

**GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: A
STUDY OF TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA**

BY

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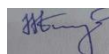
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family.

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, there has been a surge in the growth of independent media, fuelled by greater democratic gains and advances in technology. This exponential growth and free operational space have put pressure on the media to develop effective media cultures and practices. Arising from this background, this study investigated gatekeeping at KTN and NTV television stations in Kenya. The following research questions guided the study: What is the role of gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?; How does gatekeeping manifest in live television talk shows in Kenya?; What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya? The research was guided by the Gatekeeping theory and the Social Responsibility Theory. The qualitative research approach was chosen for this study and the research method was a multiple case study. Purposive sampling was used to pick 12 television journalists working as producers, editors and show hosts as participants for the study. In-depth interviews were held with the participants and the data generated was analysed using thematic analysis and presented in narrative form. The findings revealed that gatekeeping in live television talk shows is used to manage content and to ensure only ethical and quality content is broadcasted to the public. Gatekeeping is also used to prevent misinformation and as a tool to protect the image of the media house. The study also found that the gatekeeping practice manifests in live talk shows through external censorship, self-censorship, fact-checking, disclaimers by show hosts and the use of delay technology. Further, the participants were of the view that even though gatekeeping was instrumental in live television talk shows, it was hampered by a lack of appropriate technology, inadequate training, and unethical gatekeeping practices. Even more, participants stated that gatekeeping was practised haphazardly, without clear, agreed-upon policies and procedures. Therefore, newsroom managers need to develop effective policies and guidelines that ensure the gatekeeping practices create trust between audiences and media organisations. There is a need for media managers to upscale gatekeepers' skills through regular training and investing in research and innovation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MCK	Media Council of Kenya
CA	Communications Authority of Kenya
KTN	Kenya Television Network
NTV	Nation Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
TV	Television
CNN	Cable News Network
DRC	Democratic Republic Congo
KBC	Kenya British Corporation
FM	Frequency modulation
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Television
DTH	Direct to Home
JKL	Jeff Koinange Live

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Gatekeeping It is the process of selecting, writing, editing, shaping, manipulation, repetition, localization, disregarding and channelling information.

Talk Show In this research, a talk show is operationalised as a live television show in which various topics are discussed by guests, where the host provokes and moderates the discussion to enhance the value of the talk.

Discussants: Discussants are all participants in the talk shows, including talk show hosts, resident analysts, and guests.

Censorship: The supervision and control of the information and ideas circulated among the people within a society. In modern times, censorship refers to examining books, periodicals, plays, films, television and radio programs, news reports, and other communication media to alter or suppress parts thought to be objectionable or offensive.

Self-censorship: The act or action of refraining from expressing something (such as a thought, point of view, or belief) that others could deem objectionable.

Disclaimer: A formal statement saying that you are not legally responsible for something such as information given in a book or on the internet or that you have no direct involvement in it

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The current chapter provides the background of the study, highlighting the statement of the, the study objectives, research questions, scope of the study, and the rationale of the study

1.1 Background of the Study

This study examined gatekeeping in Live Television (TV) talk shows in Kenya. The researcher investigated the role of gatekeeping in the talk shows, how gatekeeping manifests in the shows, and the perception of journalists on the gatekeeping role in the TV stations.

This study is of interest because gatekeeping was a global concept of interest in media studies (Kiraguri, 2015). With the need to have reliable and accurate information disseminated to the public through news media, discussions surrounding the effective use of gatekeeping in the news were becoming more topical issues among scholars and other areas of application in live TV productions, including new areas such as the live TV talk shows which is the focus of this study.

TV Talk programs are a staple of regular worldwide television broadcasts and a topical issue in media studies. For example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) presented a live television program titled The Venessa Show as early as 1999 (Tolson, 2001). The show rified extensively on controversies. The largest incident was two so-called "feuding sisters" who had intentionally been recruited by an entertainment

agency. This generated concerns about the channel's credibility, leading to accusations that it promotes false news. As a result of the development of technology and the growth of television channels, television talk shows have grown worldwide (Zein, Silalahi, & Yusuf, 2021). Scholars continue to suggest that television shows seek to influence social realities, attract, and maintain audiences. In doing so, television stations are accused of violating cultural norms, redefining deviance, and frequently removing certain social barriers, inhibitions, and cultural distinctions from their content (Abt & Seesholtz, 1994, p. 171). These perspectives on television programs have led to lobby of censorship measures to ensure that the content transmitted to the viewers is appropriate and adheres to societal norms.

The concept of media gatekeeping has been examined extensively on a global scale (Tolson, 2001). The concept of gatekeeping comprises the selection of information based on its level of relevance and interest, as well as the determination of how much information must be disclosed or broadcast (Shabir et al., 2015, p. 589). Media gatekeepers correct pertinent information after classifying it according to the order of their requirement. The information from essential themes, controversial problems, and topical news items has a higher propensity to be prioritized since it is more likely to gain momentum than the news that might result in a loss of interest. The notion of the practice dates to 1943, when Kurt Zedek Lewin introduced it in research. Lewin was an influential German psychologist and social psychology pioneer at the time. His study largely centred on how wants and objectives interact to form a person's environment. Lewin conducted research with midwestern housewives during the second world war to determine how to successfully alter their food intake throughout the war. The researcher was aware that for food to get from the grocery store to the dinner table, there must be several decision-making procedures, and the food must pass through gatekeepers who

made various home decisions. David Manning developed the concept further whilst White, a friend and colleague of Lewin and a student of Wilbur Schramm, examined the criteria an editor considers when choosing which news piece to publish (Bro & Wallberg, 2014). White asserted that the Source-Message-Receiver model has become predominate in the media and is consistent with the channel theory of gatekeeping. Media gatekeeping is crucial. When determining which news items to publish or broadcast, news agencies and newspapers adhere to a code of ethics and set of guidelines. From a reporter determining which sources to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed or covered to media outlet owners and even advertisers, gatekeeping happens at all levels of the media hierarchy (Shabir et al., 2015). Individuals can also serve as gatekeepers, selecting which information to post in their blogs or emails.

There is a growing interest to study gatekeeping to comprehend its applicability to the considerably evolving forms of content in legacy media and digital platforms (Boberg et al., 2018). Rusdi & Rusdi, (2020) states that with the development of technology and media, gatekeeping had developed; thus, a study must be performed on the idea of gatekeeping considering its shifting application areas. The employment of gatekeeping in live talk programs is a topic that had gained much interest. As the audience got more engaged through live comments, live television chat programs developed dramatically (Ichiki et al., 2018). Considering the absence of stringent control in live commentary, methods must be implemented to ensure that information shared with the public is filtered.

Furthermore, gatekeeping is vital in television discussion shows since television programs have a worldwide impact on themes and concerns (Shoemaker, 2020).

According to studies, producers of live television prefer to avoid contentious questions from audiences that may offend the ruling class of society and government, therefore acting as gatekeepers by supervising chat shows. In a study of how western discussion programs on BBC and CNN depicted Islam and Muslims, Hayat and Wahab (2016) found that the media departed from the conventional rhetoric of depicting Muslims and Islam as terrorists and instead focused on the geopolitical shifts that these regions are facing. This shift has been attributed to the screening procedure employed by these western television chat shows. Nonetheless, Sharifi et al. have presented this reasoning (2017). They suggested that western media discussion programs were on a campaign to distort all Muslim-related matters in a prejudiced, stereotyped manner. The majority of the time, the scope of the discussion programs was consistent with enduring Islamophobic views in the western media. Given the lack of consensus on gatekeeping given in the two studies, it is essential to analyze the function of gatekeeping on television discussion programs.

In Africa, there has been a proliferation of talk shows often focusing on different and varied societal issues (Sarfo-Adu & Cynthia, 2021). However, these shows are often affected by the level of democratic maturity in the specific nation. South Africa has the highest number of talk shows compared to other African states, with over 15 television stations with an estimated viewership of 36.2 million. Seven million citizens are interested in various talk shows (Srinivasan & Diepeveen, 2018). Other countries with more television talk shows include Nigeria, Ghana, and Botswana, with over ten talk shows across different television stations. Besides, these talk shows are from 30 per cent of all live shows, including news coverage. Agbaglo et al. (2021) indicate that in less democratic states with suppression of press freedom, like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Rwanda, Tunisia, and South Sudan, it is difficult to have

discussions freely, and the gatekeeping process has been termed to appease the government. From the local context, significant strides have been made to promote media freedom. The country has revolutionized information sharing through television talk shows such as Kenya Television Network (KTN), Royal Media Services (RMS), Nation Television (NTV), and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), among others. Most television talk shows in the country occur either early in the morning or late evening. The evening talk shows often focus on civic and political issues, while morning shows address issues relating to current affairs and health (Sobel Cohen & McIntyre, 2019). In most Kenyan television stations, there is more than one live talk show that attempts to address specific issues, with the majority being health and political agenda.

1.2 The Kenyan Context

The media landscape in Kenya has evolved significantly since the pre-colonial period (Ogola, 2009). Ochilo (1993), in his dissertation titled *Press freedom and the role of the media in Kenya*, indicate that the modern media, as witnessed in the Kenyan context, was a creation of missionaries, immigrants, and colonial administrators as the chief actors. Further, Kadhi et al. (2001) postulated that the early broadcast programs in Kenya intended to serve settlers. Following the self-rule in 1964, the clamour for media freedom, including media ownership and development, began to take shape as they were under colonial rule. In 1959 the KBC was established by the British colonial administration to facilitate television and radio broadcasting. However, following the country's independence up to the 1990s, the radio and television primarily operated in a restrictive political environment (Onguny, 2021).

Nairobi's privately held Kenya Television Network was granted a license in late 1989, after which the airwaves were eventually liberalized. The government liberalized the airwaves by awarding broadcasting licences and licenses to several private firms beginning in the mid-1990s. Additionally, it permitted international radio stations to operate within the country. The liberalization of the airwaves has resulted in a revolution in broadcasting, with many television stations now serving as forums for information and public discourse. Citizens discuss subjects they deem significant, such as government. According to Nothias and Cheruiyot (2019), there has been a boom in media outlets in recent years, allowing individuals to enjoy a range of television channels and engage in public discourse. According to the Communication Authority of Kenya (CA, 2021), there are more than 130 FM Free Air television stations. The radio stations consist of 186 on the FM band wave, with 131 commercial FM radio, 13 public FM, and 42 Community FM stations. In addition, the number of subscribers to broadcasting services increased to over 6 million in the current quarter of 2022. Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), Direct Home (DTH), and cable TV subscribers amounted to 41,000,000, 1,500,000, and 8,377, respectively.

In recent years, talk shows have expanded beyond radio and television to include internet-based live programming. As the number of media outlets in Kenya has increased, talk shows have grown more prevalent, notably in the radio and television debate of public opinion on a variety of themes, from personal troubles and family connections to bigger social and political problems and concerns (Mulinya, 2018).

Many stations broadcast talk shows at any time of day, but to enhance viewing, they are frequently aired during prime time. This supports Klein's (2014) claim that the increasing popularity of live television programs suggests that the world has accepted

the concept and that its efficacy in conveying the message is far greater than that of recorded movies and documentaries. With a weekly audience of 9.1 percent during watersheds, discussion shows ranked fourth on the list of local programming categories, according to the CA (2021b). The weekly average for religious programming was 40 percent, followed by music programming at 21.9 percent and features at 9.9 percent. Sports, comedy, and drama got the lowest local ratings. The survey indicates that the performance of discussion shows climbs by 11,3 percent during prime time, placing them in fourth place after religious material, music, and features, respectively.

Generally, the audience in the Kenyan media relies on the traditional news media as a source of information, especially when it comes to hard news and talk shows that capture topical matters affecting the citizenry, such as politics, economics, health, and security. TV stations in Kenya conduct live interviews, live discussion shows, debates, and live talk shows as forms of broadcast talk. Some talk shows are argumentative; others are not (Kamau, 2017). However, there are dissenting opinions concerning these talk shows among the audiences. While some perceive that the Kenyan media talk shows, be it radio or television, are accurate and observe gatekeeping, some believe that some Kenyan media are unprofessional. According to them, these media do not consider ethics while running these programs. While examining the professionalism of Kenyan digital media, Nyakwara's (2020) research highlighted two significant points: first, the arrogance of media owners and gatekeepers. The respondents asserted that the majority of them (media) are owned by journalists who disregard journalistic ethics. Since some individuals are primarily motivated by money, "poison" news can be easily ignored. Second, the hiring of unskilled labour, whereby some media proprietors hire low-wage workers who are not trained to be journalists, so long as they know how to write or speak on a talk show.

Further, the above assertions explain why audiences have more complaints concerning the quality of talk shows on television. In Kenya, most television shows tend to host highly profiled individuals, especially politicians who engage in discussions coordinated by a single moderator with experience. However, since most audiences believe in these talk shows as a source of information, any remark made during the talk show session is more likely bound to impact how the audience will perceive things. Some politicians find it difficult to contain themselves and end up using vulgar language or making slanderous statements which, in turn, is believed they often get away with. This is in tandem with Islam's (2012) study that illustrated the ineffective methods used globally to undertake gatekeeping. Her findings showed that the dominant class of society dominates the talk show and gets more space in talk shows. Further, she revealed that, during the live talk show, producers avoid the audience's questions, which discontents the power class.

As live talk shows gain popularity, the content disseminated by these shows needs to be moderated. The concept of gatekeeping becomes a key for live talk shows to ensure that only ethical content is communicated to the public and that all other media regulations are observed. Due to their participatory nature, they provide a venue that "reconnects" media and individuals to form and mobilize public opinion on topics that impact them. As a result, they are a popular technique for influencing public opinion and have established themselves as a genre that is still poorly understood. Therefore, robust gatekeeping methods are required for live television chat shows. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate in further depth why gatekeeping is essential for Kenyan discussion shows. Considering how difficult it may be to implement gatekeeping in a dynamic, interactive live presentation, this is especially true. The live show happens

with discussants and hosts who can raise some aspects that might be difficult to address during the show (Owill, Chege, Awiti, & Orwa, 2020).

Live TV talk shows in Kenya are many. Most discuss politics and governance issues, and a few discuss other matters, including health, agriculture, and technology. Examples of these talk show on various TV stations in Kenya include Opinion court, Jeff Koinange Live (JKL), and The Big question on Citizen TV; Checkpoint on KTN, The Trend, SideBar, PressPass and AM Live on NTV, and Evening Edition and Breakfast show on K24 but to mention a few (Mwai, Maroko, Orwenjo, & Ogutu, 2024). Hence, this research on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya is timely and relevant.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of technology has significantly impacted media and television worldwide, leading to the expansion of independent media outlets. However, this increase in media platforms has not been accompanied by a corresponding development of robust media cultures and practices (Nothias & Cheruiyot, 2019). A key issue that has emerged is ineffective gatekeeping, particularly in live television talk shows, where the lack of proper oversight has been linked to the spread of hate speech during sensitive periods, such as elections. For instance, the electioneering period in Kenya saw the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) implement stringent policies to curb hate speech on media platforms (Bowman & Bowman, 2016). Highly contested elections have often resulted in political intolerance, with commentators blaming the Kenyan media for creating a toxic political atmosphere by failing to maintain high professional standards, including effective gatekeeping (Maweu, 2022; Odanga, 2022).

While the media plays a critical role in informing the public on contemporary issues, it must do so responsibly, ensuring that the information reaching audiences is well-filtered. Gatekeeping is crucial in shaping media content, yet it has been less effective in live television talk shows, which dominate Kenyan airwaves. Unlike pre-recorded programmes, where content can be carefully reviewed and edited, live talk shows present unique challenges due to their real-time nature. The fast-paced, unfiltered interactions with guests and audiences leave little room for error, and hosts often struggle to maintain control of the narrative and prevent inappropriate content from airing. Additionally, modern technology enables real-time audience engagement, which can introduce further difficulties in moderating discussions effectively.

McCombs and Guo (2014) emphasise the importance of the media in informing the public about critical issues, such as economic developments. However, in Kenya, live TV talk shows have been accused of advancing biased political narratives, often favouring certain agendas. Reese and Ballinger (2001) highlight that viewers are often unaware of how content is selected or excluded, leading to perceptions of bias and partiality. This lack of transparency in gatekeeping has sparked criticism and raised concerns about the quality and impartiality of live talk shows.

A report by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK, 2014) identified several key problems with gatekeeping in live talk shows. These include poor moderation by hosts, inappropriate comments from guests, sensational or immoral contributions, and a failure to adhere to professional journalistic standards. The report suggests that these issues are exacerbated by the rapid technological advancements and the liberalization of the media, which have complicated the gatekeeping process. In live talk shows, the real-

time handling of discussions and audience comments poses significant challenges for gatekeepers, raising concerns about the extent to which such shows can be effectively regulated.

These issues point to a broader problem: the absence of rigorous quality control in gatekeeping during live broadcasts. The research further suggests that while there is growing concern about gatekeeping in live TV talk shows, there is a lack of empirical evidence addressing how gatekeeping practices manifest in these programmes (Maweu, 2019). As a result, this study aims to investigate the challenges of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya and provide evidence-based insights into how these issues can be mitigated to ensure unbiased and professionally managed content.

1.4 Research Questions

The overarching objective of this study was to examine the role, manifestation, and perception of gatekeeping in live television talk shows on KTN and NTV, with the aim of understanding its impact on content management and journalistic standards. Below are the research questions used in this study.

- a. What is the role of gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?
- b. How does gatekeeping manifest in live television talk shows in Kenya?
- c. What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of the current study covered three aspects: the geographic, content, and methodological scope. Geographically this study was carried out in Nairobi County in Kenya. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya and the headquarters of the Media Council

of Kenya and most of the main media houses in the country. Besides, the study mainly focused on Kenyan-run media television stations, and the participants were recruited from the main television stations in the country. The second is the content scope. Three research questions guided the study: How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya? The second research question is 'What is the role of gatekeeping in running live TV talk shows in Kenya? Finally, the third research question is: What techniques do they use to exercise gatekeeping in live TV talk shows? Through addressing the research questions, the study has been. Able to discuss emerging issues in the live broadcasting landscape and make important policy recommendations on emerging issues relating to gatekeeping for live television broadcasting. Finally, the study was limited by the methodological scope. The study was guided by a qualitative research approach, which was deemed important for the current study as it allowed the researcher to seek further insights from media personnel and veterans in the media industry on issues relating to gatekeeping.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The current study will contribute significantly to theory and practice. Regarding theory, the current research will bridge the gap in the literature on gatekeeping in the Kenyan context. Currently, the available studies on gatekeeping have been keen on the pre-production gatekeeping process, with little or no research on the gatekeeping process concerning live television. Thus, the current study's findings will fill in the existing gaps in the literature about gatekeeping. In practice, this study's findings will contribute to developing policies that will guide gatekeeping in live television.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed concepts related to gatekeeping for live TV talk shows. This includes providing an introduction, background to the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the study's scope, and the study's justification. The next chapter includes a detailed literature review that addresses key concerns regarding some issues discussed in chapter one.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an in-depth review of gatekeeping concepts, gatekeeping practices in live TV, theories, relevant past studies, rationale and the conclusion.

2.1 Gatekeeping

The notion of gatekeeping has been highlighted as the most essential media and journalistic practice (P. Shoemaker, 1991; Soroka, 2012). In the classical sense, gatekeeping refers to the journalistic process of choosing, composing, editing, scheduling, and making significant decisions on the production of news products that influence how the public perceives reality (P. J. Shoemaker et al., 2009). Traditionally, gatekeeping is the method by which news decision-makers minimize the numerous messages on the globe and share them with the public (Shoemaker, 1991). Without gatekeeping, their task of picking and moulding the limited quantity of material that becomes news would be impossible. Information is selected, written, edited, shaped, manipulated, repeated, localized, disregarded, and channelled (Nahan, 2009). Gatekeeping goes back to 1947, when psychologist Kurt Lewin observed that information (about news) travels through the "gate" and that certain individuals control what information comes through the "gate" (Lewin, 1947).

David White Manning introduced the concept in 1950 when he questioned an editor's choice to reject a submitted essay. As a result, he transformed it into a journalistic theory. Therefore, according to the Gatekeeping hypothesis, media organizations should

employ "gate" keepers to standardize, filter, and select which content should be made available to audiences via radio, television, print, and the Internet.

Shoemaker et al. (1991) argue that gatekeepers come in a variety of forms, including people (who can be producers, sub-editors, reporters, and managing editors, among others), professional codes of conduct (including media ethics), company policies, and computer algorithms (sets of formula that translate the company's gatekeeping policies into computer instructions) to select news items for readers of the news Web page, such as news.google.com (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

According to Shoemaker et al. (1991), algorithms are the result of several decisions made by management and code authors. Therefore, Google News provides users with supposedly objective information. Similarly, gatekeeping by media professionals in major channels indicates some influence from management that establishes operational norms and procedures. These become a guideline that journalists instinctively apply to news stories. The symbiotic relationship between professional journalistic codes of ethics (objectivity, fairness, accuracy, and balance) and organizational policies contributes to the subjectivity of the gatekeeper who uses these direct means to ensure that only news and information consistent with organizational policy reaches audiences. Given the community's approval of the reporter as a representation of its culture, it is regarded to be in the public interest and as such represents what the community shall hear as reality. (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

Bruns (2005) states that there are three gates. The input step permits the incorporation of news and information into the news-producing process. The third and final step, Response, comes after the original news items have been published and audience

comments (such as letters to the editor) are approved or refused for publication. This method of selection, which he refers to as gatekeeping, does not apply to new media. Bruns (2005) explains that these limitations exist within the journalistic tradition. To ensure that the distributed material is appropriate to the intended audience, it is strictly monitored.

Under the phenomena of new media, gatekeeping has taken on new connotations. It is no longer viewed as a simple matter of choice at the levels of the individual, the routines or practices of journalism, the organization, the extra-media (journalists must remain aware of what their competitors are doing), and the social system (the socio-economic, political, and cultural structures); (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). Today, gatekeeping has a broader range of possible applications, since it may be used for the work of literary agents and publishers as well as several types of editing and production work for print and television. It pertains to distribution and marketing decisions for current media items (for instance, films).

In a larger sense, it refers to the ability to provide or deny access to various social voices (McQuail, 2005). In this instance, the citizen symbolizes the implied voices that conventional media has allocated to the receiving end throughout the history of communication. In the aftermath of online communication, researchers have created numerous perspectives on gatekeeping and revealed its shortcomings, such as indicating a single starting gate, the selection criteria of a single journalist, and the inclination for decisions to be made on an individual basis. In later studies, several influences on the original notion of gatekeeping have been identified. Shoemaker (1991) highlights the importance of advertising, public relations, pressure organizations, and diverse news

sources (including citizen journalism, per my idea) in the process. These pressures restrict the individual autonomy of gatekeepers.

In addition to the likelihood that greater reliance on advertising will lead to more positive coverage (and less negative coverage) of business (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009), proprietor demands can also influence gatekeeping, given the media owner's decisions regarding the dissemination of a particular message. Singer (2006) noted that the profusion of information on the internet has weakened the authority of journalism's gatekeepers, but journalists may still play a role in selecting, interpreting, and adding legitimacy to news for the public's benefit.

According to Bruns (2005), this is unrealistic, and he instead refers to gatekeeping as "gate monitoring" since news consumers who organize accessible news pieces from several channels cannot manage the gates of any of the channels. The number of gates has exploded beyond control. Singer contends that people are now secondary gatekeepers of the material published on media websites that digital news editors evaluate, resulting in selective re-distribution of that content (Singer, 2013).

Given that news articles are still vetted by web editors, this most recent discovery undermines the phrase "gate monitoring." The essence of this study is the extent to which this is being carried out. Although Channel (2010) indicates that CNN Report allows the public to share and submit "unfiltered" content, and only vetted submissions that are deemed newsworthy can then be broadcasted across networks and published on CNN.com, he does not specify what Singer (2013) means by secondary gatekeeping; a new finding that provides direction for gatekeeping theory. Domingo et al. (2008) conclude that there are two types of gatekeeping. The first category consists of weblogs

created by public media outlets, whereas the second category consists of weblogs written by professional staff journalists. This implies that such bloggers will apply their journalistic talents to their blogs automatically. These are comparable in some ways to news journalism.

In what Christians et al. (2009) refer to as civic democracy, a citizen has the right to contribute to democracy by choice of content. This indicates that contrary to the pattern of delivering higher quality information and news, the media must open its channels to more voices, listen to public concerns, and reflect on them. In essence, the people can also demand that the media offer relevant content. Citizen journalism might therefore perform this essential function.

2.2 Gatekeeping in Television Live Talk Shows

Talk programs have been shown on television since the earliest days of the medium. American radio and television celebrity Joe Franklin presented the first television chat show. The program premiered on WJZ-TV (later WABC-TV) in 1951 and moved to WOR-TV (later WWOR-TV) from 1962 until 1993. (Hinckley, 1999). The Tonight Show on NBC is the longest-running talk show in the world; it premiered in 1954 and continues to air. The show's current title was established in 1962, and despite a brief venture towards a more news-oriented format in 1957 and subsequent reversion that same year, it has remained a discussion show. The Late Program, which premiered in 1962, is the second-longest-running talk show in television history and the longest-running talk show in Europe (Hinckley, 1999).

Steve Allen was the inaugural host of The Tonight Show, which premiered as a local New York program in 1954 before being picked up by the NBC network. It had

developed from his Los Angeles late-night radio chat program. Allen pioneered the concept of late-night network television talk shows, including elements such as the opening monologue, celebrity interviews, audience engagement, outside-the-studio comedic segments, and music. However, the series' popularity was bolstered by its second presenter, Jack Paar, who took over when Allen left and the show halted production (Hinckley, 1999). Oprah Winfrey has significantly influenced the culture of live television chat programs. Since the debut of her show in 1986, Oprah has been able to attract a sizable following from the target demographic and beyond. Kenya has seen an increase in the number of live television chat shows since the year 2000.

Unique and notably intertextual in their reliance on other types of media, live television discussion programs are distinct (Munson, 1993). They contrast with traditional journalism, which seeks and values accurate and objective information. A talk show can have speakers addressing problems or hosts urging random audience members to share their opinions. Hirsch, (1991) reports that a source of infotainment, talk shows are popular and have become an integral component of television.

The primary focus of television talk programs is on discussions utilizing conversational techniques. Through these conversations, both the live audience and viewers at home engage in diverse themes, fostering a feeling of community. This type of program employs a "town-hall" style in which on-air presenters are responsible for encouraging and sustaining active discussions with viewers on topical subjects of the day (Carter, 2019). The label for this now-familiar "genre" has not yet been established. Carr (2009) differentiates between talk programs focused on dyadic discourse and those based on group discussion. However, with the latter, the personality of the presenter remains significant. A distinction must also be made between group conversations involving

regular people and those involving just specialists. A variety of access and engagement programs involve both professionals and average citizens. They vary in approach and severity according to the topic, the abilities and interests of the presenter, and the intended audience, and their popularity is on the rise, with numerous episodes now airing (Donahue, Phil. 1979). In live audience discussion events, the public actively participates in discourse with professionals and can pose questions.

Live talk programs provide a sense of community and public consolation. It is a platform of unity; there is consensus on the social, political, and emotional agenda, and the rationale is the key to solving everyday issues. The ensuing conversation may be well-considered as an open text (Hirsch, 2009) or dialogic text, in which multiple meanings grow and diverse viewpoints are interconnected. Participants and the home audience are relatively free to interpret the text differently, depending on their contexts. In her paper titled "Professionalism in Broadcasting in Developing Countries," O'Brien (2006) believes that a news presenter needs "skills without a script" defined by the presenter's knowledge base. This requires knowledge of conversation subjects and the ability to place them in context for the audience. This is due to the speakers' dedication to self-improvement and broadening their understanding of world events. The hosts must also be capable of processing, sorting, organizing, prioritizing, and retaining the enormous volume of incoming data.

Karine Barzilai-Nahon (2009) presented a novel perspective on gatekeeping as a process involving actions such as information selection, inclusion, exclusion, presentation, channelling, shaping, manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard, and deletion. She introduced the term "Network gatekeeper" to indicate that a gatekeeper has the discretion to exercise gatekeeping through a network

gatekeeping mechanism and can choose the breadth of its application based on the gated status. Moreover, Pamela Shoemaker and Tim Vos (2009) argued that the act of gatekeeping influences the picked material and the "nature of the messages." The presenter must also be sensitive to ethical issues that frequently complicate the field of live breaking news/talk shows, unverified reports, graphic videos, information that could cause panic, compromise public well-being or safety, or words that exacerbate the suffering of already distressed victims and their loved ones.

2.2.1 Contributions of a Director

The tasks of a television director in live TV production are determined by the nature of the production and the aims of the primary team players and sponsors. The director must obstruct cameras, lights, microphones, and props. The role of the director in live production is comparable to that of a film director (BBC, 2004). This implies that the director is responsible for selecting the finest pictures for live broadcasts. The director must maintain order and silence on set for optimal reception and coordination. He or she may also maintain order in other production-related areas in order to maximize the live performance (Fleming, 1997). The director instructs the camera operators on shots and focal points. The director is responsible for particular shots, whereas the producer is in charge of the whole film. This includes commercial breaks and the scheduling of the program. The director's position in live television production is unparalleled, as their influence permeates the whole program. A show's success is due to a knowledgeable director who knows what shots he needs and their significance to the show's message delivery. The director and authority's coordination maintains the personnel behind the scenes organized and focused.

2.2.2 Contributions of the Host to Message Delivery

In some modern talk shows, there is more than one host, and the two work together to keep the audience on their toes. The presenter serves as both a timekeeper and a representation of the personnel working behind the scenes. The host has the ability to both captivate and repel the audience in the studio and at home. A live chat show must have a dynamic, well-informed host who will unite all the participants and guide the production to its intended message delivery (Boddy, 1993). Therefore, when preparing and airing a talk show, the entire production team must bear in mind a number of factors. A talk show demands a feeling of urgency and the significance of the problems at hand, the host should coordinate properly in order to deliver.

Talk shows employ state-of-the-art technology and professionals to ensure that the message is delivered clearly and without interruption. Live production integrates many Internet technologies to provide live and recorded audio content. This combination generates high-quality audio and an environment in which hosts may direct and manage the live production. In certain instances, the host of a live television talk show selects the discussion topic based on emergent issues or the sponsor's suggestions. With the help of other team members, the host establishes the appropriate tone for the show (Boddy, 1992). The host schedules and invites guests for each program. The host manages the show and acts as a moderator or facilitator of the program.

During live talk shows, the program presenter creates conflict among the guests based on personal identities, social commitments, and the needs of societal, interpersonal, and interactional/activity roles in order to improve ratings. Only careful consideration of each participant's desired face needs, rights, and duties by the host and other participants will settle the dispute. According to Ytreberg (2004), it is commonly

understood that both professional and non-professional individuals participate in the broadcast media.

According to Goffman (1974), our identities are revealed through our roles in our daily interactions with others. According to Giles (2002), media texts dictate the roles that participants, hosts, guests, viewers, and other players will play in interactions. The success of a live talk show depends on the cohesiveness and skill of all team members, regardless of their position. Without cooperation from the director, camera operators, and sound professionals, the host cannot succeed. This is why a talk show employs the most skilled personnel to guarantee that the program conveys the proper message.

2.3 Situating Study in the Relevant Field

From a global viewpoint, television is an important weapon of power. Due to its capacity to transmit live, this is the case. Television has the ability to affect demonstrations, foster social interaction, and shape public opinion. Furthermore, television fosters optimal policymaking conditions (Marriot, 2007). A live television production brings together the abilities of the director and the host in a live performance. This performance seeks to connect with the audience in real-time and in a stylish manner.

Since its inception in 1958, the world has embraced live television. The reality of live television production has enabled producers to more accurately educate the audience (BBC, 2004). This strategy has helped the global community to recognize the importance of live television production in capturing the target audience more accurately (Klein, 2014). The notion of live television production in its many genres indicates far greater possibilities in real-time productions than was previously believed.

Live television broadcasting necessitates a high level of talent, high-quality control, precision, and competence, as well as cutting-edge technology (Marriot, 2007). In addition, a live production needs a staff that is trained and informed. This involves a production director responsible for conceptualizing the screenplay or event in a creative manner. This engineer is in charge of the automatic transmission systems for the transmitter plant and the professional camerapersons who carefully choose photos that correspond to the topic being presented or discussed. All of these are essential for the timely delivery of the proper message to the intended audience (Timberg & Erler, 2010).

In addition, the host (interviewer) must have practical expertise and abilities to engage the interviewee(s) and keep them professionally focused on the topic. In the case of interactive sessions, the host must maintain control over the audience and their replies in order to filter the material without compromising its significance and convey the message effectively. Today, live television coverage of events is gaining growing popularity. In the present media landscape, the majority of morning television programs are broadcast live. Internationally, the BBC Breakfast program and the vast majority of U.S. television newscasts carry live, real-time updates and breaking news stories (Timberg & Erler, 2010). The increasing popularity of live television programs suggests that the world has accepted the concept and that its efficacy in conveying the message is far superior to that of prerecorded films and documentaries (Klein, 2014).

Africa has embraced the presence of live television production and has tried to improve it to promote the creation and delivery of messages. When a significant national breaking news event happens, broadcast television networks will interrupt regularly scheduled programming and broadcast the event live on all stations labelled "Special Report." Local television stations interrupt regularly planned programming in the case

of national security incidents or substantial local breaking news developments. Today, African nations are attentive to matters of security; for instance, terror attacks must be broadcast live, and routine programming must be interrupted. The events in the watching region must be broadcast to inform and warn the audience (Fleming, 1997). This helps listeners feel valued by their local radio station.

Kenya has also adopted live television talk programs, with spectacular results. Kenyan television stations are increasingly including live coverage of events and conversation shows. The majority of marketers increasingly favour these productions; practically all paid advertisements during university commencement ceremonies are broadcast live. Private and government entities prefer live broadcasting over recorded features and documentaries when presenting new items. Live shows are led by a host or team of hosts; regardless of how planned or structured the event is, it may be impromptu. A live discussion program on television preserves the appearance of the current tense. Immediacy is a potent form that has shown to be a valued commodity in this genre (Marriot, 2007). Examples of live conversation programs in Kenya include Crossfire on KTN News and Your World on NTV.

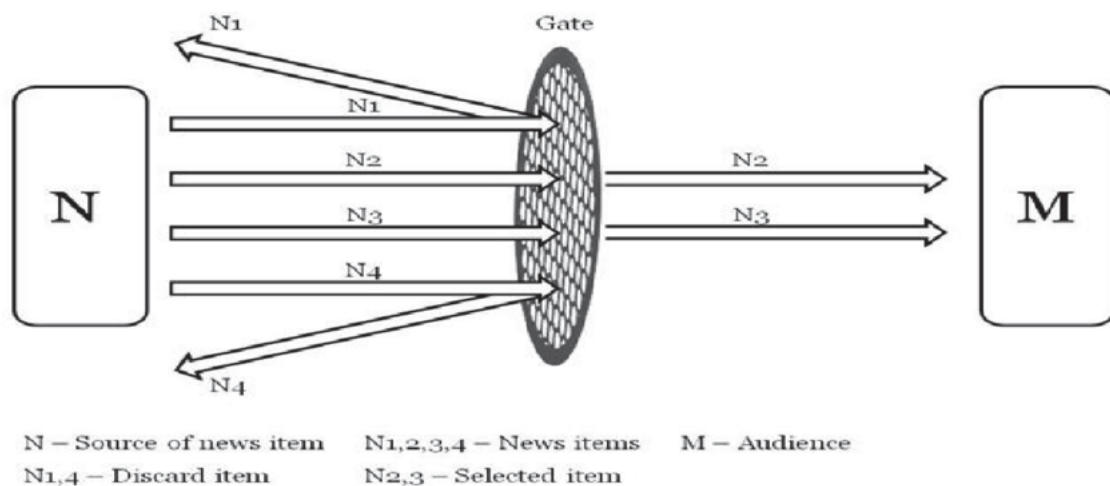
2.4 Review of Relevant Theories

2.4.1 Gatekeeping Theory

The current study is predicated on the principle of gate keeping, which posits that "gatekeepers" govern the flow of information being channelled to the receivers. The idea was devised by Kurt Lewin to describe the process by which newsrooms winnow, shape, and prod large volumes of prospective news messages into the handful that are finally sent. In general, gatekeeping is the process of choosing, authoring, editing, placing, scheduling, repeating, and generally manipulating information into news

(Scheufele, 1999). Thus, gatekeeping activities include the selection, disregard, or deletion of information that scholars have acknowledged to be subjective, given that the stories to be published are chosen based on the gatekeepers' personal tastes, gender, and preferences, with minimal regard for professional, organizational, technological, and cultural influence. The "gate" was the key principle of the theory applied to the research. Which technique serves information to the public before it reaches the general populace? The gate defines the information filtering levels and strategies for the audience. These levels might be internal or external within the context of the organization. As shown in figure 2.1, the media organization gets distinct news items from distinct sources N 1,2,3,4 for each news source item N. However, before reaching the audience, news items must pass through a gate that discards news judged undesirable N1,4 and only allows news items deemed worthy to be broadcast N2,3 to reach the public (M).

Figure 2:1 Gatekeeping theory



Gate Keeping Theory

This theory helps explain the mechanisms that influence the flow of content, including the decisions made by editors, producers, and hosts, as well as the influence of organisational, political, and social factors.

Gatekeeping Theory is directly related to the second research question, "How does gatekeeping manifest in live television talk shows on KTN and NTV?" Live television talk shows present unique challenges to gatekeeping, as there is limited time to filter content, especially when dealing with spontaneous discussions, audience interaction, and sensitive political or social topics. Gatekeeping Theory provides a framework for analysing how KTN and NTV manage these challenges. For instance, the study can examine how decisions are made in real-time to ensure that content is appropriate, ethical, and adheres to journalistic standards (Tandoc & Vos, 2016). It also sheds light on how external pressures, such as political influence or advertiser demands, may impact the gatekeeping process in live formats.

Furthermore, Gatekeeping Theory relates to the third research question, "What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?" By examining how journalists understand their role as gatekeepers, the study can explore the internal and external factors that shape their decision-making processes. According to Tandoc and Vos (2020), journalists in live settings may experience unique pressures that impact their gatekeeping choices, including real-time interactions with guests and viewers, editorial directives, and the need to maintain audience engagement. Gatekeeping Theory provides a robust framework for analysing these dynamics and how they affect content in live television talk shows.

2.4.2 Social Responsibility Theory

The research utilised social responsibility theory (SRT) to explain the research problem and then evaluate the results. The SRT concentrated on the social component of morality, in which individual ethical values are subject to societal values. The notion stated that media ethics should serve the broader public benefit and ensure that media

professionals are held accountable by society. The approach emphasized the social side of morality by "sublimating" individual ethical values to societal values. It involves being accountable to society and holding the press to account.

SRT, one of the four press theories, was first developed in 1956 by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (Baran & Davis, 2015; Middleton, 2009). Since media is controlled by community opinion, consumer activity, and professional ethics, the approach emphasizes ethics (Ochieng, Gachoka, & Mureithi, 2014). SRT evolved from libertarian theory, which posits that freedom is accompanied by obligations. SRT acknowledges that the press serves the political system, enlightens the people, and protects individual liberty, but it falls short of these responsibilities (AL-Ahmed, 1987). The press functions of SRT are similar to those of libertarian philosophy, but they reveal discontent with how the owners and operators viewed them (Paracha & Sultana, 2011).

The theory seeks to mitigate the impact of private ownership on public opinion through means of cultural production via electronic media. Due to the concern that enforcing press regulation would subject the media to official control, SRT urges media professionals to be accountable to the public. The media professionals were required to cultivate productive and innovative Great Communities. Practitioners were urged to be the voice of the people by prioritizing cultural plurality rather than the elite groups that had dominated culture in the past (Baran & Davis, 2015).

The second function was to encourage journalists and media contributors to pursue fairness, impartiality, accuracy, and balance in all news they produced and to use "news values" The SRT urged media professionals to unite in the service of cultural plurality,

even if it meant a loss of profit or conflict with the social elites (Baran & Davis, 2015). However, it was unclear how such techniques could successfully produce socially responsible media (AL-Ahmed, 1987). Concerning the implementation of SRT in professionalism and ratification of the code of conduct, numerous questions were raised.

According to Baran and Davis (2013), SRT contains flaws, such as the hope that the media would fulfil its responsibility to society and the underestimation of the motivational power of earnings and competition. According to Baran and Davis (2015), the question of the establishment of new communities would be strengthened in SRT by rising technologies that provide groups with greater information dissemination capacity. In this study, the SRT was examined through MCK standards of regulations as a measure of social responsibility using live TV talk show hosts and their desire to abide by the MCK code of laws. Other critics of SRT (Altschull, 1995; McQuail, 2005; Pickard, 2010; Baran & Davis, 2013;) stated that the majority of media organizations have prioritized profit over duty without considering the dual social responsibility paradigm. Contemporary researchers agree, notwithstanding these objections, that the social responsibility theory is the foundation of universal professional media ethics, which are essential for judging the quality of media practice.

The fundamental tenet of the theory that inspired the present study is the emphasis on the free press principle. This principle provides the media with some freedoms while recognising the necessity for external control, professional self-regulation, or both.

Social Responsibility Theory underscores the media's ethical obligations to serve the public interest by delivering truthful, accurate, and balanced information. This theory is grounded in the belief that media institutions should operate in a way that benefits

society, promoting democratic ideals, social justice, and responsible communication (McQuail, 2013). It suggests that the media must balance its freedom with accountability, ensuring that its content does not harm or polarise audiences but instead fosters informed and rational public discourse.

This theory is directly related to the first research question, "What is the role of gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?" By applying Social Responsibility Theory, this study investigates how media outlets, specifically KTN and NTV, manage their gatekeeping functions to uphold their duty to society. Live talk shows often deal with sensitive topics, especially during periods of political tension or social unrest, where the potential for harm through misinformation or biased reporting is high (Shoemaker & Vos, 2015). Social Responsibility Theory provides a lens through which the role of gatekeeping can be evaluated, ensuring that talk shows adhere to ethical standards and journalistic codes of conduct.

Additionally, the theory is useful in exploring the third research question, "What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya?" Journalists' views on gatekeeping are often influenced by their understanding of social responsibility, where the need to balance freedom of expression with public accountability is critical (Christians et al., 2020). This theory, therefore, helps to contextualise how journalists perceive their gatekeeping responsibilities, particularly in the high-stakes environment of live television.

2.5 Review of Relevant Previous Research

The phenomenon of gatekeeping in live television events has been extensively examined. Numerous international studies have been conducted on gatekeeping,

particularly with regard to live television. Padgett et al. (2019) did a study in the United States to determine how the gatekeeping method gave the United States an extreme appearance. The researchers did a content study of 46,218 cable and broadcast television news from the 109th to the 112th congress in order to determine the frequency with which members of congress were mentioned. The focus was mostly on congressional members' on-air utterances confirming that the gatekeeping role overrepresented the partisanship of both parties. Confirming that the gatekeeping process was biased towards extreme and conflictual content under both market and advocacy models. This demonstrates that gatekeeping on live television is difficult, frequently resulting in misperceptions, polarization, patrician-ideological sorting, and bad political impact on the voters.

In addition, the rise of mobile telephone technology, which has made media more participatory, has further complicated the job of gatekeeping. Sara Enli (2007) conducted a qualitative thematic examination of interactive short-messaging services during live television programs. The study noted that the combination of contemporary communication channels and conventional television made the gatekeeping process problematic for editorial and traditional gatekeepers. The researcher analyzed incoming tweets during debates about immigrant crime and concluded that they were not only xenophobic but also polarized. Thus, the study reveals problems pertaining to the gatekeeping of the new media, verifying challenges in hybrid media formats that incorporate both interactive and traditional media models.

In addition, the findings imply that the gatekeeping process must be incorporated into the production process in order to ensure that polarizing messages are limited and addressed before reaching the mainstream audience. Overall, the study demonstrated

the difficulties associated with gatekeeping when employing hybrid media models, highlighting the need for an enhanced gatekeeping procedure.

In a collective instrumental case study of local television broadcasts in the United States, McElroy (2019) attempted to examine the gatekeeping method and improvement areas in contemporary interactive broadcasts. According to the survey, the conventional responsibilities of journalists as gatekeepers have shifted as a result of a shift in the newsroom, where audience involvement is valued more than the traditional positions that required decision-making. Journalists now interact more with the audience as a result of the new method of news collecting, which has also altered the process of gatekeeping. In addition, the study emphasizes the shifting role of the gatekeeper in the media community by emphasizing the need for journalists to determine the veracity of the audience's opinions and information during live broadcasts.

According to Gondwe (2014), Zambian media practices were marked by bias and unprofessionalism, which greatly damaged the quality of journalism. In a qualitative study including ten Zambian print journalists, the researcher found that the practitioners were aware of partisan journalism and violations of media accountability and openness. As a result of the malpractices, ethical media practices, such as gatekeeping, were also negatively affected. The researcher discovered few studies on the gatekeeping mechanism in television chat shows broadcast live in the African region.

Mukuna (2005) examined the establishment of ethical norms in Kenyan broadcast media. The primary purpose of the study was to analyze ethical standards in Kenyan broadcast media, specifically FM radio stations. 59 percent of the 132 respondents described talk shows as offensive, making them the most susceptible to abuse. The most

disregarded of the questioned journalistic standards was impartiality, followed by balance and decency. 85 percent of the practitioners surveyed in the study were aware of the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya, which is enforced by MCK. The study revealed that the greatest obstacle for FM radio stations in Kenya was the necessity to institutionalize professionalism in broadcasting media through policy adoption and acknowledgement of the country's laws. In the study, journalism principles and professionalism were studied, but the primary focus was on the quality of journalism, which included the method of hiring and the calibre of presenters.

Ochieng, Gachoka, and Mureithi (2014) conducted comparable research on adherence to ethical values, with a focus on the print medium. The researchers conducted a social responsibility audit of how the media gathered and disseminated information, observing that attributing media responsibility to individuals within media houses qualified the institution as a public interest and watchdog entity. The study distinguished media from other industries because it supplied citizens with the knowledge they required. Therefore, journalism was connected with a country's democracy and administration. The study indicated that social responsibility could strengthen the professionalism of the media in Kenya. The survey revealed that although the MCK had established ethical norms, the majority of media platforms had difficulty adhering to them. According to practitioners, the MCK code of conduct lacked a clear definition of "public interest" and required reform. The study revealed that reporters were familiar with the MCK code of conduct, but editors did not involve reporters in policy formation. The study advised the establishment of a correlation between adherence to the code of ethics and the level of journalism training for further investigation.

The study by Ochieng et al. (2014) differs from this one because it was based on print media and its primary focus was code of conduct compliance. Examining social responsibility as an enhancement for media professionalism reveals parallels between their study and the current investigation. In addition, public interest was not defined in the current code of ethics, leaving a loophole in the clause's ratification (Ochieng et al., 2014). The research presents an example of a poorly implemented portion of the code. Welfare and working conditions are among the several factors that influence media practice in Kenya. However, the study did not examine the consequences of presenters and content because it focused on print media as opposed to broadcast media.

In Kenya, gatekeeping is dynamic and situational. In the media environment, gatekeeping has been utilized unpredictably. Few studies have examined journalistic gatekeeping. The effect of a live television production process on messaging: The case of the Sikika Sasa chat show, was the topic of a study undertaken by Kiraguri (2015). In the study, the principles of gatekeeping were investigated. The study addressed live audiences from five counties who were invited to the show. According to the conclusions of this study, contrary to the widespread belief that the program host is more important, the TV director is the most influential individual. He/she directs the show's flow, makes the ultimate call on what airs, and is responsible for the appearance and sound of live production as well as its technical requirements. For a show to be successful, the host must believe in the message, regardless of his or her popularity, physical appearance, or level of expertise, according to further findings from this study.

Okumbe (2016) investigated the effects of radio talk show hosts and content on media practice in Kenya: The researcher examined the radio talk show material of chosen FM radio stations, focusing on whether or not the presenters adhered to the professional

standards established in the code of ethics for the practice of journalism in Kenya. The study analyzed ten prominent Nairobi FM radio stations that broadcast morning talk shows. According to the findings of the study, regulatory authorities such as the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) and the Communication Authority of Kenya (CA) were at the forefront of attempts to control content in the interest of decency. The investigation demonstrated the MCK's inadequacies as a media regulating agency, including its inability to monitor radio stations, resulting in ineffective enforcement of the journalists' code of ethics. The organization was unable to ensure that only qualified media outlets employed radio broadcast journalists. Although the MCK produced a curriculum for colleges of journalism training at the intermediate level, its impact on standardizing training was little.

2.6 Rationale of Study Based on Literature Review

According to the reviewed literature, there are numerous reasons why this study is significant and must be conducted. First, several of the research included in the literature study was unable to demonstrate or analyze gatekeeping in live television shows. The majority of gatekeeping research has been discussed in print and other forms of production content, but not on live television shows (Gondwe, 2014; Ochieng, Gachoka, & Mureithi, 2014; Ochieng et al., 2014). Due to the interactive character of live TV show discussions, where only the moderator can regulate proceedings to the exclusion of the other TV crew such as cameramen, comprehensive gatekeeping is difficult to impose, according to the findings of this research (Owilla, Chege, Awiti, & Orwa, 2020; Timberg & Erler, 2010; Baran & Davis, 2013). Consequently, this challenge has created questions regarding the efficacy of the gatekeeping mechanisms for live television chat shows, thereby necessitating this investigation.

Thirdly, research based on the reviewed studies must be done to get an understanding of the social obligations required of viewers who watch live television programs such as *The Voice* (Middleton, 2009; Ochieng, Gachoka, & Mureithi, 2014; Paracha & Sultana, 2011). Theoretically, the viewers are the gatekeepers; hence, the efficacy of the gatekeeping process can only be measured by the viewers' perceptions. The purpose of this study was to determine if live television programmes are subjected to enough screening. The research must be done to cover the gaps left by global and regional studies such as those recommended by (O'Brien, 2006; Marriot, 2007; Klein, 2014). In conclusion, only a limited amount of research appears to have been conducted on the topic of gatekeeping for live television broadcasts in a local context; consequently, our study contributed valuable knowledge to the existing body of literature.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of my topic's primary research body. I have reviewed the theories underpinning this study. In this, the review of previous work has helped me to identify gaps since few studies have been undertaken on gatekeeping in live television talk shows in the local context. Further, I have discussed the rationale of my study. Therefore, to address the gaps, I selected a qualitative approach to do my research as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The following chapter covers the techniques that I used for this study. The elements I have captured in the chapter include the research paradigm, research approach, research method, sampling, data generation techniques, data analysis, ethical consideration, the study's trustworthiness, and a conclusion.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The current study was guided by interpretivist research paradigm. According to (Bryman, 2012) the interpretivist research paradigm holds that there is no single reality and that truths are subjective. The research paradigm was important in the current study as it allowed the researcher to collect and analyze qualitative data from the research participants. The data included the experiences and views of the participant with respect to the phenomenon of interest in the study.

3.2 Qualitative Approach

I adopted the qualitative approach to conduct this study. My study focused on the naturalistic search for relativity in meaning, multiplicity of the interpretation, particularity detail and flexibility as Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) argue in their definition of a qualitative approach to research. My study sought to investigate gatekeeping practices in live television talk shows in Kenya through the understanding of journalists working as producers, editors and show hosts. Therefore, I preferred the qualitative approach for exploring and understanding how media practitioners understood

gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya. In addition, I chose a qualitative approach that enabled me to ask questions that cannot be measured in numbers through a quantitative approach.

My goal was to understand the everyday realities of gatekeeping and find answers to my research questions as they are truly experienced by gatekeepers in Kenya. My argument is consistent with Pope & Mays (2006), that qualitative research focuses on the meaning and understanding of phenomena. Additionally, I set out to gather data on the perception of the gatekeepers on gatekeeping in live television talk shows. For these reasons, the qualitative research approach was the most appropriate to explore the richness, depth and understanding of gatekeeping practice in Kenya.

3.3 Multiple Case Study Method

I adopted a multiple case study method of qualitative research. According to (Obuya & Ong'ondo, 2020) multiple case study method is preferred in situations where the researcher aims to undertake an in-depth investigation of a specific case or cases in the real-life context in which multiple perspectives related to the complexity of the cases are sought (p.4).

I proceeded to study the two cases, NTV and KTN, jointly to understand the phenomenon of gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya. My choice is consistent with Stake's (1995) assertions that a researcher can adopt a collective instrumental case study method for a situation where several cases are studied jointly.

Additionally, Stake notes that the collective instrumental case study is chosen because understanding them will result in a better understanding of a larger collection of cases.

Thus, NTV and KTN were chosen as instruments to understand the concept of gatekeeping in live television to generate broader insights and applicable findings and contribute to theoretical understanding of the practice (Yazan, 2015). I selected KTN and NTV due to their prominence, influence, and role in shaping public discourse through live television talk shows in Kenya.

As two of the leading national broadcasters, KTN and NTV have a long-established presence in the Kenyan media landscape and are widely regarded for their political and social commentary. These stations have an extensive reach, commanding large audiences across diverse demographics, making them ideal for analysing gatekeeping practices in live talk shows.

KTN and NTV have consistently been ranked among the top television stations in Kenya based on viewership and influence. According to the Media Council of Kenya (MCK, 2021), KTN and NTV are both highly influential in terms of political and social programming. Their live talk shows often set the national agenda and influence public opinion. Their programs frequently feature high-profile politicians, analysts, and commentators, giving them a central role in shaping discourse on key national issues.

Given the highly competitive media environment in Kenya—with over 130 licensed television stations as of 2023 (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023)—KTN and NTV stood out due to their journalistic reputations and large-scale operations. Their talk shows are regarded as platforms where critical political and social issues are debated, often with real-time audience interaction. This makes them particularly relevant for a study on gatekeeping, as they must navigate the complexities of live broadcasting while adhering to journalistic standards.

3.4 Sampling

I used purposive sampling to identify and select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Therefore, firstly, I picked KTN and NTV because these television stations recorded a high viewership in the recent past while using the official and national languages only for their broadcast. Data from the Media Council of Kenya (2023) reports that KTN and NTV had 13% and 12% viewership in the country. Additionally, these two television stations were selected, considering they host the most interactive television talk shows.

This study focused on a sample of 40 respondents from KTN (18) and NTV (22), drawn from a population that includes over 130 television stations in Kenya. I used purposive sampling to select editors, producers, and show hosts, as these individuals are directly involved in the gatekeeping process for live television talk shows. Their roles provide them with in-depth knowledge and experience in content selection, moderation, and decision-making under the pressures of live broadcasting.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research when the aim is to gather in-depth information from participants who possess the most relevant knowledge and experience related to the research questions. In this study, editors, producers, and show hosts from KTN and NTV were chosen because they are the key individuals responsible for gatekeeping decisions in live talk shows. Their perspectives are critical to understanding how gatekeeping manifests in this unique media format.

The study involved interviewing 12 participants, drawn from a population of approximately 40 media professionals at KTN and NTV. These participants were

chosen to ensure representation across different roles within the gatekeeping process—editors, producers, and show hosts—providing a comprehensive view of how gatekeeping functions in live talk shows. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), saturation is achieved when no new information or themes emerge from the data. In this study, saturation was reached after interviewing 12 participants, meaning the responses provided sufficient depth and coverage to answer the research questions without requiring additional interviews. Of the 12 participants, 7 were from NTV and 5 from KTN, where one of the participants worked in both media houses.

3.5 Study site

This study was conducted in Nairobi County which is a major hub of local and international media stations. The majority of local tier I and tier II media houses are located here. NTV is located in Nairobi Central Business District (CBD) while KTN's head office is located along Mombasa Road, a few minute drive from the Nairobi CBD, but with an office and studio in CBD as well. I, therefore, drew participants from two local television stations as discussed above.

3.6 Data Generation Technique

I collected data using in-depth interviews with broadcast journalists working as producers, editors, and hosts of live television shows on the NTV and KTN.

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

I collected data on the gatekeeping practices in the main television stations using in-depth interviews with 12 journalists including senior and veteran television editors, producers and show hosts in the selected stations. The in-depth interviews were deemed appropriate for the current research as they allowed the researcher to engage in a

conversation with the participants who provided unlimited responses whilst allowing for follow-up questions.

The in-depth interview was vital to get first-hand experiences from participants that are an extension of ordinary conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interviews have advantages in creating rapport and allowing the researcher to observe the participants' nonverbal communication, including gestures. They were semi-structured and lasted 35-60 hours. The respondents were asked about the gatekeeping in live TV talk shows and their perspectives on the practice.

I ascribe to Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) explanation that an in-depth interview serves as a pathway to multiple realities, whereby any participant is anticipated to bring forth their distinct experiences and extraordinary narratives.

I arranged for interviews with the participants to whom I asked permission to record our conversation. I discussed the purpose of the study and how I would use the information they provided to me. None of the participants pulled out however, I had to postpone some interviews due to availability because of their busy schedule. Nonetheless, I managed to complete all arranged interviews.

The in-depth interviews were guided by a set of interview questions which covered three interview questions (see appendices section). My main aim was to allow the participants to respond freely, allowing them to respond until when they gave a note that they were done or a natural pause. Where appropriate and necessary, I asked additional questions to seek clarification. I keenly observed their non-verbal cues, such as nodding, use of hands and eye movements to identify when they had more to say

even though they were through with their previous response. I also varied the order of questions to maintain a natural flow of conversation as Morgan and Guevara (2008) posit in their theory on interviews.

3.7 Data analysis

In this study, I analysed the data thematically. I ascribe to the views of Creswell et al. (2011) that data is analysed thematically to identify, analyse, and report themes. Further, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised that thematic analysis is used for identifying and recording patterns (themes) in qualitative data.

I applied thematic analysis to the current study since the objective involved constructing and representing the concept of gatekeeping in local television stations. I employed the suggested methodology outlined by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) to conduct data analysis for qualitative research. I used the following steps in the analysis process:

I transcribed the research conversations into written form, capturing all utterances. This transcription phase took about one month. Then, I familiarised myself with the data by individually reading the transcripts, identifying errors, and gaining a general understanding. I refined the transcripts by removing fillers, repetitions, and redundancies.

In the first phase of coding, I read and re-read the data, generating initial codes by identifying interesting segments. Some codes emerged naturally, while others were guided by the scope of my study.

During the second phase of coding, I reviewed and merged codes, creating categories without overlaps or repetitions. I also reviewed the previously labelled "bank" data, appropriately categorising relevant portions.

In the third phase, I categorised groups and themes to organise them under each research question. Finally, I produced the report by conducting a final analysis of the data. I included select quotes to support the themes and presented the findings in a chapter format aligned with the research questions (See chapter 4).

I adopted Gay's (2011) qualitative analysis recommendation with verbatim quotes from interviews transcribed, and the categorised themes and sub-themes generated from the study.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I used several strict procedures to ensure that I adhered to ethical considerations while doing this study. This was critical because ethics in research helps to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, which is critical (Mazur, 2007). Also, ethical considerations prevent the fabrication or falsification of data and promote the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which is the primary goal of research. Furthermore, I ensured that my study followed the ethical guidelines to encourage trust, accountability, and mutual respect from fellow researchers (Miller, Birch, Mauthner & Jessop, 2012).

Firstly, I sought approval for this research from Moi University, through the Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies, School of Information Sciences, where two supervisors were assigned for guidance. Thereafter, I

applied for a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before contacting the respective media personalities and media houses. May (2011) asserts that various areas of consideration are weighed to ensure ethical research including informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and trustworthiness

Informed Consent: I sort verbal and written consent to participants and relevant institutions as a prerequisite for this study. I outlined the purpose and scope of the study, the types of questions that are likely to be asked, the use to which the results will be put, the method of anonymisation and the extent to which participants' utterances will be used in reports. I allowed the participants time to consider their participation and ask questions for clarify as (Mugenda, 2003) posits.

Anonymity, Confidentiality, and Privacy: I was keen not to identify the ethnic or cultural background of respondents, refraining from referring to them by their names or divulging any other sensitive information about a participant (Mugenda, 2003). For instance, instead of suing their real names, I used code such as participant #1 to protect their identity.

Openness and Integrity: I ensured openness and honesty about the purpose and content of this research. For example, I informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and that there was no monetary compensation for their information.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I implemented various mechanisms to uphold the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research process. These concepts are commonly referred to as internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in the context of quantitative research.

Credibility: I demonstrate credibility by focusing my study on the research questions earlier outlined in the research proposal to investigate the research problem. I was guided by the aim and scope of the study to identify and select participants who were gatekeepers. Further, I took criticism and feedback from my supervisors and incorporated their feedback on the research proposal and data generation tools to ensure a credible study.

Transferability: The outcomes of my study are significantly influenced by various factors such as the specific study design, the participants selected, and the contextual conditions in which the study took place. It is possible that certain findings could be replicated under similar circumstances, such as in the case of another television station in Kenya. According to Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011), qualitative studies are subjective and context-dependent. I concur with this viewpoint, but I also align with Yin's (2009) assertion that it is feasible to apply a study, a specific context, or a research process in a similar situation elsewhere.

Dependability: I ensured to maintain the acceptable standard in qualitative research through a thick description by which the research was conducted, analysed, and presented. I ensured that each process in the study was reported in detail to enable an external researcher to repeat the inquiry and achieve similar results. For example, I outlined a clear research methodology in chapter three giving all details necessary.

Confirmability: Precisely, a researcher ensures confirmability by conducting a study free from internal and external influences as Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011) posits. I shared my research work and findings with my supervisors for review. This may have influenced the final thesis. I acknowledge that I may have influenced the study to some extent, inevitably. For example, by purposively selecting the participants. Nonetheless, I managed to provide a thick description of the findings to ensure confirmability.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I expounded on the research methodology used for this study. I employed a qualitative approach for a better and deeper understanding of the gatekeeping practice. I used in-depth interviews to get data from participants. The outcome was a comprehensive description of the gatekeeping process which comes in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings, and the outcomes of my research based on the following research questions: a) What is the role of gatekeeping in live television talk shows in Kenya? b) How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya? c) What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows? The first question examined the practice of gatekeeping in live television talk shows with a focusing on the editorial team's involvement in the practice. The second question interrogated the different mechanisms in place to promote the gatekeeping practice in live television talk shows. The third question examined the perception held by gatekeepers regarding the practice of live talk television shows in Kenya. Additionally, this question revealed the challenges facing the gatekeepers and the practice. I conducted in-depth interviews with the participants and subjected them to thematic analysis. The data below was presented along with the corresponding verbatim excerpts from the interviews.

Table 4:2. Codes for data sources

Participant #1	Senior Reporter media house A
Participant #2	Senior Reporter media house B
Participant #3	Former Editor media house B
Participant #4	Former Editor media house B
Participant #5	Former reporter media house A
Participant #6	Former reporter and editor media A
Participant #7	Former reporter, and editor media house A and B
Participant #8	Former Media CEO and Editor media house B
Participant #9	Editor media house B
Participant #10	Director/Editor media house B
Participant #11	Former director/Editor media house A
Participant #12	Former reporter and editor media A

4.1 Role of Gatekeeping in Live TV Talk Shows in Kenya

The study sought to identify the role of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya. The findings of the in-depth interviews are presented as: 4.1.1 Gatekeepers and their role in live television talk shows; 4.1.2 Curating Content; 4.1.3 Protecting the Image of the Media House; and 4.1.4 Preventing Misinformation.

4.1.1 Gatekeepers and their role in live television talk shows

The evolution of television programming, advancement in technology and democratic rights have enabled local media houses to produce more live talk shows. Participants noted that nowadays, it is relatively cheaper to produce a live talk show thus allowing the media houses to organise debates on current affairs, politics and lifestyle.

The participants provided information on how live television talk shows are produced and the role of each person in the production process. Media houses, and by extension the local broadcasters, had mastered the art of live TV talk show production over time. It is possible and easier to hold a live talk show and also receive a live from different parts of the country which were then incorporated into the in-studio live discussions. The participants said that the live links add gist to the conversation making it very interesting and worthwhile.

One participant from media house B provided a comprehensive response on how the process takes place thanks to the many years of experience in the media as well as a wealth of technical expertise as an electrical engineer. Moreover, the participant tied in the technical production process to the role of journalists in the gatekeeping process. First, the production team played an important role in controlling the videos and audio of the various panellists. Furthermore, multiple cameras and microphones used for the panellists helped in gatekeeping by pausing or turning them off on the occasion that the guests share controversial or polarizing views. My findings also revealed where the participants sit and the role of each in the live talk show production.

The editor and the director sit together in the control room. Occasionally, a researcher joins them to fact-check and provide quick clarifications when necessary. The control room also accommodates the video mixer, who actively manages the camera feed for the live broadcast, and the graphic designer responsible for typing and cueing the text displayed on the lower third of the TV screen. On the other hand, the sound mixer operates in a separate room, where they control the microphones and the live broadcast sound. **(Participant #8 – June 2022).**

Further, the findings of this study pointed out two other gatekeepers who are not in the studio during the live broadcast but have an equally significant role in the process. These two include a reporter and cameraman on location who may occasionally facilitate a live feed to the studio during a live talk show.

The participants said that the gatekeeping practice in live television broadcasting begins before the actual show. It involves a meeting with the producer, editor and the show host to “discuss the topic for the upcoming show and agree the names of guests to invite and the angle of the discussion.” (Participant #1). One participant noted that during the editorial meetings that was when “issues that the media house management want or do not want to be discussed” emerge. (Participant #8).

Following this editorial meeting, the producer then calls to invite the guests and inform them of the day, time and topic. Further, the producer prepares the guests on what aspects of the topics they will focus on. During the live talk show, the show host is connected to the control room through an earpiece that “enables the editor or the producer to manage the direction of the conversation and guide the show host” (participant #2). This implies that gatekeeping in live television talk shows is a continuous process that is closely monitored and evaluated to achieve intended results. These levels of briefing and continuous gatekeeping indicate that gatekeepers are cognisant of the importance of the practice and use it to curate content, protect the image of the media house and prevent misinformation as discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.1.2 Curating Content

The participants said that one of the goals of gatekeeping in live talk television was curating the content. The findings revealed that television stations use gatekeeping to ensure they produce content that the public could easily consume and worthy their time. The respondents were aware of this role of gatekeeping saying that:

Gatekeeping is a continuous process to discuss how far the host and the guests can go in discussing a particular type of content **(Participant #2- August 2022)**.

This assertion is seen in explosive debates and discussions, which often result in certain participants using derogatory language against others, which risks the media house being sued for defamation. These participants are muted or at times the show host is forced to take a commercial break to enable them time to control the debate. This argument was further bolstered by another participant who indicated:

As the participants argue their points in specific situations, gatekeepers manage what they can disclose, withhold or how far they can go with their points. For example, gatekeepers do so by either muting the participants or advising the show host to make take a new point of discussion **(Participant #3- July 2022)**

One participant also noted the editor, and the producer also spoke to reporters on the ground who provided a live feed to the studio during a talk show to ensure that they are well-prepared before going live on air. This allows them to discuss what they cannot say and other relevant matters.

4.1.3 Protecting the Image of the Media House

The media houses attempted to protect their image to ensure no legal lawsuits were filed against them through gatekeeping. The respondents acknowledged the role of the defamation act, which indicates that an action for defamation remains largely personal. Often, those aggrieved can sue the claimant and the person who said the defamatory words or caused them to be aired on television.

The law of defamation and liability holds the owner or station liable for disseminating the material, so gatekeeping is a good practice. At least I know with... media, it happens that what we call 'live' is between 6 and 20 seconds late, to allow the editors to cut out any unwanted remarks to protect the station against rough people. **(Participant #4- August 2022).**

Further, the need to protect the image of the media house was demonstrated by another participant indicated who was liable for defamatory remarks.

Two people are held responsible: One is the person who says it and the second is the person who broadcasts or communicates it. In live television talk shows, the editors through the show host, can clarify the views said by the guest or allow the guest to retract. **(Participant #5- August 2022).**

4.1.4 Preventing Misinformation

The participants said they noted a rise of misinformation in the contemporary media platform, a phenomenon that most participants attributed to the internet and social media that allowed commentary from active audiences and views of citizen journalists. The respondents agreed that the role of legacy media in dispelling misinformation could not be overestimated. According to one participant, the media houses have the responsibility to their audience to inform them correctly to avoid misinformation.

News-makers or editors sift information in a way that ensures that the audiences get the right information timely and correctly and in a manner that does not go against the set code of conduct or ethics. **(Participant #6- August 2022).**

These findings reflect the social responsibility theory that emphasizes on the need for the media houses to filter out information to ensure incendiary information that might be incite violence or character assassination are not included in the information relayed to the public (Middleton, 2009). These findings are consistent with the study by Owino, (2022) who observed that media played an important role in promoting peace by withholding and censoring information that is rather felt or believed to be incendiary. This extends to misinformation where the media houses are responsible for factual reporting and ensure that only the correct and right information is broadcasted.

4.2 How Gatekeeping Manifests in the Live Talk Television

The study participants reported three ways through which gatekeeping manifests in live television talk shows. These include censorship, self-censorship, and fact-checking. The participant said that these approaches for gatekeeping were achieved using different

techniques, including technology to delay the conversation and broadcast as discussed below.

4.2.1 Censorship

One participant said the use of technology to delay broadcast ensure that certain sections of the arguments are curated or edited out. Usually, there is a 6 to 20 minutes delay on the live broadcast that allows the gatekeepers an opportunity to censor some conversation by pressing a button on the controls to skip/jump some seconds before the comments go live on air.

The Broadcast Delay creates a delay between the live recording and what listeners see and hear. This allows gatekeepers to censor or remove certain parts of the conversation before it's broadcast by **(Participant #2- August 2022)**

Similarly, one of the respondents said the delay enabled censorship to take place “to protect the station against rough people” (Participant #4- August 2022).

However, in as much as the respondents displayed confidence in the use of delay technology for censorship, certain uncontained arguments still pass through the production process to television screens which makes the use of delay technology for censorship not very effective. To overcome this challenge, the participants noted the critical role of self-censorship. One participant said that self-censorship was a common practice among journalists.

Gatekeeping sometimes involves an element of self-censorship for example in a situation such as the one we found ourselves in 2007/08. If television stations were to say everything as it was explicitly, chances are the media would be pointed out for inciting one community against the other. Therefore, as much as possible, gatekeeping involves a level of self-censorship which could be un-journalistic but again necessary **(Participant #7- July 2022)**.

Another respondent said that self-censorship is critical in reducing violence and negative outcomes, citing some of the worst media mishaps in Africa, including the

2007/08 post-election violence and the 1994 Rwandese genocide preceded by wanton ethnic hate speech and accusations. Thus, the need for a journalist to self-censor. The significance of gatekeeping in discussing political matters, live broadcasts of political rallies and ethnic clashes was also highlighted as a major concern.

We practice a very high level of gatekeeping to ensure that whatever was going on air is not vile. Sometimes, it is not worth doing a live feed to the studio because of the nature of the conversation but we allow the reports to cover the events and then edit that footage for news. This allows us to put context and facts into the story (**Participant #7- July 2022**).

The study findings revealed that the local media was extremely cautious during live coverage of political issues, rallies and political talk. Self-censorship was highly practised by journalists because of the fear of sparking political instability. The application of the gatekeeping theory was manifested in the revelations by the participants.

More importantly, the Social Responsibility theory was reflected here by the fact that the journalists and media principals worked for the greater interest of the public but at the same time social aspects of morality and especially personal ethical values were subjected to societal values (Middleton, 2009). The media houses weighed the merits and risks of content for live broadcast and what can be delayed. An example was given by one participant: Announcing Election results should be live because the viewers are eager to know who has won. However, showing a riot live where there is deadly violence can have serious consequences such as during general elections and political unrest.

4.2.2 Fact Finding and Disclaimers

The participants also indicated that fact-finding and disclaimers were important parts of the gatekeeping practice. One participant said that in a live television broadcast, the host, guests, producer, editor, and director “work together to ensure that the conversation is worthwhile and useful to the audience by checking on each other's comments and facts.” **(Participant #6- August 2022)**

Gatekeepers checked for validity especially when having talk television shows with Key Opinion Leaders in different areas of life or profession. For example, one participant said that Fact-checking is common in the gatekeeping process to enable the editors and show hosts to understand new emerging issues such as during the Coronavirus outbreak in 2020. At the time, media houses were accused of misreporting facts about the disease.

In the wake of the pandemic, there was a need to ensure quality control of information through trained journalists to prevent fake news. Further, there was a need for selectivity where the media's role was to bring only the most important news to the public's attention to promote trust. The media also ensured that only useful information was used to overcome the issues of anxiety and uncertainty brought by fake news. **(Participant #7- July 2022).**

These assertions are consistent with the studies by Ennab et al., (2022) who indicated the importance of fact checking information relating to the pandemic before relying outside to the public. The media house has a responsibility to the public to ensure that only reliable and valid information is made available to the members of the public which is a primary tenet of the social responsibility theory that demands that media houses relay factual and reliable information with respect to the information being always communicated.

4.3 The Perception of Journalists on Gatekeeping in Live TV Talk Shows

The study investigated the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows. The following outcomes emerged:

4.3.1 post-production gate-keeping technology

Most of the participants felt that it was challenging to practise gatekeeping live talk shows, mainly considering the level of innovation and development of post-production gate-keeping technology.

When ... media station went live in Kiambu, and ... politician went on air, at the end of the interview, he was asked a question which and responded with, “f*ck you and f*ck you”. These remarks went on air and have been used over the years as an example of what can go wrong in a live television talk show. **(Participant #6- August 2022).**

Participants indicated that journalists do not have control over the utterances and actions of the discussants. One participant said that gatekeeping during live shows is one of the most challenging things and that there is no deliberate play that happens by the editor to listen to the person speaking before pressing a button to cut off the conversation from going on air. “No channel in this country has implemented that system.” (Participant #7-July 2022).

In a clip from the famous AM Live TV talk show titled "Boniface Mwangi faces off with police spokesperson Charles Owino" that streamed on 5th October 2016, the talk show host could not stop the discussants from being aggressive and vulgar concerning the topic being discussed. However, over time the conversation turned into body shaming, with one of the discussants indicating that the other participants had a big stomach making the discussion weird and messy.

One participant who worked in both media houses A and B differed from participants 2 and 4 from media house B on the role of technology in gatekeeping. A participant said that the profanity technology for television was “too expensive” and it would be “so cumbersome to have such a thing” (Participant #7). The participant also said that for effective gatekeeping, the gatekeepers depend on everybody to play their part and “pray that whomever they invite to in-studio says the right things.”

However, participant 7 agrees with Participants 2 and 4 on the role of the human interface in gatekeeping as discussed in the topic of censorship above. Participant 7 noted that the human interface is better than the technology used to delay or cut out unwanted talk during a live TV production. The participant emphasised that the person responsible for controlling the content during live talk shows is the anchor, who serves as the moderator and is the main point of communication for gatekeeping. If the anchor asks a question that goes in the wrong direction or is potentially harmful, the gatekeeper can communicate to the anchor through an earpiece to stop the discussion. The anchor, with the help of the producer, who is listening on the other side of the studio, ensures that the information broadcast is correct. Currently, no technology can be used to prevent potentially damaging content from going on air during live talk shows, and the best way to maintain control over the content is through the anchor and producer's monitoring.

The participants explained what delay/profanity system is used by television stations in Kenya. It emerged that even though the television stations have some sort of delay technology, none had a profanity system. However, for the longest time, their counterparts in radio stations have had one of the profanity systems in place including, but not limited to, Delay Broadcast, Crystal Vision and Eventide.

Profanity technology is not widely used in local TV stations, but it is an option that broadcasters can explore to help them maintain high standards of professionalism. I know with the advancement of technology, particularly artificial intelligence, there is an opportunity to borrow and improve the radio system that has been tried and tested over time. The challenge here, of course, is to have a system that will overcome the effect of jump cuts in television broadcasting. As far as I know, the reason this has only worked for radio and not television is because on radio one only deals with audio files while television has a combination of audio and motion pictures. **(Participant #1, July 2022)**

This finding reveals the underlying problem with profanity filtering technology facing broadcast media in Kenya today. The researchers concluded that in the short and long term, the human capacity to reason gives gatekeepers the power to make informed decisions and the ability to key in commands into the profanity systems for effective gatekeeping in live TV talk shows.

4.3.2 Training of Gatekeepers

The participants agreed that there was inadequate training for the gatekeepers. Furthermore, the participants noted that there was a need for training other live TV production crew, for instance, the camerapersons in the field who are responsible for framing the shots and selecting what goes through their camera lenses for live links to the studios. One participant said that the cameraman in the field is the “editor, director and producer all in one.” (Participant #6- August 2022).

Another participant noted that the challenges that gatekeepers face may be due to poor training. Specifically, the participant said that most journalism trainers in colleges and universities in Kenya do not have practical experience in the newsroom. This posed a challenge for the trainers to impart practical skills to journalism students. One of the biggest issues ailing journalism schools “is that many people who teach in journalism schools have never practised journalism”. The participant added that “the only people

who should teach in media are those with both academic credentials and experience.”
(Participant #5 - August 2022).

One participant proposed the introduction of a system where journalists could earn points by taking short courses to improve their practice.

Just like in legal practice, journalists should take up train opportunities to develop their professional development. This has already been proposed by Kenya’s Editors’ Guild for continuous professional development. **(Participant #6- August 2022)**

4.3.3 Policy and Guidelines

The participants said that there was limited policy and legal framework for the practice of gatekeeping in a live television talk show in Kenya:

One of the key challenges we face in Kenya is the absence of clear policies or guidelines to address gatekeeping in live television talk shows. While there are regulations governing media content in general, they often lack specific provisions related to talk shows. This absence of policies allows for discretionary decision-making by media professionals, which can inadvertently perpetuate biases and favour certain narratives or voices over others. **(Participant #9- August 2022)**

The participants also said that there were general guidelines and policies in media in general, however, there was a lack of specific regulations that targeted live television talk shows in the country. The lack of policies has further exacerbated the practice of gatekeeping process as editors have the discretion to decide which content and material is suitable for viewers. The absence of policies leaves room for “subjective decision-making by gatekeepers”. Without clear guidelines, there is a greater likelihood of personal biases, political affiliations, or commercial interests influencing the selection of guests, topics, and narratives. This can result in “the exclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, leading to an imbalanced representation of issues on these shows.”
(Participant #11- August 2022).

Participants also highlighted the lack of policies and guidelines further promotes inequality and marginalisation of unpopular voices. One participant gave an example of how “certain talk shows tend to focus on urban, middle-class issues, leaving out issues affecting rural or lower-income communities.” Similarly, political bias played a role whereby shows gave disproportionate airtime to certain political figures or parties while ignoring others. In their view, this gatekeeping was used to silence controversial or critical views from marginalised communities and leaders. (Participant #12- August 2022).

One participant said that “the Editors Guild was working on a framework to guide media houses and gatekeepers on how to conduct live television talk shows.” (Participant #10, July 2022).

4.3.4 Societal issue impact Journalists and Gatekeeping

Participants said that despite the training and professionalism of the gatekeepers, sometimes, the current affairs in society affected them and, consequently, the gatekeeping process. One participant said:

One key lesson is that as much as we pretend as a journalist that we are supposed to be the ones who are objective and just in looking at things from that prism of gatekeeping at times its impossible, it’s impossible not to have feelings as a journalist, it’s impossible not to have felt as a journalist and if anybody to tell you with an unfeeling individual they would be lying to you they are just humans with their breaking point. (Participant #1- July 2022).

4.3.5 Retention of Talent and Veterans

From the respondents, it came out very clearly that local media stations were not keen to retain talent and veterans who have institutional memory and run live talk shows so

seamlessly. One participant said that there was a need to retain these talents and veterans for proper gatekeeping. The participant said:

There is nothing better than experience in a television newsroom. You need experienced people who have institutional memory. Such people understand the individual that they will interview thus making the talk worthy of listening and watching **(Participant #10- July 2022)**.

The participant further noted that novice show hosts must be groomed and receive guidance on live TV production. “Experience is the best teacher” and moderating a live talk show requires specific skills and not everyone can fulfil that role. However, the participant says, for young show hosts to take on anchoring responsibilities, it is essential to provide them with proper and extensive guidance. (Participant #10- July 2022).

Concurring with this point, another participant said that local TV stations were understaffed which posed a challenge in the management of newsrooms. The media had laid off seasonal news editors, news anchors, and senior reporters in what the media management call “unsettling changes” to survive the economic slow-down from the Covid-19 hangover and inflation.

The biggest challenge I must accept is the manpower of the anchors or gatekeepers handling the media. There are a lot of turnovers for veterans and gatekeepers who have experience. **(Participant #6- August 2022)**

4.3.5. Research for gatekeeping

The participants said that research departments in media houses played a crucial role by providing facts, in-depth analysis, and investigative support, that ensured that the news reported was reliable and trustworthy. The study revealed that the outputs from the research department enabled journalists to deliver comprehensive and well-informed stories, fostering transparency and upholding the integrity of journalism.

However, participants noted that the local media stations were not keen to fund the research departments. One participant noted that this issue brought about friction between gatekeepers and media owners. Also, the participants added, that this lapse added more work on the show hosts, producer and editor to squeeze their time to undertake research thus creating a bad perception of the process which had an impact on the gatekeeping process.

Another participant added that due to the lapses in the research department, no one was responsible to remind the gatekeepers of certain past issues making the audience accuse the media of “moving on so quickly from one issue to the next with short-lived memory of what happened in the past.” **(Participant #6- August 2022).**

Participants said that gatekeepers are trained to critically analyse data, facts, and other pieces of information gathered and validate sources. Their participation in research allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, enabling them to ask informed questions and provide context in their reporting.

The study revealed that the participants expressed strong emotional responses regarding the question of research funding for talk shows as they believed the lack of it had an impact on the practice of gatekeeping.

Gatekeepers must be involved in the research for the news development and for talk shows. This allows the gatekeepers to, at least, have the background of the topic and enable them to align internally on the best approach to gatekeeping for the talk. **(Participant #3- July 2022)**

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings based on the key research questions: i) What is the role of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya? ii) How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya? iii) What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows? In the next chapter, I discuss the findings and conclude the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise the key findings based on the research questions, then I discuss the outcomes and conclude the study. Finally, I highlight the impact on policy and practice.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

For this study, I set out to investigate three main questions: a) What is the role of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya? b) How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya? c) What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows? The study established the findings as follows:

Table 5.3 1: Summary of Key Findings

a) What is the role of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya?

- The gatekeeping process curates content that the public consumes easily during the discussion. Gatekeepers decide what content they will discuss and how far they will go into the discussion.
- The gatekeeping process is used to protect the image of the media house. This is done by limiting derogatory language, defamation, unfounded claims, or inciting viewers to violence, all of which may put the media house at risk of legal action.
- Television stations in Kenya use gatekeeping to prevent misinformation. Gatekeepers sift information to ensure that the audiences get the right information timely, correctly, and in a manner that does not go against the set code of conduct

or ethics and set roles.

b) How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya?

- Gatekeeping manifests in live TV talk shows through the use of technology to delay broadcasts to ensure that certain sections of the arguments are omitted from the broadcast.
- Secondly, gatekeeping manifests in live TV talk show through self-censorship. The gatekeeper control what goes on air and stays clear of, for instance, controversy, misinformation or incitement. The talkshow or reporter recants or clarifies the unfortunate event that such an issue passes through to the audience.
- Finally, gatekeeping is realised through the internal processes of fact-finding and disclaimers, as gatekeepers are involved in reviewing the topic of discussion.

c) What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows?

- Gatekeeping in live talk shows was a difficult exercise for the local media. Participants cited the inadequate level of innovation and development of post-production gate-keeping technology as one of the challenges. Inadequate training for the gatekeepers also impacting negatively on the quality of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows.
- This study found that societal issues impact journalists and gatekeeping. Despite the training and professionalism of the gatekeepers, sometimes, issues such as ethnic background or political affiliation affected the gatekeeping process.
- The high turnover of talent and veterans in the newsrooms was also impacting the quality of gatekeeping. The local media stations were not keen to retain talented and experienced journalists to run the live talk shows.

- Local media houses were also not keen to invest in research to support gatekeepers. This lapse leaves gatekeepers with little or no time to review issues before a live talk show.

5.2 Discussion

Following the study, key pertinent issues emerged from the three research questions. These issues were; the roles and manifestations of gatekeeping in live TV production in Kenya, journalists' perceptions of gatekeeping practice and areas of improvement in improving gatekeeping. I discuss the issues in detail as follows:

5.2.1 Gatekeeping as a means of maintaining audience trust

The findings show that gatekeeping enabled media houses to build and maintain trust with their audiences. The findings of this study showed that the role of gatekeeping in live television shows in Kenya includes curating content, preventing misinformation, and protecting the image and credibility of the media house. These findings were consistent with the current research on gatekeeping and how news outlets use the practice to maintain trust with the audience. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the proliferation of misinformation, many people, especially the elderly, relied on mainstream media, especially television talk shows and news, as the reliable source of truth. Olsen et al. (2022) reported that while the internet and social media were filled with misinformation and fake news, citizens relied on legacy media such as television and radio to get the right information. The common belief of the citizens was that the media houses would sift through the volumes of information and report an accurate and honest account of events.

The findings of the study are consistent with the arguments of Tsfaty et al. (2020), who underscored the importance of journalistic commitment to correct misinformation and enable the members of the public to learn the truth as expressed in the journalistic discourse. Further, Weaver and Willnat (2012) emphasised the journalistic principles of not publishing rumours that journalists consider not to have value to the audience. Therefore, journalists should practice gatekeeping as a means to counteract misinformation, distortions, and exaggerations.

The findings of this study also indicated that gatekeeping helps protect the image of the media house. The participants said that some of the information shared in the media houses had the potential to water down the reputation of the media house, making them less appealing to the members of the public and advertisers. In recent years, lawsuits against media houses have become ubiquitous and often threaten the suitability of the media. In 2016 the court of appeals in Nakuru, in the case of *Nation Newspapers Limited v Peter Baraza Rabando* [2016] was awarded Kes 2 million for running a story between 30th October 1998 to 4th November 1998 titled “The man who milked Jumbo”. Similar cases have been filed against the media houses dating back to the 1990s, including *Peter Kimani Nene v Nation Newspapers Limited* [2010], where all the applications against the media house were allowed. Such cases water down the image of the media house. Similarly, in the case, *Musikari Kombo v Royal Media Services Limited* [2018] eKLR, the Court of Appeal granted Sh6 million in damages to the appellant against Royal Media Services.

The above-mentioned cases underscore the significance of journalists and organisations in mitigating the risk of defamation. In such instances, the media houses often have the burden of proving that their story was true, which might go against the principles of

journalism since the accused media houses might be forced to disclose the source of information or the whistle-blower. Hence, media organizations must exercise responsibility in their broadcasting or publishing practices through gatekeeping. Failure to do so may result in damaging consequences for the brand and a loss of public trust due to potential allegations of defamation, misinformation, or incitement.

From a global perspective, different countries have different defamation laws, like the Kenyan defamation act. In the U.K., the Defamation Act of 2013 came under significant criticism for what activists called “gaging journalists” (Watson, Roldan, & Faza, 2017). In the U.S., the Speech Act of 2010 was developed in response to the issue of Libel tourism. It was evident that both developed and developing countries have put in place laws that check the outputs of media. Hence, in the abundance of media laws and heightened risk of law suites, media houses must ensure that only accurate information was put out to protect their hard-to-find advertisement revenue and mitigate the risk of layoff or shutting down due to cashflow crisis.

In Kenya, the role of gatekeeping in live television had similarities to international practices across the world, however, with several variations in various important domains. First, in the regulatory domain, different nations had a set of regulations and guidelines that shape the gatekeeping processes. In Kenya, the media was regulated by the Communications Authority of Kenya together with the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) (Owino, 2022). These media regulations and guidelines ensure that media practitioners adhere to their professional standards, ethics, and the promotion of diverse voices. Similarly, in other countries and regions, there were national regulatory bodies with frameworks that demand specific gatekeeping processes and restrictions (Ristow,

2013). The practices might also vary depending on the region and the political climate of the region.

Additionally, media ownership was another factor that influences gatekeeping practices of a country. In Kenya, media ownership was decentralized and a few major players were dominating the market. This concentration posed a risk in sharing unpopular views and opinions. Olick, (2021) in a doctoral thesis reported that the ownership of the media influenced the narratives in Kenya. Those with influence and control of media channels were able to channel their views and opinions on various issues especially those touching on the country's politics which are always contentious this is likely to impact the diversity of voices making it hard to represent different voices.

The other issue was that gatekeepers and the practice were influenced by political factors including government control, censorship and political bias (Prior, 2013). In Kenya, just like in the United States media outlets were expected to maintain editorial independence, but political pressure and influence still shaped gatekeeping decisions to some extent. In other countries, the level of political interference in gatekeeping varied significantly, ranging from strict government control to a more independent media environment.

The last theme that emerged was that the role of gatekeeping was to enable gatekeepers to disseminate consumable and useful information to the public. According to the social responsibility theory of the press, media and press is granted the freedom to perform their function. However, media freedom should be exercised responsibly as (Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, & Omenugha, 2013) posit. Thus, the content made available to the public must align with the values and belief systems of the public and society.

Therefore, content deemed inciteful or hateful must not be broadcasted to the public. This is because gatekeepers bear personal responsibility for hate speech. For example, Joshua Arap Sang, a presenter on a vernacular radio station was accused of coordinating attacks against a community through his radio programme at KASS FM and he was summoned by the International Criminal Court to answer to incitement charges (Wilson & Gillett, 2018).

5.2.2 Gatekeeping to uphold media ethics and quality control

This study revealed that gatekeeping played a crucial role in upholding media ethics and ensuring quality control. Various forms of gatekeeping, such as censorship, self-censorship, and fact-checking, were used in live television talk shows. The media's responsibility to provide accurate and timely information was supported by theories, such as Social Responsibility Theory, that emphasis the need for reliable and valid accounts of events and discourses across different platforms (Middleton, 2009).

In the context of live television, the gatekeepers actively fact-checked the information presented during live discussions to ensure its accuracy and reliability (Participant #4 - August 2022). Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of exercising restraint and practising self-censorship as part of the gatekeeping process (Participant #6 - August 2022).

Participants in this study emphasised the significance of employing delay tactics to prevent derogatory and defamatory language, particularly in live broadcasts. This practise aligned with the efforts of both the media and the government to curb hate speech and incitement to violence (Bowman & Bowman, 2016).

This study also revealed that gatekeeping in live television shows manifests in various ways through which the respective media houses are used for quality control. Firstly, gatekeepers such as producers and hosts had the authority to select the panellists who appeared on the shows, shaping the range of perspectives presented in the discussion. Factors like popularity, expertise, controversy, and alignment with the show's agenda influenced the gatekeeper's choices of Guests. Thus, for a balanced opinion during the talk shows, gatekeepers ought to include certain voices in the discussion to impact the diversity of opinions expressed, hence the quality of the content aired to the public.

Furthermore, the study showed that gatekeepers had control over topic selection, enabling them to prioritize specific issues while neglecting others. This framing of topics significantly influenced the narrative and public perception, often favouring sensational or controversial subjects over more substantive discussions. Further, time allocation was another aspect controlled by gatekeepers, determining how long each guest could speak and the overall balance of the conversation. This control over time can affect the depth of analysis and the exploration of different perspectives. Editors and media teams need to strike a balance on how they exercise influence through the moderation and censorship of conversations, potentially distorting the original intent of participants to adhere to legal requirements, broadcast standards, or shape the narrative.

Moreover, in the era of social media and interactive communication, the study revealed that gatekeepers need to extend their responsibilities to audience participation. The study showed that gatekeepers selectively choose which audience asks questions or shares their opinions, thereby impacting the representation of diverse voices and addressed issues.

Finally, the prevalence of fake news further emphasised the importance of fact-checking before disseminating information to the public. In the wake of the pandemic, fake news proliferated, creating confusion and misinformation about the spread and management of the situation. Fact-checking, as highlighted by Porter and Wood (2021), significantly reduces the prevalence of fake news and misinformation. The findings of this study confirm that fact-checking remains a crucial aspect of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows, with the Kenyan media actively working to eliminate misinformation.

5.2.3 Challenges facing Gatekeeping practice in live television talk shows

The participants said that gatekeeping in live television talk shows presented a complex task, demanding dedication effort and resources to guarantee the dissemination of accurate information. Within the realm of live television talk shows, gatekeepers encountered various challenges, one of which was the prevalent issue of fake news. In a study conducted by Mutugi et al. (2020), the researchers shed light on the difficulties faced by television journalists in identifying and addressing fake news. These challenges encompassed a wide range of factors based on news sources, technology, education, skills and training, and interpretation of information.

Secondly, the study revealed that television stations faced inadequate innovation and development of post-production gate-keeping technology for live talk shows. The implementation of the broadcast delay technology was one aspect that gatekeepers said would enhance gatekeeping by preventing profanity, bloopers, nudity, or other undesirable speech from making it to air. However, this study revealed the necessity for local television stations and gatekeepers to prioritize skills development. This is because the human intellect possesses the intelligence and capability required to effectively gatekeep a live talk show through tactics such as self-censorship, skillful

framing of questions, and interjections to make a clarification or to refer to past data on record. Technology, in the context of live television talk shows, serves as a tool to support the gatekeeping process and the gatekeepers. Also, the study revealed that there was a need to train gatekeepers in the studio, the reporters and camerapersons on the ground as they play a critical role in gatekeeping through the framing of their talk and shots.

Thirdly, the study revealed that the training for the gatekeepers was inadequate further impacting the quality of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows. This was corroborated by the MCK reports which noted that although the MCK had developed a curriculum for middle-level journalism training institutions, its impact on standardising training had been negligible. The training model/curriculum choice may have had a positive or negative impact. In Zambia, for example, Gondwe (2014) noted that the training offered was a Western curriculum, which compelled students to take Western journalists as models. The research lamented that classroom learning of ethical behaviour did not translate into practice. Issues of values and moral decadence were seen to be influenced by what was learned in the journalism practice in the field. Globalisation was cited as the reason behind the break-up of the community spirit and the loss of language. To improve the quality of journalism, it is crucial to establish a strong foundation in journalism schools by employing instructors who have practical experience in the field. Additionally, gatekeepers should continue their learning and development even after entering the profession to refine their skills and enhance their performance.

This study revealed that the high turnover of talented individuals and experienced veterans in Kenyan newsrooms had adversely affected the quality of gatekeeping. Local media stations were not prioritising the retention of valuable talent and seasoned

professionals who possess institutional memory and are adept at running live talk shows seamlessly. As a consequence, novice show hosts were deprived of the opportunity to learn and be mentored by these veterans, missing out on valuable guidance in areas such as live TV production and effective gatekeeping.

Another issue that emerged from the study was the concern about limited policies and regulatory frameworks for live television talk shows. The lack of a regulatory framework was a double-edged sword. While the lack of it allowed the editors and journalists to exercise their freedom of the press regulations also opened avenues for restrictions and imposition by the government and other influential parties in the country. This could restrict journalists' ability to report independently and undermine the fundamental principles of a free press. Besides, gatekeeping without regulations could perpetuate a lack of diversity in news content and representation. Without guidelines promoting inclusivity, newsrooms may overlook or marginalise voices from underrepresented groups, reinforcing existing power imbalances. This could result in a limited range of perspectives being presented and limit the public's access to a variety of viewpoints.

Laxity by local media houses to invest in research to support gatekeepers impacted gatekeeping in live TV talk shows. This finding is critical because it explained the lapse that the media was accused of because gatekeepers had little or no time to review issues before a live talk show or fact-check them while the show was in progress. As a result of this, the media was also accused of moving on so quickly from one issue to the next with short-lived memory of what happened in the past.

Finally, this study found that societal issues impact journalists and gatekeeping. Despite the training and professionalism of the gatekeepers, sometimes, the current affairs in society, such as political affiliation and political violence, affected them and, consequently, the gatekeeping process. This finding contravened the tenets of the Social Responsibility theory that proposes that media principles should work for the greater public good and ensure that media practitioners are held accountable by the wider society. The theory focused on the social aspect of morality in the sense that it would 'sublimate' personal ethical values to societal values. It entails being responsible to society and holding the press accountable. As a result of various societal issues, the process of gatekeeping in live talk shows may continue to face challenges and obstacles. These external factors have an impact on the decision-making abilities of gatekeepers, making it more difficult for them to effectively carry out their role in selecting and managing the content of these shows.

5.3 Conclusion

The main objective of the current study was to determine the role of gatekeepers in live television talk shows in Kenya. The study sought to address three research questions: role of gatekeeping, the manifestation of the gatekeeping in live television talk shows and the perception of journalist on gatekeeping live television talk shows by focusing on the study of KTN and NTV. The findings indicated that gatekeeping in live television plays an important role in packaging information, protecting the image of the media house and preventing misinformation. Considering the delicate topics discussed in live TV talk shows, gatekeeping plays an important role in ensuring that the correct information that is socially acceptable reaches the audience promptly. In general, media houses used gatekeeping to also maintain the trust of their audiences. Hence,

gatekeepers must pay close attention to the topics discussed on live television to ensure that they are received and accepted socially. Furthermore, the findings revealed that gatekeepers were aware of the role of media is in line with the social responsibility theory. That the media has the role of informing the members of the public of important happening, however, when executing their duty, the media must exercise responsibility to ensure that all the information put out is in line with societal values. Moreover, the media must conduct its role per the freedoms of the press including acknowledging the need for external, professional self-regulation. Therefore, gatekeepers must be cognisant of the important role they play in setting the agenda hence the information shared must be carefully sifted and factual to also protect the image of the media house and possible defamation cases.

The second objective of the study focused on how gatekeeping manifested in live television talk shows in Kenya. The findings revealed that the gatekeeping process in the live television show started with the editorial meetings followed by the selection of the topic of discussion and the guests. The selection of a specific date and time sometimes can be used for gatekeeping purposes depending on the circumstances surrounding the topic of discussion. date and time of the discussion. The findings also revealed that censorship, self-censorship, and fact-checking were some of the most used gatekeeping practices. Furthermore, the study unveiled that media personnel consistently provided disclaimers to clarify that the opinions expressed by guests did not necessarily reflect the views of the media organization. The study also revealed that gatekeepers used technology such as audio delays to blur or eliminated the sections of the discussions that were considered inappropriate and unsuitable for a live broadcast even though the technology was lacking in television. Fact-checking was also used to ensure that the issues that the discussants were addressing were factual.

Lastly, the study sought to understand the perception of the journalists regarding gatekeeping in live television. The study revealed that gatekeepers in live television talk shows faced challenges including a lack of appropriate profanity technology, a lack of specific policies to facilitate the practice in live television talk shows, a lack of funding for research, high turnover of gatekeepers. Following the study, I was able to pinpoint the most effective methods to enhance the practice as discussed in the sections below. These findings offer valuable insights in the media practice and bridges the existing gaps in literature with respect to gatekeeping in the broadcast television and media setting. The findings of the study will provide valuable insights to the media practitioners and policy makers with respect to formulating effective policies that can regulate the media industry and fraternity.

5.3.1 My Thesis

My thesis is that even though local media continue to innovate their programming to include more live television talk shows and live feeds from different locations to spice up the discussion with different voices, the gatekeeping practice continues to face challenges. This is because media houses and gatekeepers are not putting deliberate efforts to improve the practice. These revelations come in the wake of dwindling television viewership due to the diversification of the audience to other media platforms. As a result, there is pressure on television stations to innovate and improve their programming, including live talk shows, by taking advantage of advancements in technology and guaranteed media freedoms. Furthermore, there is pressure on the media to address the growing need of the audience who are more informed about current affairs, and who are actively involved in the live talk show through instant feedback to the gatekeepers on social media, calls and instance messages. Therefore, my conclusion is that unless gatekeepers and newsroom managers conquer the

challenges facing gatekeeping practice, efforts to retain viewers and consequently the advertisers will be futile leading to the closure of the already cash-starved television stations.

5.4 Recommendations

I made the following recommendations that can be used to enhance the policy and practice of gatekeeping in live television talk shows:

5.4.1 Television stations to Provide Proficiency Training to moderators/hosts of live television shows.

Training and development of live television show moderators can go a long way in improving the gatekeeping process in the local and Kenyan contexts. First, the media house must invest in the training and development of moderators to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to guide the gatekeeping process in live TV talk shows in the country. Moreover, media houses must strive to retain their talent and reduce their overall rate of turnover. This will enable new journalists to gain experience and skills, and knowledge on effective media practice that can foster their maturity.

5.4.2 Media houses to Investment in modern technology

Current advances in science and technology look promising in promoting gatekeeping activities. Different technologies are being developed, such as profanity delay, which is a technology that allows you to censor or erase audio before it is broadcast by introducing a delay between the live recording and what listeners hear. This delay is built up by slowly extending the natural pauses as hosts/guests speak so listeners do not detect any gaps or forced pauses. The amount of delay can vary, and some systems let you choose how much delay you want and whether to erase the objectionable part or alter it with a sound effect. Television stations in Kenya should prioritise investment in

research and innovation to adapt popular radio profanity systems, such as Sonifex Delay Broadcast, Crystal Vision, and Eventide, for television use. Alternatively, they should explore harnessing the power of AI and machine learning to develop a profanity system specifically tailored for television broadcasting. This study revealed that there is currently no available profanity system in Kenya for television networks.

5.4.3 Media house to Invest in the research department

The need for research remains critical in advancing effective and good media practices, particularly concerning the changes occurring in legacy media. In this respect, the media agencies must invest in a research and development department that can enable them to conduct research and studies relating to effective practices that can be adopted by media houses to improve efficiency with practices such as gatekeeping while also carrying research studies on effective mechanisms that can be used to navigate the current volatile media landscape largely characterised by two-way communication.

5.4.4 Government and media council of Kenya to policy guidelines

There is a need to develop policy guidelines that define and outline the gatekeeping process in different contexts, especially in live talk television shows. These guidelines will guide different media houses in the country to effectively carry out the gatekeeping process while also serving as the standard across all the media houses in the country. The guidelines, by MCK and/or the Editors' Guild, will ensure that the gatekeeping process is conducted uniformly across all the media houses.

5.4.5 Engagement of veteran media personnel

Media houses should try to retain professionals with institutional memory who can grasp issues more quickly and make informed decisions about different issues in the live television context. This can help advance the gatekeeping process by ensuring that

the information and the content that is published and made available to the public members have been sieved and curated effectively. This ensures that it receives the appropriate or the deemed acceptance by members of the public. They also serve as mentors for upcoming journalists.

5.4.6 Enhance the training of journalists

The study recommends the enhancement of training of journalists in Kenya on several fronts. One, journalism schools should consider employing qualified trainers with practical newsroom experience to benefit upcoming journalists. Secondly, local media houses should encourage the gatekeepers to acquire proficiency training through short courses to enhance their gatekeeping practice. Thirdly, journalists may be considered for post-graduate training after completing undergraduate training in a specialised field such as medicine. This is critical, especially for gatekeepers, as it gives them an upper hand in research and understanding of the discussions on critical issues. Thus, this makes live TV talk shows worthwhile.

5.5 Contribution of the Study

The study contributes in various ways to policy, research, and practice. The study fills the knowledge gaps relating to gatekeeping in live television in Kenya. Moreover, the study provides insights to address the challenges facing gatekeeping practice. Gatekeepers, media owners and policymakers will benefit from the findings and recommendations of this study. The study highlights the complexity of gatekeeping practice in live television talk shows therefore, it provides the stakeholders with relevant information to finetune their actions and interventions. Overall, I envision that this study will contribute to the ever-growing literature on television journalism, and, in practice, it will contribute to the survival and sustenance of television stations.

5.6 Recommendation for future studies

While the study attempted to fill the current gaps in the literature relating to gatekeeping in live TV talk shows, further studies can be carried out to compare the gatekeeping process in local media and international media live television talk shows. Also, further studies can delve into investigating the influence of progress in machine learning and artificial intelligence on gatekeeping in television stations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview schedule

My name is Daniel T. Mbugua, and I am a student at Moi University pursuing a master's degree. I would like to ask a few questions about gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya to enable me to complete my research work.

Introduction questions

- i. How would you describe your career in journalism?
- ii. When did your journey in Television broadcasting begin?
- iii. What has your experience in live TV shows been like?

Specific Field Questions

a. What is the role of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows in Kenya?

- i. How do you define gatekeeping?
- ii. How important is gatekeeping in running live TV talk shows in Kenya?
- iii. What gatekeeping functions take place in live TV shows?
- iv. What are the critical elements of gatekeeping?
- v. How does gatekeeping work?

b. How does gatekeeping manifest in live TV talk shows in Kenya?

- i. What is the process of gatekeeping in your TV station?
- ii. What role and to what extent are editors, producers, directors, and media owners involved in the gatekeeping process?
- iii. What internal and external factors are considered during the gatekeeping process for live TV talk shows?
- iv. What examples can you share of your gatekeeping skills we put to the test live on air?

- How do you avert issues such as controversy and unethical issues from guests in live TV talk shows?
- In case of a breach of media ethics during live TV talk shows, who bears the consequences and why?

c. What is the perception of journalists on gatekeeping in live TV talk shows?

- i. What is your view about gatekeeping in media organisations?
- ii. What challenges do journalists face in the gatekeeping process?
- iii. What can local TV stations and hosts adopt to improve the process?

Appendix II: Research Schedule

Activity	Preferred Timeframe
Developing research questions	5 days
Developing a research design	3 days
Design & data generation techniques	1 week
Seeking permissions	1 week
Identifying research participants	2 weeks
Collecting data	3 weeks
Transcribing audio recordings	2 weeks
Coding and analysing data	3 weeks
Interpretation and discussions	2 weeks
Writing a report	2 months
Rehearing presentation	2 days
Presenting the findings and recommendations	1 day

Appendix III: Introduction Letter

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a master's student in the department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies, School of Information Sciences, Moi University.

I am researching "GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: A STUDY OF TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA".

I kindly request you to participate in the study by providing the information requested below. I appreciate your voluntary participation, and your responses will be regarded with much confidentiality and will only be used for this study.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Daniel Mbugua.

Appendix IV: Participant Consent Form

GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: A STUDY OF TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA

Consent to take part in research

I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves providing information that will help the researcher understand the concept of gatekeeping in live TV talk shows.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, and I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's thesis

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's personal Google Drive until after a successful thesis defence and graduation.

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of graduation.

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix V: Authority Letter from the University



**MOI UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL INFORMATION SCIENCES
NAIROBI CAMPUS**

Tel: (053) 43153

Fax: (053) 43153

P.O Box 63056-00200
NAIROBI
KENYA

MU/NRB/IS/SA/14

2nd March 2022

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

Upper Kabete.

NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT – MBUGUA DANIEL THUO – SHRD/PGJ/01/15

This is to confirm that the above named is a Postgraduate student of Moi University, School of Information Sciences, Department of Publishing, Journalism And Communication Studies.

The student successfully defended his proposal and is due to proceed for his research data collection. The research Title is – *“Gatekeeping in Live TV Talk Shows: A Multiple Case Study Of Crossfire And Your World Television Talk Shows In Kenya”*

The student is in the process of obtaining a research permit to enable him visit the identified research centers. The University shall highly appreciate any assistance accorded to him.

Yours faithfully,


**MOI UNIVERSITY
NAIROBI SATELLITE CAMPUS
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES
P.O. Box 63050 – 00200
NAIROBI
COORDINATOR, COMMUNICATION STUDIES
NAIROBI CAMPUS**

Appendix VI: Nacosti Certificate

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
RefNo: 497494	Date of Issue: 10/March/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr.. Daniel Thuo Mbugua of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TV TALK SHOWS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF CROSSFIRE AND YOUR WORLD TELEVISION TALK SHOWS IN KENYA for the period ending : 10/March/2023.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/22/16157	
497494	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Applicant Identification Number	Verification QR Code
	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	

Appendix VII: Letter to Media Houses

Mbugua Daniel
Thuo,

Moi University.

Standard Group Plc HQ Office,
The Standard Group Center,
Mombasa Road.
P.O Box 30080-00100,
Nairobi, Kenya.

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request to interview the editorial team for Academic Research

I am a master's student in the Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies Department at the School of Information Sciences, Moi University.

I am researching "GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: A STUDY OF TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA".

I kindly request permission to interview the editorial team for my study. The responses will be treated with great confidentiality and will only be used for this study.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Mbugua.

Appendix VIII: Plagiarism Awareness Certificate



SR206

ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution

THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

MBUGUA DANIEL THVO

SHRD/PGJ/01/15

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis entitled: **GATEKEEPING IN LIVE TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA** with similarity index of 8% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count:24635

Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu
CERM-ESA Project Leader Date: 26/06//2023
