, Ongowo (2011) says the newspapers team of 15 journalists had worked to grow circulation to over 40,000 copies every week on the backdrop of a print order of 50,000 copies by 2011. The weekly newspaper, in most cases breaks and publishes stories which are later picked up by the quality newspapers

while critics have accused the publishers of disregarding ethical principles in the practice of journalism as set out by the regulator, the MCK. *The Weekly Citizen* dwells mainly on sensationalising imagined or real stories about the Who's Who of Kenya. The newspaper concentrates on publishing stories on corruption and sex scandals taking place in private companies and the public sector but it also concentrates on stories touching on the private lives of politicians and the celebrity in Kenya (P.22). Over the years, the newspaper has been raided by police and its journalists as well as vendors selling the newspaper arrested. In 2006, Police raided their offices in Nairobi and arrested four journalists and vendors after the paper ran a front-page story titled 'Kibaki Senile,' which alleged that the then and now the late retired President Mwai Kibaki was not in control of the government (P.23)

According to the 2022 State of the Media Report, the *Weekly Citizen* has managed to thrust itself into the list of the most read newspapers in Kenya at one per cent alongside mainstream newspapers like the People Daily which is also at one per cent. The *Weekly Citizen* has beaten well known titles like *The East African* who are at 0.4 per cent.

2.2.3 The Sun Weekly Newspaper

The Sun Weekly was initially a weekly newspaper published in Nairobi every Sunday. The newspaper states its mission as 'the eye to your world'. Interviews with one of the directors who doubles up as the editorial director revealed that the paper was established in 2013 with a view to provide an alternative media that adhere to professionalism. The editor said the paper has a print run of at most 15,000 copies and targets the common man as its niche market in the rural areas who they claim was being left out by the mainstream media who cover issues and events mostly in the urban areas. The paper is distributed in 41 of the 47 Counties in Kenya.

Unlike *The Weekly Citizen* which exhibit a rare boldness and whose stories border on what Ongowo (2011) terms as sensationalising imagined or real stories about the Who's is Who of Kenya, *The Sun Weekly* is the complete opposite and may be confused with the so-called mainstream newspapers in Kenya. It is evident the paper has made great attempts not to go for the jugular of its news makers inherent in *The Weekly Citizen*.

According to the editor, it is the adherence to professional ethics that differentiates the paper from others in the alternative media market segment. And because they avoid sensationalism, they have never been raided by the police for what they publish. This can also be attributed to the government change in strategy from use of force and raiding media houses to focus on denying the media advertising business or delay in paying for the advertisements as a way of dealing with a critical media.

The paper has correspondents in the Counties it is distributed and another 10 employees at the main office in Nairobi. The editor who is a trained journalist is responsible for its editorial policy. His other two partners who are non-journalists deal with finance and circulation issues. The paper has however in 2019 converted to an online publication for what the editor refers in the interview as cost implications. It is now online at www.thesunweekly.co.ke through which it disseminates news, information and advertising. The website has links to all the major social media platforms.

2.2.4 The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) is an independent institution established by the Media Council Act 2007 to set media standards and ensure compliance as set out in Article 34(5) of the Constitution (IPSOS 2018). The Council promotes and protects the freedom and independence of the media and assures protection of the rights and privileges of journalists in the performance of their duties (P.2). The Council often

engages stakeholders on issues of freedom of the media which is guaranteed in Article 34 of the Constitution (P.3). The Code of Conduct also referred to as the Code of Ethics is entrenched in the Second Schedule of the Media Council Act with those subject to the Act being journalists, media practitioners, foreign journalists and media enterprises. The Act was first enacted in 2007 following the clamour for self- regulation of the media and revised in 2013 to align it with the new constitution.

The Code contains 25 items among them accuracy and fairness, independence, integrity, accountability, opportunity to reply, unnamed sources, confidentiality, misrepresentation, obscenity, taste and tone in reporting, paying for news and articles, covering ethnic, religious and sectarian conflict, and recording interviews and telephone conversations. Although there is none that categorically talks about objectivity, the sum total of adherence to the Code as set out in the second schedule would qualify for objectivity.

Ochieng et al. (2014) captures this ably when they state:

Pivotal is that the fundamental objective of a journalist is to write a fair, accurate and an unbiased story on matters of public interest. All sides of the story should be reported, wherever possible. Comments should be obtained from anyone who is mentioned in an unfavourable context. Journalists should present news fairly and impartially, placing primary value on significance and relevance. They should treat all subjects of news coverage with respect and dignity, showing particular compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. In addition, journalists should seek to understand the diversity of their community and inform the public without bias or stereotype and present a diversity of expressions, opinions, and ideas in context (P.6)

2.2.5 Overview of the Media in Kenya

Kenya is ranked 69 out of 180 countries in the 2022 World Press Freedom Index prepared by the Paris-based Organization, Reporters without Border (RSF). That ranking is an improvement from the previous year when the country was placed at 102. The MCK's *State of the Media Report in Kenya for 2022* concluded that Kenya has a

vibrant media environment while Kenyans are happy with the freedom of the media, quick dissemination of information and the high level of technology employed by the media.

From the survey, it is notable that broadcast media has remained in the lead, with radio leading TV at 33 per cent, outplaying other platforms as the main source of news, followed by the social media at 18 per cent and informal sources like family, friends and colleagues at six per cent. The report further observes that print media has continued to experience a decline in the ranking at six per cent.

An interesting finding of the report is that the level of trust in the media has declined over the last two years. However, TV ranks the highest at 33 per cent followed by radio at 32 per cent. The key concerns that Kenyans have when it comes to media today include spreading of fake news at 24 per cent, biasness in the media at 20 per cent and poor coverage of important issues at 14 per cent.

2.3 Situating the Topic within Communication and Journalism Studies

This research study is about the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media. According to Udomisor and Udoh (2015), journalism as a discipline is about collecting, analysing, verifying and presenting news regarding current events, trends and people. It is a term used both in print and electronic media as both are involved in the collection, gathering, analysing, verifying and the presentation to the public through newspapers, radio, television and internet among others.

Maras (2013) defines objectivity as the reporting of reality, of facts as nearly as they can be obtained without the injection of prejudice and personal opinion.

Ward (2009) is of the view that ethics are the norms of responsible journalism. He defines journalism ethics as applied ethics that examines what journalists and news organisations should do, given their role in society. This therefore demonstrates that the study of objectivity as an ethical principle is resident in the journalism discipline.

On the other hand, Journalism is a subset in the field of communication studies. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2010), communication as a field of study is viewed in broad categories and among them is mass communication. Mass communication on the other hand is divided into broad categories which include broadcasting, journalism, advertising and public relations. It is at that point where objectivity as a topic in journalism finds its place in the communication of which journalism is a subset.

Dogu (2015) describes the alternative media as the media forms that are on a smaller scale, more accessible and participatory and are less constrained by bureaucracy or commercial interests than the mainstream and often in some way in explicit opposition to them. He continues to argue that alternative press is one of the contemporary terms describing communication media that provide information and analysis not normally available through mainstream corporate-owned media. By referring to alternative media as a media form as well as communication media situates alternative media in the communication field of study and in journalism as a subset.

2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The examination of the research questions is founded on the Social Responsibility Theory.

2.4.1 The Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory is among the four theories formulated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in their book; *The Four Theories of the Press* (McQuail 2010).

The theories are concerned about the ownership of the media and who controls the media or press in a country. They include the authoritarian theory in which according to McQuail (2010) applies in undemocratic countries where the press is fully under the control of the authorities, the libertarian theory which originated from the libertarian thoughts in the 16th Century in Europe and advocates a situation free from any authority, control or censorship. The third theory according to McQuail (2010) is the soviet/communist theory premised on the Marxist- Leninist principles where the ruling class controls the media which in turn serves the interests of the elite. The last is the social responsibility theory which according to McQuail (2010) replaced the libertarian theory and which is the most applicable in this study.

According to Ochieng et al. (2014), the social responsibility theory is the only one that speaks to ethical principles. They support the above argument when they say as follows: *This is because in this theory, it is where ethics come into play by the fact that media is controlled by consumer opinions, actions and professional ethics.*

According to McQuail (2010), the social responsibility theory advocates for a responsible media which is free to report what they want but exercise care to preserve the society. According to this theory, media ownership is in private hands but the media has an obligation of reporting issues in a manner that is not harmful to society. McQuail (2010) further argue that the social responsibility theory moves beyond the simple objective of reporting facts to interpretative reporting meaning media has a responsibility to synthesize information to assist the members of the society make informed decisions.

Ochieng et al. (2014) summarises the tenets of this theory as follows: media acceptance to fulfill certain obligations to society, setting high or professional standards of access

to information, truth, accuracy and balance; media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions ; avoid offensive content triggering crime , violence, or civil disobedience or harm to minority groups and lastly the media as a whole should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and rights of reply. The sum total of all these is that journalists have responsibilities towards society, one of which includes reporting news objectively.

In Kenya, domestication of the social responsibility theory may be demonstrated in the passing of the Media Act in 2007 and which set up the MCK (Ochieng et al. 2014). The Act has now been repealed by the Media Council Act of 2013 which prescribes standards for journalists, media practitioners and media enterprises. It promotes and enhances ethical and professional standards amongst journalists and media enterprises among other responsibilities through the Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism which is entrenched in the Second Schedule of the Media Council Act of 2013.

2.5 Review of Related Previous Research

This section reviewed related previous research on the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism.

As noted earlier, research on a single ethical principle is quite limited (Ochieng et al. 2014) with what there is encompassing the whole spectrum of the ethical principles in journalism. However, several studies have been undertaken in this area.

Ochieng et al. (2014) undertook a study on Ethics in Journalism but with a focus on adherence to the Code of Conduct in the Kenyan media. The theoretical and conceptual framework were derived from the social responsibility theory, deontological, teleological, situation and utilitarianism theories of media ethics. The target population comprised of media practitioners in the various media houses selected using the non-

probability purposive sampling. Data was generated through field survey with interview schedules that had predetermined set of questions

The key finding was that a section of the media in Kenya appeared apathetic to adhering to the ethical principles contained in the then Media Act of 2007 and recommended a revision of the same among other recommendations.

Ongowo (2011) has also undertaken research on the Ethics of Investigative Journalism with a focus on a tabloid and a quality newspaper in Kenya in which case the tabloid was *The Weekly Citizen* which is also one of the newspapers studied in this research. The conceptual framework was derived from Kieran and MacFadyen's ethical framework for investigative reporting to present a content analysis of *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sunday Nation* during a six-month period ending December 2010. Data was generated through interviews and content analysis of the stories carried by the two papers within the period of study with the key finding that journalists working for both papers break certain ethics in journalism in some situations but justified the breach citing the publics' right to know and the endeavour to fight corruption and wrong doing against society. They further cited commercial pressures to increase circulation as the reason behind pushing ethical limits to obtain exclusive scoops.

The African Women and Child Feature Service (AWC 2005) undertook a study on the Impact of the Code of Conduct on Journalism Ethics in Kenya to assess and understand the degree and the level which Kenyan journalists use the Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism. The study was carried out across all mass media categories in the country and the alternative media.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were employed. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantifiable data on areas of interest from

survey respondents. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and one-on-one interactions were used in extracting important information that could not be tapped using quantitative techniques. The data collected was cleaned and collapsed for analysis, triangulation and synthesis. Survey data was coded, processed and tabulated for analysis and interpreted using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data derived from FGDs and key informant interviews were analysed along thematic matrices, interpreted and then integrated with other data to enrich the results.

Among the key findings in this study was that most respondents agreed that knowledge levels on ethical principles that guide the practice of journalism had grown after the introduction of the Code but not the same can be said about the quality of journalism. While the Code of Conduct was accepted as a useful tool for guiding journalism practice in the country, there was little effort to enforce the Code in newsrooms, much in the same way that the house style book is emphasized. It also emerged that media houses only talk about ethical concerns when faced with libel cases with the results suggesting that many of the fresh journalists getting into the profession did not have access to a copy of the Code while most have not seen it.

Further afield, Bakare (2013) undertook a study on Rethinking Notion of Journalism Ethics in the Reportage of 2008 Xenophobic Attacks with a focus on *The Sowetan* and *Daily Sun* newspapers. The purpose of the study was to find out whether journalists at *The Sowetan and Daily Sun* newspapers were ethical in their reporting of the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa. A qualitative content analysis of a sample of newspaper articles constituted the methodology of the study while a purposive sampling was used to identify the articles from the two newspapers that covered the events of the xenophobic attacks within the specified period. The overall finding of the research

showed that the two newspapers adhered to the South African Press Code (2007) and were ethical in their 2008 news reports. This finding contradicted the dominant perception of most mainstream newspaper readers who thought that *The Daily Sun* is just a tabloid newspaper which represents the lowest standards of journalism (P.11).

While Ochieng et al. (2014) acknowledged in their study that there is a lot of literature on the ethical principles that ought to guide media practitioners in their profession, they found very little research on the adherence to a single ethical principle. This was demonstrated during the literature review in this study as outlined above. This is therefore a research gap that the researcher reasoned should be filled through this seminal study.

The findings in all the studies above have a common thread that speaks to the research questions in this inquiry that set out to establish the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers, the place of objectivity in their practice and how to overcome the challenges on adherence. It is in line with what this study established that practitioners are aware of the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism, they were aware that breaching the ethical issues was to offend the law but still there were breaches that occur. This study also found out objectivity was not something that practitioners should be obsessed with as there was no media in and outside of this country that was objective. Facts, fairness and right of reply were much more critical issues they should strive for. Finally, the study established that challenges facing the alternative media should be addressed to enhance adherence while enforcement should be taken a step higher.

2.6 Rationale for the Study Based on Literature Review

As pointed out by Ochieng et al. (2014), there is limited research on adherence to a single ethical principle locally which is partly because media institutions have concentrated on the bottom line more than commission research on media research. The little there is, covers the bigger spectrum of ethical principles without focusing on a particular issue as this study. This research study therefore attempted to fill this gap and generate empirical knowledge on the application of objectivity as a specific ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media.

Despite the setting up of the Media Council through an Act of Parliament that among other functions promote and enhance ethical and professional standards among journalists and media enterprises, adherence to such principles has been problematic as observed by various scholars (Ochieng et al. 2014, Kadhi 2012, Gicheru 2015, Nyabuga 2017, Mbeke et al. 2010). This therefore presented an opportunity for the researcher to investigate why the lack of adherence thus necessitating this research. The print media is especially vulnerable now that it is racing to catch up with digital journalism that has unruffled the media sector in ways never anticipated.

As it is inherent in qualitative research, two important issues emerged in the analysis of the data; which is the media capture by various actors and the future of alternative media. On media capture, it emerged that the media whether alternative or mainstream have become captive to various actors resulting in the media abandoning the cardinal duty to play their role as the watchdog of society. On the other hand, it emerged that the brand of journalism practiced by the alternative media had its place and it would continue to thrive not necessarily in the form it is now. This therefore is new knowledge generated from this study enriches it. It is important to note that the twin issues of

media capture and the future of the alternative media speaks to the third research question in this study on how the challenges in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism are addressed by the practitioners. It is therefore safe to state that the gaps in knowledge were catered for. From the foregoing, a study such as this was long overdue and useful in creating knowledge which it is envisaged will prompt other scholars to undertake further studies in this area.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, various terms including objectivity and alternative media were discussed as well as an overview of the two newspapers in this study, the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly*, the Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism in Kenya and state of the media in Kenya.

This study is situated within journalism studies which in turn is within communication as a field of study. Further the social responsibility theory on which this study is pegged was discussed and is the most appropriate as it speaks directly to ethical principles.

As a result of literature review, it emerged that not much in terms of research on a single ethical principle in the practice of journalism was available, a situation that was confirmed by the various research efforts outlined in this chapter. A common thread from the research efforts outlined were in tandem with the three research questions in this study.

This research is therefore appropriate because it has narrowed the knowledge gap that currently exists on a single ethical principle and therefore opens up discussion not just on other single ethical principle but also on the finding of the study that is; no media is objective in Kenya or elsewhere and therefore objectivity is not something that practitioners should be obsessed with.

As mentioned above and in line qualitative research which envisages that important matters outside the scope of a study may emerge, two important issues came up in the analysis of the data which are crucial in enriching the study; which is the media capture by various actors and the future of alternative media. These are two areas that would form the basis of further research in the future.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the various issues related to methodology. These include the research philosophical paradigm, the research approach and design, the sampling procedures, data generation techniques, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations and a summary.

3.2 Philosophical Paradigm

A philosophical paradigm constitutes a way of looking at the world and interpreting what is studied and therefore an indication of how research ought to be conducted, by whom and to what degree of involvement and interpretation (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). They outline the importance of a research philosophical paradigm by emphasizing it is only possible to conduct rigorous research if a researcher understands its philosophical support. Creswell (2014) affirms that a good research undertaking must make the philosophical paradigms within which the inquiry is domiciled clear to show that the researcher is aware of their influence on the conduct of inquiry.

The twin issues to consider pertaining to philosophical paradigms in research are ontology and epistemology (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). The two scholars define ontology as the assumptions held about reality or knowledge. Ontological postulates are understood in two extremes which are realism and relativism. On its part, the realist perspective looks at the world as an objective entity with rules and regulations governing behaviour (P.20). The realist's role in research is therefore to be neutral with a purpose to discover the objective truth (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011).

The relativist perspective on the other hand takes a subjective view that there is no single viewpoint of the world and that reality is internal and dependent on the individual's perceptions and experiences as well as the way it is interpreted by an individual (P.21). Therefore, as a result of existence of unique settings, there is multiple realities, as opposed to objective reality, socially and culturally constructed by individuals from within their own contextual interpretation (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011).

Epistemology refers to the way reality or knowledge is studied. It is the nature of evidence and knowledge, the rules and principles by which one decides whether and how social phenomena can be demonstrated (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). A particularly central issue in this context is the question of whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos (Bryman 2012).

The epistemological paradigm has a continuum; the positivist orientation and the interpretivist/constructionist (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Positivist orientation advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond (Bryman 2012).

Interpretivist/constructionist epistemology on the other hand seeks to bring about data from people themselves with an aim of getting knowledge about how people perceive, interpret and understand issues that affect them in their circumstances (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Interpretivist/constructionist epistemology is rooted in subjectivism and assumes that knowledge can only be created and understood from the point of view of the individual.

They conclude by arguing that in this paradigm, researchers address the process of interaction among individuals and that this approach enables a researcher to adapt to unexpected problems and work out new solutions that makes possible the generation of

data to continue. This is because the researcher does not follow strict procedures of data generation but can adjust as the situation demands (P.23). This study therefore adopted the relativist perspective as it was the most suited.

Besides concerning itself with the application of objectivity which is a social issue in nature, the study adopted the qualitative approach which by its very nature is under the relativist tradition and stands on the pedestal that there exist several view points on any subject (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011).

In addition, this study adopted the interpretivist /constructionist epistemological paradigm as it is the most suitable for a qualitative study such as this. This paradigm is the most suited as it offered the required flexibility in making choices (P.25) which in turn resulted in a thick description of whether or not the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism is an issue in the two newspapers. The study generated data from the respondents knowledgeable on the practice of journalism in Kenya. It sought to understand the status and the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism in the alternative media. In other words, the application of objectivity in the alternative media can only be understood in this study from the point of view of the respondents which is in the purview of the interpretivist/constructionist epistemological paradigm.

3.3 Research Approach

This study took the qualitative approach as the best suited because qualitative research strategy usually emphasizes words rather than quantification (Bryman 2012). A conclusion on whether or not objectivity as a journalistic ethical principle is an issue in *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sun Weekly* was arrived at after the analysis of the data collected whose emphasis was words and consistent with a study such as this.

Further qualitative research approach place weight to a naturalistic search for relativity in meaning, multiplicity of interpretations, particularity, detail and flexibility in studying a phenomenon/aspect of it that a researcher delves into at a given time (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). The intention of this study was to generate an understanding of the possible perceptions of the participants regarding their views on whether the application of objectivity as a journalistic principle is an issue in the two newspapers. This is only possible by use of a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research approach seeks to generate an understanding of the various possible meanings of a subject in its natural setting (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Qualitative research is concerned with live as it is lived, things as they happen and situations as they are constructed in the day-to-day moment (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). This is supported by Yin (2011) when he argues that qualitative research involves studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions. Studying an issue such as the application of objectivity requires such a setting where people will be performing in their everyday roles and expressing themselves independently. This is the same situation as applies to *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sun Weekly* and which the study adopted.

Qualitative research approach tends to work with a relatively small number of cases or participants. Scope in qualitative research is thus more considered in terms of detail of what we get from the cases than the number of cases (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Bryman (2012) supports this view by arguing that qualitative researchers are seen as being concerned with small-scale aspects of social reality such as interaction. This study definitely used a small number of participants and specifically ten who were considered

experts, knowledgeable and available to shed light on the study topic as it is consistent with qualitative studies and which the study adopted.

Qualitative research tends to work with unstructured data or what Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) emphatically points out as non-numerical data. They continue to argue that qualitative analysis is often portrayed as concerned with discovering what might be learned from a particular set of data. This argument is supported by Bryman (2012) who argues that in qualitative research, the approach is invariably unstructured so that the possibility of getting at actors' meanings and of concepts emerging out of data collection is enhanced which this study agreed with and adopted.

This study adopted all the above because first and foremost it involved a small number of participants who were interviewed to establish their understanding of the application of objectivity and the extent to which it is applied in the two newspapers. The outcome of this was the emergence of clear themes which the researcher then used to determine whether or not objectivity is applied in the two newspapers. The emphasis on this study was words and not figures since the place of objectivity in the media can only be established through a description by use of words which was the case in this research. Further since the qualitative approach is best suited to study an issue in real world situations, this research studied the application of objectivity as an ethical issue by interacting and interviewing practitioners at the two newspapers as well as other knowledgeable people.

3.4 Research Design

Along with the qualitative approach, case study was adopted as the design of study. A case is an entity, a specific bounded system where it is possible to identify that some features are within the case while others are outside but are significant as contextualized

by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011). The boundedness and activity patterns are useful concepts for specifying the case. It may be a child or a classroom of children or an event, a happening or a concept. It is one among others (P.31). While in some cases the case may be a physical setting that is easily identifiable, in some instances, it may be abstract and intangible (P.32).

Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real world (Yin 2014). Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) agrees with Yin's view by saying that a case study is defined by interest in individual cases and a researcher can collect detailed information using a variety of data generation procedures. Lichtman (2013) further supports Yins' view by arguing that case study as a method to qualitative research involves the specific and detailed study of a case or cases.

There are different types of case studies which include intrinsic, instrumental and multiple case studies (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Intrinsic case study is where the study is undertaken because one wants a better understanding of a particular case and not necessarily because the case represents other cases. The intrinsic case study therefore is concerned with the particular case in order to learn about it more deeply.

The instrumental case study applies where the case is of secondary interest and plays a supportive role (P.34). It facilitates our understanding of something else (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Jwan and Ong'ondo argue that in instrumental case study, the focus is the issue rather than the case.

Multiple case study is where several cases may be studied jointly to look into a phenomenon, population or general condition. The cases are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding about a larger

collection of cases (P. 35). The study therefore adopted the multiple case study with the two newspapers facilitating an understanding on the application of objectivity in the practice of journalism in the alternative media.

Studying the application of objectivity as a single issue as opposed to an inquiry into the whole subject of ethical journalistic principles is in line with Yin (2014) argument regarding case studies which this study agrees with.

In selecting the two newspapers, this study relied on Lichtman (2013) formula on how to select cases which include typical, exemplary and unusual, unique or special. Based on this criterion, the two newspapers were considered typical because of their longevity in the market at a time when no one would have wanted to be associated with such papers and when such newspapers were being confiscated by the police and those behind their publications arrested. The newspapers were considered in this study as exemplary because other publishers have followed this example and we now have more publications of this nature available in the news-stands. Finally, they were deemed to be unusual, unique or special because among those categorized as alternative press, they are the most consistent and always on the news-stands.

In conclusion, case study method is therefore appropriate in this study because of the type of research questions which are what Yin (2013) refers to as the “How” or “Why” questions which are more exploratory and lead to the use of a case study. The method is also the most appropriate in this study because it is the best in examining a contemporary issue like the application of objectivity as is the case in this study and where the issue cannot be manipulated (P.12). The study relied on interviews of the people knowledgeable on media issues which is consistent with a case study and whose unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence as in this study.

3.5 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this study as it was considered the most appropriate just like in all other qualitative studies. Bryman (2012) emphasizes the importance of purposive sampling in qualitative research when he argues that purposive sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research so that the units of analysis are selected in terms of the criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered. He argues that the goal of sampling is to sample cases or participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed. This is supported by Mason (2002) argument that essentially the work of a sample here is to help provide the data which is necessary to address the research questions.

Consequently, in line with purposive sampling, ten participants were interviewed to generate data on the subject of study. The ten participants identified by use of a code were grouped as follows: two respondents from *The Weekly Citizen* identified as Respondent (R) Number 1 and 2 and two from the *Sun Weekly* identified as R 3 and R 4. Of the two, one of the participants in each of the two newspapers was the top editor. These participants were critical because they were responsible for working on the stories with the power to apply objectivity into the stories or not.

A participant was selected from KUI representing journalists identified as R9 and another from the Kenya Correspondents Association (KCA) representing correspondents identified as R10. Two journalism scholars engaged in training journalists at university level were also selected and identified as R6 and R7 as well as an independent reader of the newspapers to provide an unbiased view identified as R8. Lastly an official at the MCK, the regulator in the industry was also interviewed to give their views and identified as R5. The justification for the small sample is because this

study was narrow in scope in that it is mainly concerned with whether or not objectivity is an issue in the alternative media by studying the two newspapers and had only three research questions to be answered. The justification for this is based on Bryman (2012) argument that research based on qualitative interview is concerned with saturation of data and as such are primarily based on quite small samples. Bryman (2012) further argue such research can be based on quite small samples when saturation is used as a criterion for deciding on the adequacy of the sample. So, saturation being the criteria for determining sample size, the numbers do not matter. Yin (2011) weighs in with the same argument that the purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data in line with the topic of study. Mason (2002) is more categorical with her argument that when using purposive sampling, whether or not the sample is big enough to be statistically representative is not the major concern; what is of importance is whether the sample provides access to enough data and with the right focus to enable one to address the research questions. In this case, the respondents were purposely selected taking into consideration expertise, experience and availability. The smaller sample was appropriate and resulted in high quality and manageable data while at the same time facilitating a deeper data analysis process.

Mason (2002), in addition, argue qualitative samples are usually small as in this study for practical reasons to do with costs in terms of time and money in generating and analysing qualitative data. This was the case in this study in that it was facilitated financially by the researcher through a modest budget while limited time was spent in generating the data.

Nairobi was chosen as the site because this is the location the newspapers are published while all those interviewed were based in the city. This is in line with Bryman (2012)

argument that in purposive sampling, sites are selected because of their relevance to the research questions. The site provided accessibility to the respondents.

3.6 Data Generation Techniques and Process

This study being qualitative in approach had envisaged to use interview and documents as sources of data. However, as a result of constraints that arose in the course of the study, the study ended up using the interview technique and abandoned the document review technique. This is discussed further below.

3.6.1 In-Depth Interviews

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) defines interview as a technique concerned with gathering data by direct verbal interaction between individuals and are geared to get what a participant in research thinks, the attitudes of that person and or to explore person's reasons for thinking in a certain way or for carrying particular perceptions or attitudes. They continue to argue that interview is the most important method in qualitative research because such a research deals with human issues of a social nature and allow participants themselves to report their thoughts and experiences thereby giving important insights. This is what Bryman (2012) refers to as qualitative interview which he refers to as a general term that embraces interview of both the semi-structured and the unstructured kind. Mason (2002) supports this view with the argument that the term qualitative interviewing is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. Of this two, this study used the in-depth semi-structured interview.

In the actual interview exercise, the researcher prepared guidelines for use in the interview process followed by contacting individual respondents for face-to-face meetings. In the first meeting, the researcher obtained informed consent where the

respondents gave their consent by signing a consent form and the date of the interview agreed upon. The researcher conducted the individual interviews lasting between one and two hours. When the situation demanded, the respondents gave all the time needed to make the necessary clarifications, explore their responses, probe or pursue emerging matters in the interview. The responses during the interviews were audio recorded in addition to taking notes during the discussions. The audio recordings were later transcribed.

The interviews were conducted mostly in English with a bit of use of Kiswahili. The lengthy sessions with the respondents meant that there was no need for a repeat interview as there was enough time to interact. Having met the respondents or engaged them before the interview made it easy for the researcher to maintain a rapport.

The study as expected used a small number of participants and specifically ten respondents which made the interview technique the best suited. This technique enabled forming of a relationship with the respondents as well as enable the interview to proceed as a conversation.

The use of the open-ended questions facilitated the generation of elaborate and qualitatively rich data. It further allowed extended responses followed by prompts and probes giving the respondents the opportunity to clarify responses.

Important issues like the capture of the media by various actors and the future of the alternative media emerged in the course of the discussions and data analysis. This was possible because of the use of the in-depth interview technique employed. These matters have been discussed at length in Chapter Four.

3.6.2 Document Review

As mentioned earlier, it was envisaged this study will employ document review as a source of data. Such documents as mentioned earlier would have been editions of the two newspapers published over a period of six months. This was however not possible because in the course of the study, one of the newspapers, *the Sun Weekly* ceased the publication of the print version citing cost implications. It would therefore have been inappropriate to go ahead and analyse the hard copies of one newspaper. The online editions were not an option because they were not carbon copies of the print version as some of stories in the print version were left out because of the target audience. In addition, the website was not periodically updated meaning some editions were altogether missing.

This is expected in qualitative research as ably captured by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2020) when they argue that some qualitative researchers may solely rely on interviews for particular projects depending on their focus and any constraints that they may be facing. In this particular case, the researcher was constrained by the fact that *The Sun Weekly* ceased publication of the print version in the course of this study leaving me with no newspaper here referred to as the document to review. In addition, since the aim was to yield useful data, the interview technique in addition to the comprehensive nature of the interviews provided the opportunity to realise such data.

Yin (2014) supports the same argument when he affirms the value of documents in corroborating data from other sources. He argues that quite often, documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly. In this particular study there was no issue or activity that the researcher could not get or corroborate through the in-depth interviews with the respondents.

3.7 Data Analysis

This research study adopted the thematic data analysis strategy in data analysis. Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) define data analysis as involving looking at the data, assigning categories and putting together emerging issues into items in an attempt to answer the research questions. The data in qualitative research is mostly in the form of words (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011, Litchman 2013). The data according to Litchman (2013) is the information you collect as part of the research study.

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) defines thematic analysis as the search for relevant themes to the research topic under which reasonably large amounts of data from different sources can be organized. As to what constitutes a theme, Bryman (2012) argues:

- i. Is a category identified by the analyst through his/her data
- ii. That relates to his/her research focus
- iii. That builds on codes identified in transcripts and or on field notes
- iv. That provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his/her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus.

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) sums up Bryman's argument that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

Consequently, data analysis is an orderly process of transcribing, collating, editing, coding and reporting the data sensibly and make it accessible to the readers and researcher for purposes of interpretation and discussion (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). This definition captures in totality the concept of data analysis by giving both the meaning as well as the processes involved.

Cohen et. al (2007) supports the argument by saying that qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; making sense of data in terms of the participants definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

Data in qualitative research is mostly in the form of words meaning qualitative research yields huge amounts of data (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Bryman (2012) supports this view when he argues that one of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that it rapidly generates a large cumbersome database because of its reliance on prose in the form of field notes, interview transcripts or documents. This is what is called attractive nuisance (Bryman 2012).

In this particular study, the process of analysing the data started with the transcribing all the interviews from audio to words ensuring that everything that the respondent said was captured. The researcher personally transcribed the data which gave an idea of what to expect from each respondent. Thereafter each transcript was read and re-read which gave a further idea of what was in those transcripts as a way of re-familiarising with the data.

Coding commenced in which case sections of the data pertaining to a specific point relevant to the study was labelled. The coding process was in three phases with the first phase or open coding generating codes from each transcript. The second phase coding went a step further where similar codes were grouped together and edited to remove redundancies and overlaps ending with categories. The categories emerged in the course of the data analysis and had not been identified earlier.

The third phase involved grouping the categories into themes in line with the research questions and which is the format used in presenting the research findings.

The final process in data analysis was the production of a report that constitutes Chapter Four by reporting the outcomes in words. This was done by paraphrasing the statements of the respondents as well as use of direct quotes presented in a narrative form. Care was exercised to ensure clarity, precision, coherence and accuracy.

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) recommends that the report should be presented in a narrative form giving an explanation of the data in a manner that would make sense to the reader. A discussion on the findings, conclusion, implications of the study for policy makers as well as recommendations pointing out areas of further research followed.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness is the process of ensuring that the research process is truthful, careful and rigorous enough to qualify to make the claims that it does (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). To ensure trustworthiness, the following issues were addressed: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is the degree to which the study actually investigates what it claims to and reports what actually occurred in the field. It is the extent to which a research fact or finding is what it is claimed to be (Yin 2014, Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011, Mason 2002). To ensure credibility in this study, all the key concepts used in the study have been defined as well as giving clear operational definitions.

Selection of the participants was done in a manner to ensure those identified were knowledgeable and have experience on the topic of study. This study being a multiple case studies, data was generated via in-depth semi structured interview as stipulated in qualitative research while the responses from the participants were open, complete and

truthful. A comprehensive account of the research process, use of quotes generated in the interviews was extensively used to establish a chain of evidence in this study.

At the end of every interview session, the respondents and the researcher went through each and every response to the questions posed to ensure such responses were correct and reflected the thinking of the respondents as a way of member checking. This ensured that the responses were accurate of interpretation. `

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent the findings of a study can be generalized. It is the degree to which the findings could be relevant to or applicable to other contexts (Yin 2014, Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Opinion on transferability is divided among scholars on whether generalisations are possible in qualitative research which emphasizes particularity and which distinguishes it from other researches. To ensure transferability in this study, the researcher ensured the respondents were the best suited and were relevant for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants from whom data was generated.

The researcher also made sure that the topic of study was well understood by the participants and that the research questions were adequately answered. The findings and discussions of the study were presented by thick description.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which a researcher provides sufficient detail and clarity of the research entire process in a way that would make it possible for a researcher to visualize, appreciate and to reproduce the study if necessary (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Dependability ensures that if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described and conducted the same study all over again, the findings and conclusions

will be the same (Yin 2014). To secure dependability in the study, a thick description of the entire research process has been provided with every step appropriately outlined to facilitate the audit and replication of the process where necessary. This is a clear demonstration that the research was indeed undertaken.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the findings of the study are free of both internal and external influence either of the researcher, participants or institutions (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Just like in transferability, questions have been raised as to whether a researcher can be neutral and to what extent the researcher can influence the findings in a study. To ensure confirmability, the researcher declared he had practiced journalism in the mainstream media for more than 10 years and that indeed some of the respondents were acquaintances prior to this study. Based on this experience, the researcher had an opinion as well as feelings about the subject of study. However, to ensure no influence on the outcome of the study and as a way of moderating any influence on the process and outcome of the study, the respondents selected through purposive sampling were experienced and well-grounded on the subject. Most of them were senior in the profession and could not be dictated in their responses as the researcher considered them to be senior in the profession. In addition, a description on how data was collected and analysed has been given to enhance transparency. The transcripts are also available for scrutiny.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics embody individual and communal codes of conduct based on adherence to a set of principles which may be explicit and codified or implicit or which may be abstract and impersonal or concrete and personal (Jwan and Ong'ondo 2011). Cohen et al (2007)

emphasizes the importance of adhering to ethical considerations by arguing that from the onset a researcher should consider how the research purposes, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices. In ensuring the necessary ethical issues were catered, the following issues were addressed:

3.9.1 Negotiation of access

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher sought and received permission of the university to undertake the study through the university supervisors. Consequently, a letter of introduction was issued and presented to the research licensing authority in the country, NACOSTI which in turn allowed the study through a license as set out in Appendix A. In addition, meetings were held with the respondents and after explaining to them in detail what the exercise was all about, they agreed to participant.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

To this end, the researcher met all the participants and explained what the study was about and their role which was to answer the questions posed as well as give their views on any discussion that may arise. The researcher gave assurances that participants were free to raise any questions on any aspect of the research and were free to opt out at any time during the study. Finally, the participants were taken through the informed consent form as set out in Appendix B which they signed out of their own free will.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The respondents were assured of confidentiality where necessary while any demands they make must be respected. It was agreed by all parties there was nothing confidential in the information they were giving. For anonymity, it was agreed the participants

would be identified by use of codes which was done. As a sign of goodwill, they signed the informed consent form which had a clause of confidentiality and anonymity. In

3.9.4 Protection from Harm

This study did not anticipate any harm that may befall the respondents either physically or psychologically. After discussions with the respondents, they signed the informed consent form that has a clause on the risks and since there were none, they gave their consent.

3.9.5 Honesty

The researcher made sure all the facts regarding the study were true and that there was no deception of any nature. The respondents were taken through on what the study was all about and assured there would be no data falsification. The outcomes of this study are based on the data collected and analysed in line with the demands of qualitative research. This report was also subjected to a plagiarism test whose results conformed to the requirements as set out by Moi University.

3.9.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail the research philosophical paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling, data generation techniques, data analysis and presentation, trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations as they applied to this study

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents data according to the research questions. The questions posed in this study were; what is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly* newspapers, what is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers and how do practitioners address the challenges they face in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism.

4.2 Status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly*.

Question one sought to establish the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly*. In answering the question, the researcher sought answers to the following questions; (i) the status of journalism practice at the two newspapers (ii) general understanding of the alternative media (iii) understanding the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism (iv) adherence to the Code of Ethics (v) adherence to the Code of Ethics by alternative media. These issues are discussed in the following sub-sections:

4.2.1 Journalism Practice

The first aspect to interrogate was the status of journalism practice in Kenya which forms the basis of journalism practice at the two newspapers. From the interviews, respondents indicated that journalism practice in Kenya has advanced and is comparable to other jurisdictions in the world which is demonstrated in the way the media in Kenya undertakes their practice. This has been promoted by the freedom of

the media and expression as well as demands by the law governing journalism practice in Kenya. This vibrancy is demonstrated by Kenyan journalists winning awards in global competitions as well as locals dominating international media outlets based in the country as employees. R8 argues that the media in Kenya is more vibrant, professional and its comparable what is found in other parts of the continent.

This is collaborated by R9 who concur that journalism practice in Kenya has actually been growing over the years with the changing environment characterised by an expansion of the democratic space since the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992 when he says: He says:

The practice of journalism was very difficult but at least we have seen a changing environment whereby right now there is freedom of the media and expression which have greatly contributed to the growth of journalism in Kenya to the extend nowadays we are saying that journalism has actually grown to become a profession from being an art and craft.

R7 while supporting the two says the vibrancy is the consequence of the competition in the media landscape both in the print and electronic media.

Respondents were of the view penalties in the law governing journalism practice in Kenya has exerted pressure on the media to train their journalists and thereby contributing to the vibrancy of the media in Kenya. R5 confirms most journalists in the country are graduates while others are multiple degree holders which is an indication of the level of training in the country. However, despite the gains made over the years in the practice, there are gaps in the way journalism is practiced in the country. This situation has been attributed to investors who come to the sector to make money and not act as the watchdog of the society which is the primary role of the media. R10 felt the quality and depth of journalism had gone down when he says:

Currently, we are not where we were. We are not especially in terms of quality and depth. We are there but in terms of quantity, certainly the media has expanded, but it has also come with costs to the quality of journalism. This has meant that there is a degree to which many people have come into the media thinking it is just a place to make money and not to serve society.

4.2.2 Alternative Media

It was clear from the interviews that respondents understood what constitutes the alternative media from a Kenyan perspective. However, respondents are of the opinion that there is a very thin line between the mainstream and the alternative media although the circumstances in which they operate in sometimes determines their conduct. R7 avers the alternative media as we know it in Kenya is not exactly the alternative media that is found in more advanced countries where the media is more developed because of the high standards of decency and not driven so much by bribery even though they are still referred to as yellow.

Perception was key in categorising who was alternative or not in Kenya. R3 has this to say:

I don't see much difference because we strive to be as professional as possible. The ethics are just the same. There is no one set for alternative media and the other one for the mainstream media. I think the main difference is the resources and the structures of our operation as well as that of perception. Public perception is an issue.

This perception issue is brought out clearly when the alternative media is sometimes described as a one man show that exist for specific reasons and once that is done, they can close shop because they were motivated by certain circumstances.

That aside, the alternative media is now gaining its respect from the mainstream media. R1 confirms it was initially not easy to relate to their counterparts at the mainstream media when the publication commenced but that was now changing.

There is also agreement that the alternative media have their place as brought out during the interviews with the respondents arguing that consumers are looking for content regardless of where it is published.

4.2.3 Code of Ethics

This study set out to establish whether the practitioners in the alternative media understood the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism in the country. The Code of Ethics was drafted and passed into law with the contribution of the practitioners as a self-regulatory mechanism.

Consequently, the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism in Kenya became part of the Kenyan law and forms the Second schedule of the MCK Act 2013. The Act also provides for a complaints commission that receives complaints from any one who feels wronged by the media and makes judgements against journalists based on the Code of Ethics.

Practitioners are aware of the existence of the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism which they agree guides the practice just like in any other profession. It provides the manner and the way journalists are supposed to behave in the line of duty and in that helps in ensuring that practitioners conform to professional standards. R5 confirms the situation when he says:

Our level of professional standards is so high, remember it is only in Kenya where the code of ethics is part of the Kenyan Law. The code of ethics is the Second schedule of the MCK Act 2013 so that tells you it is the only country in the world that already put the Code of Ethics in law. In other places, it is a self-regulatory mechanism within the professional media groups to implement but here they put it as part of the law and that then meant there are higher expectations and exposure of journalists to legal processes and that has pushed practitioners to observe the code of ethics.

Editors from both *The Weekly Citizen* and *The Sun Weekly* confirmed they were aware the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism in Kenya exists.

4.2.4 Overview on Adherence

While it is generally agreed that breaching the ethical issues is to offend the laws of the land, opinion is divided on the extend of the breaches in observing the code of ethics for the practice of journalism. R3 avers that obeying the ethical issues ensures the sector is manageable and avoids disorder as he says:

I think without adherence to the ethical practices it would be a chaotic sector to manage and people will come up with all manner of things to do, malice and all that..... So, if you are very keen to follow ethical practices, chances are that you may not be breaching the law. Offending the ethical principles is like offending the laws of the land.

Despite the lapses, adhering to the Code of Ethics is generally high with the situation attributed to the invasion of the profession by non-trained practitioners referred to as media workers.

In addition, breaches occur because the Code of Ethics that is enforced by the MCK is not taught in all journalism schools. Some journalism schools teach their students media law which has some aspects of the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism. R6 supports that and says:

In fact you will be surprised that there are very few journalism schools where you will find a lecturer with a copy of the code of ethics, very few, in fact you will find someone teaching news writing but they do not even have that handbook that talks about the Dos and Dont's of any person who is engaged in this trade and therefore that places us in a very awkward position as trainers.

It was observed that the breaches occur across the board where some journalists want to observe the code while others do not want to arguing they would rather stick to their own internal editorial guidelines and principles.

R9 argues however this is not out of the ordinary because the Code itself envisages such breaches and provided mechanisms to deal with the situation by providing for the Complaints Commission:

Other reasons the respondents cite contributing to lack of adherence include ignorance, lack of proper induction of new staff into the practice, the celebrity mentality which has taken its toll on the finances of journalists, lack of training, commercial interests and finally those outlets set up on values that do not underpin journalistic values.

4.2.5 Adherence to the Code of Ethics by Alternative Media

When asked whether the alternative media adheres to the Code of Ethics, respondents in the sector were categorical they adhere and when they don't, they do that in the best interest of the society in line with their cardinal duty of being a watchdog. While R 3 some states that application of ethical principles is the norm at his newspaper, R 1 asserts the regulator, MCK is beholden to some individuals, selectively enforces the Code and that his media outlet discards them if they think they are a hindrance to the assignment at hand. The Code of Ethics demands that in the event any journalist chooses to go against it, there has to be a justification.

Other respondents affirm there is no adherence on the Code of Ethics by the alternative media for various reasons. They have been accused of propagating lies, character assassination, sensational, doing hatchet job for the highest bidder and choosing to operate in an environment that is not regulated.

R 10 describes their mode of operations as sensational, do not have many liabilities, a one man show existing for a specific reason while sometimes its content is sponsored for malicious reasons and can close shop once the assignment is delivered:

To a large extent, most alternative publications tend to be sensational but the default of being sensational is of course to establish a niche, they also want to be recognized. You see they don't have many liabilities. The alternative media is sometimes a one man show, some of them are for specific seasons, once that is done, they can close shop because they are motivated by certain circumstances..... Some of it (content) is sponsored by malicious people that is for sure.

This argument finds support in R6 argument who believes that because of lack of training inherent in those running the alternative media they cannot be to any good. According to him, the alternative media is hell bent on propagating lies, character assassination and destroying peoples' reputations. He is of the opinion they are sponsored in some way to do the hatchet job of the sponsors:

With regard to alternative media, I would say, looks like there are some chaps in high places who support the continued existence of these alternative media may be through funding, may be giving them the legal framework for their own existence or something like that because if you have an alternative media that is engaged in disparaging people's names and killing other people's character and dreams, why should such a publication be allowed to continue to exist.

This is the same view held by R8 who elucidates that in Kenya, the alternative media has come to be perceived as doing the hatchet job for anyone who can pay. Further, they don't go through a rigorous process of verifying their information causing the readers to refer to them as alternative and falling down the pecking order.

R7 affirms the alternative media may not adhere to the Code of Ethics because they are not founded on those (journalistic) values that underpin journalism while the MCK as a regulator has been unable to rein them in.

R9 attributes the state of affairs to the unregulated environment they operate in while defending the MCK saying it is difficult to enforce the code on people of no known abode:

For the alternative media, they are operating in an environment that is not regulated and that is the reason why they do not adhere because they are operating in a different environment and they have refused actually to come to where order is because where they are operating, there is no order. Nobody even knows where they are operating from other than the papers being seen on the streets.

4.3 Place of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in Journalism Practice

Question two of the study aimed at establishing the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers. In order to answer this question, the researcher interrogated the following issues: (i) whether media can be objective or not, (ii) how content is generated at the two newspapers and lastly, (iii) the challenges to application of objectivity in the practice of journalism. These issues are discussed below:

4.3.1 No Media is Objective

Respondents were of the opinion there is no media in this country or elsewhere that is objective with the term being described as ambiguous, pretentious, subjective and altogether unattainable. Just like is the case with major media houses in the world who do not talk about it, respondents say objectivity is not something that practitioners should concern themselves with so much as long as they are factual, fair and provide a mechanism for the right of reply.

R3 argued the media in Kenya across the board only pretends to be objective to avoid the public creating a perception while R10 avers the whole question about objectivity in the media is a very subjective argument because there is no consensus in the first place on the ethos or what is good for the society. R9 argues it depend on the circumstances the media are working in whereby they could be compromised if the environment they are operating in is not suitable.

According to R8, no media is objective all over the world because objectivity is compromised at the point where the choice of the story to run is made. He avers:

No media is objective at all. Objectivity is not possible because objectivity gets compromised at the point where you decide this is the story we want to run and this is the story we do not want to run. So even at that point where you make a decision to choose one against the other kills objectivity. The point at which you decide this is how we want to frame this story, we want to take this slant kills that objectivity so there is no objectivity at all, not even in Kenya, not even in the world.

R7 argues objectivity is a very difficult subject even for major media houses in the world and not something practitioners should be obsessed with. To such media houses, facts, fairness and right of reply are more critical than objectivity. He supports this argument by saying:

Objectivity means that you remove yourself completely from the story but we know for instance in Kenya, ethnicity is a reality, support for certain ideologies is a reality. So, objectivity is very difficult to achieve in many media houses so maybe it's something we do not have to be obsessed about as long as we are accurate, as long as we are truthful and as long as we subscribe to the values that underpin journalism.

R10 flips the matter altogether with his argument that as a result, hostility towards the media is growing with the consumers feeling alienated and accusing the media for not speaking for them. He had this to say on the issue:

So, in terms of objectivity and all its derivatives around it whether is fairness and so on, the media is increasingly suffering and that is why for example, hostility is developing against the media in many quarters. What we can think about is not necessarily objectivity but a degree of factual information.

R1 explained his newspaper ensures the documents they rely on as sources of their stories are authentic and, in that way, attain objectivity. This however seems to be a

contradiction when at the same time he avers the newspaper does not contact those adversely mentioned for a right of reply because according to him that would give room for being compromised by news makers.

4.3.2 How Content is Generated

It is important to examine how content is generated to be able to determine whether objectivity is possible. The two newspapers being weeklies are not bound by the daily news happenings because that is available in the dailies as well as in the broadcast media from where they pick the stories, analyse and investigate further. Such investigations can take as long as a month. R3 says his writers rarely attend press conferences unless they are meeting a news source while R1 says the bulk of their stories are derived from the documents they receive from well-wishers as a result of the goodwill they have created over time with the sources. Correspondents spread across the country for the two newspapers also file stories from the counties.

While R3 says they have never been sued by new sources as a result of the thorough scrutiny they subject their stories to as well as offering those adversely mentioned the right of reply, R1 says this is not the case at his newspaper. They ensure the documents are authentic without much regard on how they are obtained and are always ready to defend their stories in court in case of any litigations. R1 had this to say:

Once we have the concrete documents, like if, take for example, the story of governor (name withheld), if that lady (name withheld) had approached us, there is no way we could have engaged the governor. With photos, with exchange of SMS between the governor and the lady....., that one with Weekly Citizen, it's enough evidence.

R8 differs with the argument by R1 that giving those adversely mentioned the right of reply is to give them an opportunity to compromise the practitioners. To him, it is good

practice to get the other side of the story for purposes of ensuring a media outlet is not caught up in personal quarrels. He said:

No, it is not compromising. I don't agree that is compromising. You will have to ask yourself whether what you are writing is true I think it is reasonable to say/ bounce whatever accusations to the accused. To me, that is not compromising, it is getting the other side of the story. Everything has the other side of the story. You never know, it may be a business quarrel..... verification is a must whether you are in the mainstream or alternative media and that is where the so-called alternative media out there does better than ours here For me, I think giving the other side equal opportunity to respond is a must which the alternative media here does not want to.

He is of the opinion that if they practiced a bit of professionalism and tried to source not in the manner in which they source stories, they would be doing much better even than the mainstream media. He added they would have claimed that market left by the mainstream media.

R1 finds support in R2 who argues that their brand of journalism has earned them the trust of the readers which has enabled the newspaper to survive for long in the market without advertisements. As he rightly says, the newspaper does not spare anyone and has not shied away from reporting on powerful individuals both in and outside of government. He explains:

The most fundamental difference from the rest of the other newspapers is that we don't spare any one whether you are mighty or lowly and in that we are kind of lucky and unlucky. It's our strong and weak point. Yeah, so our loyalty is to safeguard public interest and not the interest of the individuals. No one will come and say don't write about this person.

This boldness in the alternative media is also supported by R6 who observes rarely do news sources file complaints with the Complaints Commission on the stories published by the so-called alternative media. He said:

I have not heard of any fellow going to the Complaints Commission of the MCK to complain about a story that was carried (by these papers). There are times when they have carried stories that are found out to be true.

R7 gives the example of *The Weekly Citizen* and confirms actually some of the stories they carry are credible only that sometimes they fail in being responsible to the people who consume their content, to themselves as journalists and to the profession. Instead, they seek their own gratification and or certain actors resulting in the state of affairs:

We always say media has power but the scarce resource is responsibility. Sometimes they don't care about responsibility and responsibility is two way; You know you are responsible to the people that you write for and you are responsible also to yourselves as professional journalists and you are also responsible to the profession. Often times I give the example of Weekly Citizen, one of those in this country but some of their stories are actually credible stories.

4.3.3 Challenges to Objectivity

Respondents from across the board cited several challenges to the application of objectivity which results in both the mainstream and alternative media not able to observe objectivity. Lack of financial resources, lack of training, weak regulation, lack of structures, failure to subject stories to a rigorous process of verification, unfavourable political environment in which the media sometimes operate in were some of the reasons cited as challenges to objectivity.

Others were media capture by various players including media owners, poor newsroom cultures, lack of ethics and biases on the part of editors, laziness, corruption among media practitioners as well as ethnicity and tribalism were the other factors cited as undermining objectivity. R5 had this to say on some of the issues:

Ethnicity is an issue in journalism in this country. In Kenya, you are a tribe first before you are a journalist. Corruption is another challenge. It is a big issue because when we talk about corruption in

the media house is purely because once your story is being considered on the merits of who gave you what and not because of facts, then it has messed up with objectivity..... And sometimes just lack of professionalism. The issue of media ownership. Who owns media in this country? We have raised these things, how many people would write objective stories on big personalities owning the media houses?

R10 captures a number of the challenges facing the media and which have made it difficult to be objective. Decisions on which story to carry are not based on ethical issues but on other considerations which are not necessarily journalistic; He sums up the situation as follows:

There a number of challenges, you know the media enterprises are grappling with a lot of challenges, some of them are in terms of financial, some of them are political, others are ethnic, others in terms of media ownership structures, there is also the state and the corporate sector captive. So there are many players within this sector who have compromised the media in terms of what they can do so the media has increasingly become afraid. The decision on which story to carry is not necessarily based on ethical considerations.

R8 lays the blame squarely on the owners whom he accuses of not being supportive of the media in this country because of the way they fraternise with the political class, a situation he said undermines the independence of the media:

R7 brings out an interesting aspect which he refers as the dynamics in the newsrooms where senior people in the newsroom have no regard to objectivity and other ethical issues. This aspect undermines even the best training practitioners may have gone through. He avers:

So, we must work at the newsroom cultures and the dynamics that underpin whatever practices that happen in those newsrooms. If the editors, the owners are not ethical, then it does not matter how ethical one is.

4.4 Addressing Challenges on Objectivity by Practitioners

The final research question in this study related to how the challenges in the application of objectivity in the practice of journalism were addressed by the practitioners. To answer this question, the researcher interrogated key issues which include: (i) dealing with challenges in applying objectivity and (ii) training on the Code of Ethics. The outcomes on the above issues are presented below:

4.4.1 Dealing with Challenges in Applying Objectivity

Several respondents put forth several measures to deal with the challenges faced by practitioners in applying the ethical principle of objectivity. A good number felt that the regulator, MCK should be more strict in enforcing the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism. There was however a gap in how those who are not registered would be reached because MCK operates like a grouping of the willing. R8 ably captures this by saying:

The issue is the regulation. The regulation mechanism seems to be more focused on the mainstream media and the willing. What the alternative press has done, their journalists are simply not registered, the media houses that are publishing whatever they are publishing have simply not subjected themselves to the authority of the MCK by not paying what they are supposed to pay to the MCK. So, because of that they are operating in some sort of a vacuum and in that vacuum, either the regulation has not thought of how to fill or it was not thought through during the enactment of the MCK Act. It follows that those who operate there will try to exploit that vacuum and do some unwelcome things.

To achieve this, creating awareness on ethics was cited as critical through training, workshops or seminars as well as close collaboration between journalism schools, practitioners, regulators and policy makers. Another way was for media houses to strictly enforce their editorial principles and guidelines because most of them were derived from the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism.

Journalism organizations that speak on behalf of journalists should treat equally all practitioners both in the mainstream as well as those in the alternative media and involve them in crafting solutions to challenges affecting the sector.

A key issue that came up among the challenges was lack of resources especially in the alternative media and which was categorized as the weakest link in adherence to the code of ethics. R9 captures this aspect:

One of the challenges is finances because you know that these guys are struggling financially. They do not have a formal revenue stream which they can rely on. But now given the economic situation these papers are facing means it is very difficult also to allow themselves to be brought under regulation because they cannot compete with the mainstream media for the revenue so they must find a way of getting their revenue which might be unorthodox ways of getting revenue.

To resolve this issue, respondents are of the view that it was important to formulate ways to share the advertising revenue with all the players most of which is controlled by the mainstream media. R5 is convinced an advertising revenue formula can be worked out:

You know advertising in this country is controlled by five major media houses. Now, if we have 60 TV stations, how do they survive. We want alternative media to thrive, that is why we are saying we want a fund, we are calling- a diversity fund because those media like the Weekly Citizen, would like to do good, sometimes not that they are malicious but they have no capacity and no money to pay staff.

R7 affirms practitioners must understand the nuts and bolts of all issues pertaining to the practice of journalism including the Code of Ethics. Training is key and must balance between the training and the needs of the media houses. Here is his response:

The training we offer I think is critical to the practice of journalism, I mean journalists ought to understand the application of law, they ought to understand the application of ethics. You know these are critical elements that training offers that sometimes is not offered in

those media houses themselves. That is why for example from time to time we partner with media houses just to ensure that whatever training we offer is fit for purpose and its relevant to the current needs of the industry.

4.4.2 Training on the Code of Ethics

Training was cited as a key component to ensure compliance with the code of ethics and although it was already taking place, it must be strengthened because questions have emerged on the quality of the training following the emergence of all manner of institutions. Like other professions, the regulator was now demanding that journalism practitioners must be trained to be accredited to practice in the country. R9 supported this saying training in the media plays a role in helping to keep up with the standards as demanded by every profession while R6 was categorical that journalism schools were doing their best despite the challenges they were facing.

According to R2, training was key in creating awareness and imparts on compliance while R10 is of the view that those trained undertake their duties with a bit of fineness, they know the basic things about journalism and is critical in imparting skills. R10 argues:

Training is crucial because it helps to moderate how a journalist looks at things including within the confines of the law. Somebody trained is more likely to look at the ethical principles, we may not necessarily observe it 100 per cent but is more directed, he does things with a bit of fineness which is different from when if for example we release somebody out there who does not know basic things about journalism.

R5 argues that training especially for those in the alternative media is critical and suggests that as a starting point, those engaged in the exercise must recognize the place of the alternative media and factor them while planning the trainings that are only benefitting the mainstream media who are members of the MCK. He said:

Lack of training is a challenge. It is a factor because quite a number of them do not employ trained journalists. Now when they don't for example accreditate with the MCK, when we are doing a job training, we don't consider them because they are not our members. There must be a deliberate attempt by us who train to target them, to accept alternative media is here to stay and play a legitimate role. We need to accept not all of us will consume content from mainstream media and for that reason they have a role they are playing so once we accept even in our planning including training, we start planning knowing we have both mainstream and alternative, both of whom need our interventions and help.

On the flip side, those in the alternative media like R1 acknowledge that while training is important, experience is critical in journalism. R2 supports him citing experience and self-education as equally important in journalism. R3 supports training but also supports his colleagues by arguing those with an interest do better than even trained ones.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented findings in line with the three research questions in narratives using quotations, summaries and para-phrases. The research questions established the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers, the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers representing the alternative media and the challenges in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism were addressed by the practitioners. This chapter revealed that practitioners understood that no media is objective, adhering to the principle has its challenges and that objectivity is not something practitioners should be obsessed with as long as they were fair, factual and offer right of reply to those mentioned adversely.

In addition, various ways on how to deal with the challenges in applying objectivity were outlined. With these findings, the researcher presented the summary of findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations in Chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the summary of the key findings and a discussion of the findings. The researcher also presents the conclusion and recommendations as well as areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

This research sought answers for the three research questions which were; what is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the *Weekly Citizen* and the *Sun Weekly*; what is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers and finally how do practitioners address the challenges they face in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism.

The following are the key findings from the analysis of the data gathered through in-depth interviews with the respondents in line with the research questions.

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings

Key Findings
<p>(a) What is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the <i>Weekly Citizen</i> and the <i>Sun Weekly</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners are aware of ethical principles for the practice of journalism. Ethical principles guide the practice of journalism in the way and manner journalists are supposed to undertake their practice. • There is consensus it is important to adhere to objectivity within the confines of the Code of Ethics to ensure order in the sector. It is also part of the law and to breach them is to offend the law • However, despite the awareness, breaches occur in the alternative media • Adherence is low in the alternative media because it is deliberate, such media is not founded on values that underpin journalism, misconception that the regulator is beholden to a section of actors.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear what constitutes alternative media in the Kenyan perspective is not the same in other jurisdictions. In Kenya, there is a thin line between the mainstream and the alternative media. • Perception is the key in determining who is alternative or not in Kenya.
<p>(b) What is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term is ambiguous, pretentious, subjective and altogether unattainable. • There is no media in Kenya or elsewhere which is objective. Objectivity is therefore not something practitioners should be obsessed with. • Facts, fairness and right of reply are more critical issues to strive for but not objectivity. • Objectivity gets compromised at the point a particular story is prioritised and framed • Alternative media is facing challenges that compromise adherence to objectivity which include the desire to make quick money. • Other times, prevailing circumstances dictate whether to be objective • Failure by alternative media to be responsible to the people who consume their content, to themselves as journalists and to the journalism profession further compromises objectivity • Senior people with no regard to ethical principles have undermined application of objectivity in the practice of journalism in newsrooms. • The unprofessional manner in which content is sourced is the bane of objectivity in the alternative media. • Because of the thin line between the mainstream and the alternative, hostility towards the media is on the rise as a result of content consumers feeling alienated and the perception that media no longer adheres to objectivity.
<p>(c) How are the challenges in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism addressed by the practitioners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulator should be stricter in enforcing the ethical principles to ensure order in the sector. • Creating awareness on ethics through training, workshops or seminars as well as collaboration between journalism schools, practitioners, regulators and policy makers is key to ensure adherence. • Lack of resources is the weakest link in the alternative media and should be addressed to ensure compliance. • Teaching of the Code of Ethics should be mandatory as a stand-alone subject in journalism schools. • Address corruption in the sector that undermines how content should be treated and thereby objectivity. • Need to recognise alternative media have a future and will continue to thrive but not necessarily in the form they are now. They occupy a space, they are not criminal enterprises and need to be recognized. • However, it will depend on the owners of the alternative media to decide whether to vacate the niche they are already serving.

5.3 Discussion

In this section and in line with literature review, the researcher presents a discourse of the key findings pertaining to the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers, the place of objectivity in the practice of journalism by the two newspapers and addressing the challenges in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism by the practitioners.

5.3.1 The status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism in the two newspapers

The foremost research question explored the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at both the Weekly Citizen and the Sun Weekly. In answer to this question, the study established that practitioners are aware of ethical principles for the practice of journalism with the ethical principles being a guide in the way and the manner in which journalists are supposed to undertake their practice. Besides the high level of awareness and consensus that it is important to adhere to the issues for purposes of ensuring order in the sector, breaches still occur with the low levels of adherence attributable to deliberate attempts to circumvent the ethical principles, the alternative media not founded on principles that underpin journalism and in some cases a misconception that the regulator is beholden to a section of actors and therefore not neutral. These findings are in line with what AWC (2005) established in their study that while respondents agreed that knowledge levels on ethical principles that guide the practice of journalism had grown after the introduction of the Code, the same could not be said about the quality of journalism. While the Code of Conduct was accepted as a useful tool for guiding journalism practice in the country, the study established that there was little effort to enforce the Code in newsrooms, much in the same way that the

house style book is emphasized meaning that it was not taken seriously and therefore breaches were bound to occur in such a situation (P.28)

Further, Ochieng et.al (2014) arrived at similar findings which is that a section of the media in Kenya appeared apathetic to adhering to the ethical principles contained in the Media Act of 2007 and recommended a revision of the same (P.26). This is in line with the findings of this study that adherence was low and there were breaches despite the awareness that not adhering was to offend the law as well as instigating disorder in the sector.

Respondents in this study were clear on what constitutes alternative media in the Kenyan context which is different in other jurisdictions. The unique aspect in Kenya was that there was a thin line between who was alternative or the mainstream media with perception by the consumers being the key in making this determination. This is in line with what scholars observed from the literature reviewed.

The perception angle is buttressed by an article in the Standard Newspapers where Musau (2016) reports that Kenya's State House referred the respected 'New York Times' as the gutter *press* in an angry reaction to a story discussing retired President Uhuru Kenyatta's ICC case. The reference *gutter press* is mostly used in Kenya to refer to the alternative media and in this particular case, it was informed by the perception by State House that the article portrayed the retired President and the government of Kenya in bad light. This further enhances the findings of the study that perception is key in determining who was alternative media and vice versa.

5.3.2 The Place of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in the Practice of Journalism by the Newspapers

The second question sought to examine the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the two newspapers. This study revealed that there is no media in Kenya or elsewhere which is objective. Respondents averred the term is ambiguous, pretentious, subjective and altogether unattainable. They argued objectivity is not something practitioners in the alternative media should be obsessed with but should instead focus on facts, fairness and right of reply. To buttress the issue of objectivity not being attainable, respondents argued that this principle gets compromised at the point where a particular story is prioritised and how the story is framed. It also emerged that the alternative media was facing challenges among them the desire to make quick money which compromised adherence to objectivity while in other times, circumstances dictated whether to be objective or not. Ongowo (2011) concurred with these findings in his study when he established that practitioners in the alternative media break certain ethics in journalism in some situations but justified the breach citing the public's right to know and the endeavour to fight corruption and wrongdoing against society. They further cited commercial pressures to increase circulation as the reason for breaching the guidelines (P.27)

Other matters that emerged in this study were that failure by the alternative media to be responsible to the people who consume their content, to themselves as practitioners and to the journalism profession compromises objectivity, that senior people in the alternative media without any regard to ethical principles have undermined the application of objectivity while the unprofessional manner in which content is sourced is the bane of objectivity in the alternative media.

Finally, the study established that because of the thin line between the mainstream and the alternative media, hostility towards the media is generally on the rise as a result of content consumers feeling alienated and the perception that media no longer adheres to objectivity. This is in line with the findings in AWC (2005) that while the Code of Conduct was accepted as a useful tool for guiding journalism practice in the country, there was little effort to enforce the Code in newsrooms, much in the same way that the house style book is emphasized (P.28). This brings out two issues established by this study. One, little effort to enforce can be because of senior people who have no regard for objectivity and therefore undermine it by not enforcing which leads to the second issue which is the unprofessional manner in sourcing content which also undermines adherence to objectivity.

5.3.3 How do Practitioners Address the Challenges they face in the Application of Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in Journalism

The third question sought to demonstrate how the challenges faced in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism are addressed by practitioners. There was consensus among the respondents that the regulator should be strict in enforcing the ethical principles to ensure order in the sector and that it was important to create awareness on ethical principles through training, workshops and seminars as well as greater collaboration between journalism schools, practitioners, regulators and policy makers to ensure compliance. In addition, teaching of the Code of Ethics should be mandatory as a stand-alone subject in journalism schools. This corroborates what Ochieng et.al (2014) found out in their study that a section of the media in Kenya appeared apathetic to adhering to the ethical principles and therefore the need for greater enforcement (P.26)

Lack of resources emerged as the weakest link in the alternative media and should be addressed to ensure compliance with ethical principles. The respondents suggested that a fund should be set up to finance the sector including the alternative media to enable them survive and operate within the law. This is further buttressed by Ongowo (2011) study that cited commercial pressures to increase circulation as the reason behind pushing ethical limits (P.27). This is basically a struggle to survive by the alternative media which compromises objectivity.

This study revealed that media capture by various sectors was one of the emerging issues which had forced the media to abandon its cardinal duty of being the watchdog of society and which needs urgent attention. It also emerged that corruption is rife in the alternative media and undermined the objective treatment of content. This is the same finding that Ochieng et.al (2014) arrived at that is; regardless of the existing Code of Conduct, unethical media practices have been noted which among other things include corruption which this study agrees with.

5.4 Conclusion

This study focused on examining the application of journalistic principle of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers in Kenya, The Weekly Citizen and The Sun Weekly drawn from the alternative media. Three questions in this research were posed as follows; (i) what is the status of ethical principles in the practice of journalism at the two newspapers representing the alternative media (ii) what is the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers and finally (iii) how are the challenges in the application of objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism addressed by the practitioners. These issues arose out of criticisms that have persisted among them that

objectivity as an ethical principle is alien in the practice of journalism in the alternative media despite the genre finding acceptance among media content consumers. Such criticisms are not misplaced as Nyabuga (2017) observed that there were concerns that the media in Kenya was not objective, impartial and that their reports were not balanced warning that such a blemish on key journalistic tenets or principles meant that people start to look at the media with suspicion. This was collaborated by Mbeke, Ugangu and Okello-Orlale (2010) with their argument that Kenyans wanted a professionally run media that promotes respect and adhere to the fundamental principles and global standards of journalism practice, a media that promotes professional behaviour in newsrooms and respect for the Code of Ethics.

In regard to question one, data collected through in-depth interviews revealed that practitioners were aware of the ethical principles for the practice of journalism emphasizing that objectivity guides the practice and the manner practitioners were supposed to undertake their practice. But despite the high awareness, breaches to adherence still occur in the alternative media due to deliberate actions, the sector not founded on values that underpin and misconceptions.

The second question sought to establish the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism by the newspapers and revealed that no media is objective either in Kenya or elsewhere, that the term was ambiguous, pretentious, subjective and altogether unattainable. Objectivity was therefore found to be something that practitioners should not be obsessed with. What was important for the media was to stick to facts, fairness and right of reply which are the key tenets that underpin journalism. The goal of this question was therefore attained.

On the challenges facing the application of objectivity by the practitioners and the way to tackle them as outlined in question three, what came out was that it was important to enforce the ethical issues while creating awareness on the same among practitioners to ensure order in the profession. Lack of resources, corruption and media capture by various actors needed to be addressed while the alternative media has a future and will continue to thrive not necessarily in the form they are now. The aim of this question was therefore achieved.

The main contribution of this study is first and foremost to academia because it has narrowed the knowledge gap that currently exists on a single ethical journalistic issue like objectivity and open up debate in this area. The knowledge gap was ably identified by Ochieng et.al (2014) who established that there was very little research on adherence to a single ethical principle because media houses were not investing in research of that kind.

The outcomes of this study will also be important to policy makers in our country now that it has identified the setting up of a fund to finance media outlets in distress especially those in the alternative media. They occupy an important space in this country and therefore should be assisted to thrive and operate overboard. The setting up of this fund should be now be a priority now that its necessity has been established through an empirical study.

The findings of this study are important to students of journalism, scholars and researchers in communication who would wish to undertake a study in any other single ethical journalistic issue because it will be useful in assisting them to identify areas for further research.

5.5 Recommendations

This study in line with question one has revealed awareness on ethical principles for the practice of journalism is high among practitioners although there are gaps in adherence with the alternative media breaching the same. In this regard, the researcher recommends that the directive by the regulator MCK that all those engaged in media work be trained on ethical principles for the practice of journalism before they are accredited be strictly enforced to ensure greater compliance. In addition, the curriculum offered by journalism schools and colleges should be harmonised with an emphasis on the Code of Ethics as a stand-alone subject to clear the confusion with the media law course

As regards the place of objectivity as an ethical principle in the practice of journalism, the study revealed that no media is objective either in Kenya or elsewhere and that objectivity is not something practitioners should be obsessed with. The researcher therefore recommends that the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism be revised periodically to factor in new knowledge and advances in the discipline.

On the challenges facing the application of objectivity by the practitioners as outlined in question three, it was revealed it was important to enforce the ethical issues while creating awareness on the same among practitioners to ensure order in the profession. Lack of resources, corruption and media capture by various actors were identified as the weakest link that needed to be addressed. Despite all this, the alternative media has a future and will continue to thrive not necessarily in the form they are now. The researcher concurs with the respondents that a fund be set up to support media outfits in distress especially those in the alternative media segment. Corruption in the sector

should be dealt with within the rules and guidelines at the media houses and in line with the laws of the land.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This research was about the application of the single journalistic principal of objectivity in the two newspapers representing the alternative media. As Ochieng et al. (2014) confirms there is very little research on adherence to specific ethical principles in this country because the media institutions concentrate more on the bottom line and are reluctant to invest in any research. They further confirm the little research there is involve the whole spectrum of ethical issues and not specifically on a single ethical issue. From the foregoing, although this study will go a long way in availing empirical evidence on objectivity and its applicability in the alternative media, it is hardly enough to fill the knowledge gap that currently exists. It would therefore be valuable to know whether similar results would be achieved if another research would focus on the same ethical principle and whether it would yield similar results. During the interviews, new issues emerged that have impacted on the adherence to objectivity. One of the issues was the media capture by various actors and especially media owners whom respondents accused of influencing content. Their personal interests, the respondents said overrides values that underpin journalism. This is a weighty matter which needs further exploration. The researcher would recommend studies be conducted on the subject of the media capture by these actors.

Another matter that came up in this study is the relevance of the training offered by journalism schools. This is critical at a time when the regulator, the MCK has demanded training is mandatory for one to be accredited to practice in the country. What emerged was that there was a marked difference between what the regulator recommends and

what journalism schools were offering. It would therefore be interesting to conduct a research in the area of training and its relevance.

Finally, setting up of a fund to assist media outlets in distress was another issue that came up in this study. The study recommends a study on how the fund would be financed and how the resources will be distributed to the media houses to assist them survive and desist from engaging in malpractices.

REFERENCES

- Atton, C. (Ed) (2015). *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Media and Community Media*. New York: Routledge
- AWC & FES. (2005). *For Better or For Worse? Impact of the Code of Conduct on Journalism Ethics in Kenya*. Nairobi: Sunbust Communications.
- Bakare, S.A. (2013). *Rethinking Notion of Journalism Ethics in the Reportage of 2008 Xenophobic Attacks: The Case of Sowetan and Daily Sun Newspapers*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, W.J. (2014). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Dogu, B. (2015). Comparing Online Alternative and Mainstream Media in Turkey. Coverage of the TEKEL Workers Protest Against Privatization. *International Journal of Communication* 9,630-651.
- GOK (2012). *Building a Working and Caring Nation; Mwai Kibaki & the Transformation of Kenya*. Nairobi. GOK.
- Jwan, O. J & Ong'ondo, O. C. (2011). *Qualitative Research. An Introduction to Principles and Techniques*. Eldoret: Moi University Press.
- Jwan, J and Ong'ondo, C. (2020). *Qualitative Research Process. From Conceptualisation to Examination*. Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Kadhi, J. (2012). *Avoiding Another Bloodbath in Kisumu: The Media Role*. Kisumu USIU.
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Education. A User's Guide* (3rd Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Little John, S.W., & Foss, K.A. (Eds) (2010). *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Maras, S. (2013). *Objectivity in Journalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Mbeke, O. P; Ugangu, W., & Okello-Orlale, R. (2010). *The Media We Want. The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study*. Nairobi: FES.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuails Mass Communication Theory* (6th ed.). Amsterdam. Sage Publications.

- Media Council of Kenya. (2013). *Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya*. Nairobi. Retrieved Nov 18, 2017 from www.mediacouncil.or.ke.
- Munoz-Torres, J.R. (2012). Truth and Objectivity in Journalism, *Journalism Studies* 566-582 Retrieved Nov 18, 2017 from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2012.662401>.
- Nyabuga, G. (2011). *Demystifying the Alternative in Alternative Media: Beyond Mainstream Conversations on Alternative Media*. Nyeri: UON
- Nyabuga, G. (2017). Are Media in Kenya Facing a Crisis of Trust? The Standard Retrieved Nov. 17, 2017 <<http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001247729/are-media-in-kenya-facing-a-crisis-of-trust?>
- Ochieng, K.R., Gachoka, T., & Mureithi, S. (2014). *Ethical Journalism. The Case of the Code of Conduct in the Kenyan Media*. Nairobi. USIU.
- Ongowo, J.O. (2011). Ethics of Investigative Journalism: A Study of a Tabloid and a Quality Newspaper in Kenya. Leeds: University of Leeds, Institute of Communication Studies. Retrieved July 29, 2018 <media.leeds.ac.uk/files/2011/12/jim-ongowo.pdf.
- Sonnemaker. T. (2015). Objectivity and the Role of Journalism in Democratic Societies. CMK Senior Thesis Paper 1057.
- Udomisor, I. W; & Udoh, A. P. (2015). Professional Demand of Objectivity and its Effect on Media Objectivity in Conflict Management in Journalism. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 3, 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/1jc.2015.31001>.
- Yin, K.R. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Yin, K.R. (2014). *Case Study Research. Design and Methods (5th Ed)*. London: Sage Publications.
- (2015, July- September). At a Crossroads: Media & The Ethical Minefield. *The Media Observer* p.17.
- (2015, July- September). Is Objectivity Shifting to a False Promise? *The Media Observer* P.41.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Participants

This informed consent is for you as a participant whom am inviting to take part in this study titled **“Objectivity as an Ethical Principle in the Practice of Journalism in the Alternative Media: The Case of Two Newspapers in Kenya”**

Am a postgraduate student at Moi University pursuing a Master of Science degree in Communication and Journalism. This study is geared towards the partial fulfilment of my degree course

PART 1: Information Sheet

Introduction

My study is aimed at examining the concept of objectivity as an ethical journalism issue, its appreciation and application by the two newspapers representing the alternative media. I invite you to be part of this noble cause and be part of creating knowledge on this topic.

Purpose of the Research

The media is at crossroads with criticisms that it has abandoned its cardinal duty of being the watchdog of society. As a result, some quarters are of the view the media especially the alternative media does not adhere to the code of ethics the sum-total of which is objectivity. I therefore invite you to take part in this study by sharing your experience and expertise in the subject.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in an in-depth interview to share your experience and expertise in this subject.

Participant Selection

You have been selected to participate in this study as a result of your vast knowledge and knowhow on matters related to the media as a practitioner, trainer, regulator, representative of the journalism fraternity and consumer of the media content including the alternative media. Based on the above, it is believed you will enrich the study through your involvement in this endeavour.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to determine whether to participate even with prior agreement to do so.

Procedure

You are at liberty to share only what you are comfortable with. You can choose not answer any or part of the questions posed.

Duration

The collection of data through the interviews is envisaged to take 12 months. The number of visits will be determined on a needs-based case.

Risks

There is no defined risk envisaged in this study save for you may share personal experiences or confidential information that on a second thought you may not be comfortable with. In the latter case, you have the liberty to bring this to my attention and express your desire on how such information should be treated in which case I promise to respect your opinion.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you as a person but your participation will go a long way in creating knowledge that will be useful in understanding the concept of objectivity

Confidentiality

The interview will take place at a place of your choice which does not draw attention to you as a participant. I will not share information about you outside of the research team. The information gathered will strictly be for the purpose of this study and can only be shared with my supervisors.

Sharing of the Results

I will share a copy of the final findings to NACOSTI as required by law making it accessible by any interested party. The research results may also be used by my university, my university lecturers and the journalistic fraternity.

I have read the information contained in this document, understood the content therein and voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study:

Name of Participant.....

Signature of Participant:.....

Date.....

**Appendix B: In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Guide for The Editor and
Staff of The Weekly Citizen and The Sun Weekly**

<p>Climate Setting Questions</p> <p>Introductions: Tell me a bit about yourself. Introduce self.</p>
<p>Questions</p>
<p>(a). What would you say entails ethical principles in Journalism?</p> <p>Probes:</p> <p>Are you aware of any ethical principles in journalism?</p> <p>What would you say is the difference between a professional journalist and a non-professional?</p> <p>How is the practice of journalism in alternative media different from other media houses?</p> <p>Do you think it is important to observe journalistic ethical principles?</p>
<p>(b). How do you gather and report news?</p> <p>Probes:</p> <p>Do the practices of journalism here meet professional expectations?</p> <p>How does it meet those expectations?</p> <p>Are you well versed with the ethics of journalism as enshrined in the Media Council of Kenya Code of Conduct for practice of Journalism in Kenya?</p> <p>Do you factor in ethics in gathering and filing of stories?</p> <p>Would you mention some of those ethical principles you consider while gathering and filing of stories?</p>

(c). How do you ensure your stories adhere to objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism?

Probes:

Do you exercise neutrality in gathering and filing of stories?

How do you ensure the stories are fair/ balanced?

How do you ensure there is no prejudice in the stories filed?

How do you guard against injecting personal opinions in a story?

Do the alternative media which you represent observe the ethics of journalism?

**Appendix C: In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Journalists' Rep,
Correspondents Rep, Scholar, Independent and Regulator.**

1. Generally, what is your view about journalism practice in Kenya? Do you think the practice of journalism in Kenya meets professional standards?
2. What is your view about the Code of Conduct for the practice of journalism in Kenya? Would you say journalists in Kenya observe the Code of Conduct?
3. How do you rate the media in Kenya in respecting or adhering to ethical principles in the practice of journalism?
4. What challenges that would make it difficult for the media in Kenya to adhere to ethical principles of Journalism?
5. How would you describe objectivity as an ethical principle in journalism? Is objectivity an issue in the practice of journalism in Kenya?
6. What is your view about the so-called alternative media in Kenya? Do you think the alternative media is objective in its gathering and reporting of news?
7. What do you think are the challenges facing the alternative media in adhering/ not adhering to objectivity in their practice
8. Any other thoughts? Your final comments on this subject?
9. Briefly tell me about yourself?

Appendix D: Sample Transcript of In-Depth Interview

Researcher: Am a master's student at Moi University. Am undertaking research on the application of objectivity as an ethical principle for the practice of journalism in the alternative media. We start by you telling me about yourself in terms of your background and your experience in the media?

R8: I started journalism at *Nation*, *The EA* then I moved to *Expression Today* as assistant editor then I moved to the *Standard* for several years where I was on the investigations desk and became the investigations editor, then I went back to *Expressions Today*, then I got into the world of research, am currently a researcher and I do basically what journalists do, collecting information, write reports and press statements and all that. And also, being the spokesperson here, I do a lot of media work but most importantly have also researched on the freedom of expression in Kenya for the last five years.

Researcher: Generally, with such a background, what is your view about journalism practice in Kenya?

R8: Comparatively, if you look at Africa, you will say the media in Kenya is generally doing well, is more vibrant, it's a little more professional than most African countries apart from South Africa where the media is more advanced and I think Nigeria, the media is not bad, is fairly advanced so once you eliminate these two countries, Kenya would come after those two countries or may be alongside Nigeria. Even in terms of their financial capital outlay, the media in Kenya is financially strong than say the media in Congo or Zimbabwe or other countries.

Researcher: You could give me some details now that you have said the alternative media is getting acceptance. Just what is your view about the alternative media in Kenya.....?

R8: The alternative media as we know it in Kenya is not exactly the alternative media that is in more advanced countries where the media is more developed. There, I think there is some level of decency, is not driven so much by bribery even though they are still referred to as yellow because they don't go through a rigorous process of verifying their information and once the media fails to verify its information once or twice and people come to learn that what they were saying is not exactly true, it begins to fall down the pecking order, people begin to refer to it as alternative but then, it doesn't necessarily mean people are not paid well, people are taking bribes or people are publishing stories on the basis of who they know or who has talked to them well, just that they do not go through a rigorous process. In Kenya, the alternative media has come to be perceived as doing the hatchet job for anyone who can pay and because of that they lost out a bit otherwise I think they had space, they had the opportunity because people felt that the mainstream media was not covering exactly what they wanted and had it just practiced a bit of professionalism and tried to source not in the manner in which they source stories, tried to source those stories in a more balanced way, I think they would be doing much better even than the mainstream media, they would have claimed that market left by the mainstream media but because of those deficiencies I think the social media is claiming that market.

Researcher: We chose for ourselves self-regulation and primarily self-regulation is about the code of ethics for the practice of journalism. You talked of the alternative media not being professional and do not adhere to the code of ethics. Give me your views first of all, your view of the code of ethics and secondly if they (alternative media) are not professional, why is it that they don't find it easy to stick to professionalism?

R8: The issue is the regulation. The regulation mechanism seems to be more focused on the mainstream media and the willing. You see even the way the MCK operates, is either you are registered with us or you are not so the registration is and the regulation is based on those who have registered. Those who have not registered, I don't think they have a way of enforcing the code on those who have not registered and what the alternative press has done, their journalists are simply not registered, the media houses that are publishing whatever they are publishing have simply not subjected themselves to the authority of the MCK so they don't even pay what they are supposed to pay to the MCK. So, because of that they are operating in some sort of a vacuum and in that vacuum that either the regulation has not thought of how to fill or it was not thought through during the enactment of the MCK Act, it follows that those who operate there will try to exploit that vacuum and do some unwelcome things. But the problem is more than that vacuum. It is also a question of the management, the structures, the pay. So, you saw when *the People* was not paying staff, when there was no proper salary structure and regularity of payments, predictability of payments was not there, the *People* staff were just taking money left, right and centre. We would talk to the staff there and they would say, we haven't received our money for the last 9 months, so a good number of the media houses in the alternative media are like that and the staff have to find a way of surviving so if you can pitch a story to somebody and tell him I

have this dossier on you and the person agrees to pay, you go and pay your rent, pay your school fees.

Another vacuum is the way they have managed their financial capital and the lacuna that exists because of the law and the regulation and also the practice, the environment generally, is that there is corruption in the media so it is not just in the alternative media. It's now an open secret that journalists in the mainstream media are taking bribes but this is not, is sort of suppressed, people do not want to offend the mainstream media but they are willing to talk about the alternative because they can get away with it and also because of those loopholes I have talked about , the way the people in the alternative do it so brazen, so open that now people also take that room to talk about it but I don't think they are doing anything different than what I have seen happen in the mainstream media so it's a corrupt environment but they are doing it more openly than the others.

Researcher: In a nutshell based on what you have told me, do you think these alternative media is ever objective?

R8: No, they are not and I don't think they can because no media is objective at all. Objectivity is not possible because objectivity gets compromised at the point where you decide this is the story we want to run and this is the story we do not want to run, we are going to spike out. So even at that point you make a decision to choose one against the other kills objectivity. The point at which you decide this is how we want to frame this story, so we want to bring this point up and we want to emphasize, we want to take this slant kills that objectivity so there is no objectivity at all, not even in Kenya, not even in the world. You hear us Africans complaining about the way the western media covers Africans is bad. It is like that for any story.

Researcher: Let's try to define it basically/contextualize the word objectivity.

Facts, not biased, right of reply, no personal opinion, truthful?

R8: The truth is not all the alternative media reports is false. A lot of those stories were supposed to be in mainstream but because of other interests, it was passed to them. So, there is some truth in it. The problem is how they anchor the story, how they frame it.....so they don't try to go for balance and some level of trying to authenticate and verify information. They don't unlike the mainstream media Because of that there are things they publish which are not truthful. They are things they publish that are truthful. The level of verification of information is lower, the standards are lower than the mainstream media. I don't want to talk about objectivity for the reasons I have given but I will talk about balance and truthfulness in that manner.

Researcher: Giving sources a right of reply according to the alternative media is the problem in Kenya. They say this is compromising the story?

R8: No, it is not compromising. I don't agree that that is compromising. You will have to ask yourself whether what you are writing is true.... I think it is reasonable to say/ bounce whatever accusations to the accused. To me, that is not compromising, it is getting the other side of the story. Everything has the other side of the story. You never know, it may be a business quarrel....verification is a must whether you are in the mainstream or alternative media and that is where the so-called alternative media out there does better than ours here.... Ours (alternative) is purely rumours which sometimes turns out to be true, sometime you can't be sure it is true. For me, I think giving the other side equal opportunity to respond is a must which the alternative here does not want to.

Appendix E: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent

Am a postgraduate student in the School of Information Sciences pursuing a Master of Science degree in Communication and Journalism. As part of my partial fulfilment of my degree course, I am conducting a research on the application of objectivity as an ethical principle for the practice of journalism in the alternative media.

I kindly request for your time to collect data through face-to-face in-depth interview. The information collected will be treated with care and you have a choice to determine whether your name should be mentioned in this research.

Your assistance in facilitating the same will be highly appreciated. Thank you in advance


Yours faithfully,

.....

Nzioka Patrick Kilonzo

Appendix F: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: **Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/37224/24760**
MR. PATRICK KILONZO NZIOKA **Date Of Issue : 15th September, 2018**
of MOI UNIVERSITY , 456-90131 **Fee Received :Ksh 1000**
TALA, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County
on the topic: APPLICATION OF THE
JOURNALISTIC ETHICAL PRINCIPLE OF
OBJECTIVITY : A CASE OF THE WEEKLY
CITIZEN NEWSPAPER
for the period ending:
13th September, 2019



Patrick Kilonzo Nzioka
Applicant's Signature

Samuel Mwangi
Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

Appendix G: Letter from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/37224/24760**

Date: **15th September, 2018**

Patrick Kilonzo Nzioka
Moi University
P O Box 3900-30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Application of the journalistic ethical principle of objectivity : A case of the weekly citizen newspaper*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **13th September, 2019**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County

Appendix H: Letter from University



MOI UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

Tel. 053-43720, 43620, 43231(Dean)
3900, 30100
Fax No. 053-43047,43360
Telex No. MOIVERSITY 35047
Email: deanis@mu.ac.ke, sis.admiin@outlook.com

P.O. Box
Eldoret
Kenya

Our Ref: MU/NRB/SIS/SA/24

10th August, 2018

THE SECRETARY/CEO,
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PATRICK K. NZIOKA - SHR/P/006/16

The above named person is a bona fide student of Moi University, School of Information Sciences, pursuing a Master of Science degree in Communication and Journalism.

Mr. Nzioka has requested for a research permit to allow him collect data for his Thesis entitled: *Application of the Journalistic Ethical Principle of Objectivity: A Case of the Weekly Citizen Newspaper*. We support his application.

Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.


EVANS MUNGE
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES
NAIROBI PROGRAMME COORDINATOR.
EM/cro.

Appendix I: Plagiarism Certificate

SR208



ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution

EDU 999 THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

NZIOKA PATRICK KILONZO

SHRD/PGJ/006/16

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for the thesis APPLICATION OF OBJECTIVITY AS AN ETHICAL PRINCIPLE IN THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALISM IN THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA: THE CASE OF TWO NEWSPAPERS IN KENYA with a similarity index of 10% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Awarded by:

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu
CERM-ESA Project Leader Date: 27/06/2023