



**THE CONTEXT OF VIEWERSHIP AND THE PRODUCTION OF TELEVISION
SERIAL DRAMA FICTION IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

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K90/93146/2013

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) IN COMMUNICATION AND
INFORMATION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS
COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

OCTOBER, 2021

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the original author of this research work, that the work or part of it has not been presented anywhere for any form of publication or for the award of any other degree. Sources used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

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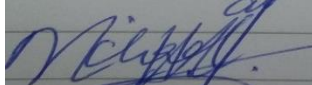
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a journey, which was made possible by many individuals and institutions that I wish to acknowledge. I am sincerely grateful to my supervisors: Prof. Robert White and Dr Michael M. Kamau for their dedication, unswerving critique and incisiveness and their immense guidance throughout the study. I would also like to thank Dr George Gathigi, Dr Oriaso all of the University of Nairobi, Dr Ochichi of Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, Dr Isaac Mutunga and Dr Wilson Ugangu of Multimedia University for their invaluable suggestions at various stages of writing the thesis. I also want to thank Professor Ndeti Ndati the Director of School of Journalism and Mass Communication for constant advice and encouragement, my employer, Multimedia University of Kenya, for supporting my studies and granting me time to undertake the PhD programme.

I am grateful to my Colleagues at the Multimedia University of Kenya, Faculty of Media and Communication for their understanding throughout the period. I thank my family members for their support and prayers during the time of the study. I will forever be indebted to my wife, Laura Omoto, son Abe Auta and daughter Ava Auta for their love, encouragement and support and for their sacrifice during the time I spent away from them in the process of collecting data and writing this thesis. Lastly, I thank the almighty God for giving me the health, strength and grace to pursue my PhD studies.

ABSTRACT

The study, 'the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya', explores how audience watch and interrelate with the producers and the TV station executives in the consumption of the serial drama fiction programming. There has been little discourse and interrogation on how the viewers engage and draw meaning from the serials. The objectives scrutinises these issues as follows: To determine the context of viewership of television serial drama fiction among audience in Nairobi, Kenya. It further seeks to gain an understanding on the lack of entertainment value of domestic TV serial drama fictions and the causes of their dissatisfaction in contrast to foreign productions. The study also explores the extent to which the producers understand the entertainment needs of their audience in a serial drama production. Finally, the study determines how the TV station executives contextualise their audiences' entertainment needs and fulfil the producers' expectations in the genre. The research is anchored on uses and gratification, active audience and cultural proximity theories. The study employs a mixed-method design approach by using survey questionnaires and applying simple random, purposive and systematic sampling techniques. The study is further organised at three levels. In the first, 422 interview guide questionnaires were administered to respondents in three randomly selected constituencies of Nairobi followed by nine FGDs. The constituencies were Embakasi West, Makadara and Kibra. Sixteen in-depth interviews were convened with TV drama producers and station executives. Survey questionnaires (415) were finally analyzed by SPSS and triangulated together with the qualitative findings. The results indicate that there is an interaction between viewership and the audience life context. The domestic audience finds more entertainment content in the foreign TV serial drama fictions than in the local productions. The audience prefers them because of their superior production treatment; from the appropriate choice of a storyline, creative dialogue development and depth of actors. Overall, they perceive them as more 'life-like', genuine and believable. The local producers have failed to interpret these audience nuances for leveraging on their productions. Besides, there is an emerging digital divide among low-income viewers with the introduction of digital broadcasting. There is also mistrust and disconnect among the producers and the station executives; a critical link to sustainable good domestic productions. The study recommends workshops on retraining/ advancing of skills in scripting for the serial drama producers, setting up of TV/Film acting schools, streamlining the working relationship between the station executives and the producers and revamping the 60% local content policy to capture aspects on improvement of quality. Finally, there is also a need to set up a TV/Film research centre.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AMDI	-	African Media Development Initiative
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
BARB	-	Broadcast Audience Research Board
CA	-	Communication Authority of Kenya
DFID	-	Department of Finance & International Development
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FTA	-	Free to Air
ICT	-	Information Communication Technology
IEBC	-	Independent Electoral & Boundary Commission
KARF	-	The Kenya Audience Research Foundation
KBC	-	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KBS	-	Kenya Bureau of Statistics
KDHS	-	Kenya Demographic and Household Survey
KFC	-	Kenya Film Commission
KIMC	-	Kenya Institute of Mass Communication
KNBS	-	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KTN	-	Kenya Television Network
KIIs	-	Key In-depth Interviews
MMU	-	Multimedia University
NACOSTI	-	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NCPD	-	National Council for Population & Development
NTV	-	Nation Television

SAARF	-	South African Audience Research Foundation
SABC	-	South African Broadcasting Corporation
TV	-	Television
USA	-	United States of America
USF	-	Universal Service Fund
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization
VOK	-	Voice of Kenya

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter traces the meaning, style, and the development of the television serial drama production and programming from different regions of the world. The areas include the USA, Europe, Latin America, parts of Africa, and finally focusing on Kenya. This background explores the context under which these programmes are produced and consumed by the audiences. The chapter also presents a statement of the research problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, justifications, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

TV serial drama fiction is a popular genre across the world. They are universal TV production and programming phenomenon attractive to sponsors and low in production cost (Brown, Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Creeber (2001) observes that the term television serial or serialisation refers to the continuation of story lines and the consistency of themes throughout episodes, which reoccur at regular and usually reliable intervals of a TV channel's schedule.

In the television serial drama, the story and discourse do not conclude, the threads of the story are picked up again after a hiatus. However, the serial has a closer confusing genre known as a series. The series is similar to an anthology of short stories. Some serials eventually end, and some may never conclude, or reach a new equilibrium (Kozloff, 1992 cited in Creeber, 2001). There is usually a cliff hanger at the end of each episode to keep the audience in suspense and encourage loyalty to the programme (Hobson, 2003).

Silverstone (1981) argues that societal myths embed the success of television drama narrative. Myths are traditional societal stories that were narrated to either entertain, as cautionary or as lessons to be emulated by the broader community. Moreover, that television storytelling structure takes a similar model. Fiske & Hartley (2004) reinforces this line of argument by saying that television performs a 'bardic function'; meaning that it serves as an intermediary which praise as well as provokes us with its contradictory stories.

The serials have been around for many centuries, first popularized in the newspapers and magazines of the 19th century. Readers would wait anxiously for the serialized novels of Charles Dickens, where 'the characters developed into a sort of communal property' (VorGerlinde, 1990). The concept would later be spread in radio in the 1930s by companies like Proctor and Gamble, a detergent manufacturer in the USA, which sponsored captivating radio dramas targeted at the women audience (Lavin, 1995). The radio drama serials gradually became known as 'soaps' embodying the sponsor's products. It was later adapted to television and has become a universal genre in media (Borchers, 1994). Indeed, there is a deep and rich history of the genre in the USA, Britain and the Latin American countries which have further influenced productions in other regions of the world (Lavin, 1995; Martin Barbero, 1993; Livingstone, 1988).

The serial dramas are diverse either by their regional production or the storyline style. For instance, the British and American TV serial drama fiction developed from different broadcast models; therefore, their approach to story themes and treatment is also dissimilar (Livingstone, 1988). One typical characteristic of US serial genre is the open narrative structure. A story might not have an endpoint, and some could last for an extended period. They are also considered as pure entertainment programming (Rogers & Antola, 2006; Brown et al., 1989) For example,

‘The Guiding Light’, was on the TV screen for five decades similarly to ‘Days of Our Lives’, which has also been on the air for decades.

The daytime schedule, the female appeal and the engaging story lines where the audience is the subject for public interest and interrogation is what defines British television serial dramas (Geraghty, 2005). For instance, the British soap operas like *The East Enders*, *Coronation Street*, and *Brookside* revolve around familiar thematic working-class issues like drug abuse, bereavement, and relationships, among others (Livingstone, 1988). The audience reception and perception of the programme determine its entertainment value (Hobson, 1982; Livingstone, 1988; Martin Barbero, 1993).

Serial drama fiction viewership, is also closely tied to the concept of voyeurism. The concept was initially developed in film theory (Mulvey, 1985). In film, voyeurism describes the sustained gaze and explains a relationship of power between the viewer and the text (where the viewer feels empowered because of “his” gaze). The established notion is that, the soap opera viewer likes to gaze and eavesdrop on the programme conversations. This forms the ‘pleasure of looking’ picking out on the secret lives of the characters which is not public to the rest of the casts. Calvert (2004) reinforces this by arguing that we live in a world of ‘voyeur’ and like to watch others at their intimate moments where their secrets and dirty laundry are revealed. This is a typical story arc in serial drama fictions. Zhanna et al (2010) argues that personal characteristics are related to the television viewing habits, and to an extent can also be a pointer to ones programme choice.

The serial dramas are known as Telenovelas in Latin America. They started as radio novellas in Cuba in the 1940s as a local format of the US soap operas. They were later introduced into television and spread to the rest of Latin America. Juan (2012) defines the telenovelas as follows; 'Daily serials which are broadcast 5 or 6 times a week both in prime time and during the day. They have a limited run which varies but, on average, they have 120 episodes (known in Spanish as "capítulos", which means "chapters"). There are telenovelas aimed at children, teenagers, or mature audiences. Because telenovelas are melodramatic, there is a clear emphasis on feelings and emotions.

Martin-Barbero (1993, p.224) argues that the foundation and popularity of telenovelas in Latin America is their narrative style, a depiction of mediation between the traditional culture and modernity recognised even by the 'drunkard'. It creates a symbolic cultural context in which audiences articulate their frustrations and seek solutions. In the melodrama, there is a constant search for recognition. The audiences perceive themselves in the plots which draw from the daily endeavours and struggles; they further identify with the characters (Martin-Barbero, 1993).

The function of the telenovelas is in the collective imagination of the audience, which manifests in discussion within 'family, neighbourhood, workplaces and friend networks' (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p.156-57). Oliviera (1993), argues that the telenovelas create a ritzy world to the unfulfilled dreams and fantasies of the audiences', and this only serves the consumerism market. Nevertheless, Stavans (2010) argues that we cannot deny the tremendous success of the serial genre across the globe despite the criticism labelled against it.

According to Tufte (2003, p.3), love stories and emotional involvement is central to the telenovela's enjoyment. Besides, Lopez (1991, p.600) observes that in Brazil, soaps are broadcast on prime time and are designed to attract a broad viewing audience of men, women, and children. Plots are finite in that the programs 'have very definitive endings that permit narrative closure' after 180 to 200 episodes, unlike US serials/soaps which can go on for generations. Georgiou (2012) studied the popularity of the telenovelas among the Latin American diaspora in Spain and found that the familiar culture, music; actors and locations created nostalgia about their homeland creating a compelling reason for watching.

A study by Ang (1985), on the viewers of *Dallas* soap opera in the Netherlands; found that the audience enjoyment of the serial was domiciled in their interpretation of the drama as 'real' heightening their watching pleasure. The participants' response letters and analysis exemplify these. 'I find Dallas super ...the characters reflect the daily life of a family...every family has rows or anything in Dallas, and there are rows, desperate situations' (Ang, 1985 p. 43). In a different study by Livingstone (1988) on *Coronation Street*, a British soap also found that the aspect of realism generated a greater sense of involvement. However, she went further to compare the American and the British soaps/serials and found that the British felt that their serials/ soaps were much more realistic in comparison to the American versions which were ritzy and fantasy-laden. Realism, as perceived by the audience, means believability in characters, storyline and even the décor (Enzeogu, 2013). Lyall (1997) adds that the British are aware of their social culture realism and therefore reject the dazzling display in the American soap operas/serial dramas as unrealistic.

The success of serial drama programmes like *Winter Sonata* has in the recent past catapulted the South Korean culture in the Asian peninsula. In what has famously been referred to as 'Hallyu' or the Korean wave (Kim et al., 2009). A study conducted among the Japanese audience reveals that the perception of realism and the drama emotional appeal drive the 'Hallyu' phenomenon (Kim et al., 2009). Similarly, meaningful, shared cultural values among different people can be an element of attraction. Ibrahim (2015) argues that a study on two popular Korean serials – 'Princess hours' and 'Secret Garden' among university students in Indonesia who accept the dramas because of the shared cultural undertones (Indonesia and Korea) such as politeness, respect for elders, family loyalty, collectivism and sanctity of love and marriage.

In Africa, studies are beginning to emerge in the pro-social edutainment serial dramas. South Africa has had a string of popular Serial dramas/soap operas, where they account for 40% of the TV viewing (Mc Murrey, 2017). They include *Generations* (1994), *Muvhango* (1997), *Isindingo* (1998). Others are *Soul City* (1994) and *Scandal* which tackle social issues. South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the public broadcaster sponsors most of them but has had to cut back due to financial challenges (Mc Murrey, 2017). He adds that the serial form of storytelling is an important platform used by producers to cover pro-social and other emerging issues in society. *Soul City* (1994) is one of the most successful pro-social soap opera in South Africa and has achieved export success in other African countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and inspired similar productions in other African countries (Tufte, 2003). He adds that careful formative research in the production planning stage contributed to its success.

Uwah (2008) argues that the rich storytelling tradition in Nigeria even before the inception of television in the country has contributed to the entrenched production culture. Indeed, Barber (1997) observes that travelling theatres performed in villages and towns as early as the 1930s. This rich repertoire later transitioned to film and television (Haynes, 2000). Similar cultural story approaches were also witnessed in post-independent Kenya, though operating within a sensitive social-political environment. An attempt in the 1970s by two foremost playwrights, Professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Miri (1977) to freely stage their play entitled; '*Ngaahika Ndeenda (I will marry when I want)*', which focused on indigenous exploitation by the elite and performed by the villagers of Kamiriithu. Shortly, the play was burned and the authors detained (Waita, 2013).

Latin America, the USA, Europe, Asia, as well as some African countries, give us a unique perspective to understand the context of viewership and production of serial drama fiction in Kenya. These are the originating markets for many of the serial dramas available at the local free to air TV stations in Kenya. The preceding discussion suggests that the television serial dramas have emerged from a history of storytelling and draw their idea themes from the cultural and traditional practices of the viewing community.

The study can infer that the audience ability to 'enter into the story world' to solve their problems is the kernel of viewing and enjoyment. The perception of realism and believability in them draw out 'everydayness' and the meaning of life. The British and Latin American serial dramas have strong pro-social and pro-development biases, these mirror the tenets of the public broadcast model (Britain). They also seem to perceive their serials as more realistic, especially in comparison to American productions. The purely American entertainment version reflects the commercial, entrepreneurial approach.

The Kenyan viewers' experience with the genre, started right at the launch of the first TV station in 1962; the Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation, the precursor to Voice of Kenya (VOK). It scheduled programmes like *Dr Kildare*; *I Love Lucy*, and *Jack Benny's* (Natesh, 1964). The station broadcasted for five hours in English, Kiswahili and Hindustan. The majority of the audience were Europeans and Asians. The programmes were mainly American imports, which was not unique to Kenya. Other developing countries which set up broadcast stations in the 1960s and 70s also relied on the American market (Nordenstrong & Varis, 1973). It was also a period of limited operations and few programme offerings - described as an era of 'scarcity' (Ellis, 2000). The dominance of American programming on stations around the world was causing jitters even in established economies like France, which regarded it as American imperialism (Tracey, 1985). The foreign serials were among the cultural imports to be aired regularly to the Kenyan TV audiences.

To further understand the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya. It is also essential to trace the historical development of two broadcasting systems which have primarily influenced the setting, operations, and programming in Kenya and other regions of the world. The two competing models were the American free-market concept and the British public broadcasting model (Moran, 2009; Mwangi, 2011; Gray & Lotz, 2012).

The American free-market was driven by non-government interest, individual investment and the commercial drive, where advertising and sponsorship formed the staple of programme development. Mwangi (2011, p.5) refers to it as 'private business, run for profit'. In the British public broadcasting model, the government considered the transmission spectrum as a public resource, invested in a people-centred pro-development programming approach (Gray & Lotz,

2012). Kenya settled for the British public model. Mwangi (2011, p.5) further observes that the British public model bases its arguments on four essential elements: ‘a non-profit aim, universality of service, unified control and maintenance of high standards of programming’.

At independence, the majority of the Anglophone countries had adopted the BBC’s model of a public corporation and public service broadcasting (Bourgault, 1995). Unfortunately, the driving force behind all this was to serve the interest of the western powers (Nyamnjoh, 2005). The development and growth of indigenous media were restricted while the authoritarian colonial ones prevailed (Faringer, 1991).

The above discussion can explain why the mass media and modernisation theory approach (Shah, 2003) influenced the early years of local Kenyan television drama productions. After independence in 1963, the first Minister for Information and Broadcasting; Achieng Oneko strongly indicated that the Voice of Kenya (VOK) was to spearhead the nation-building agenda (Mak’Ochieng, 1995). This argument parallels the BBC pro-development programming model as opposed to the American profit-seeking broadcast systems. Several VOK drama programmes were created with the ideology to educate, inform and not just purely to entertain, and one of the most successful among them was *Tushauriane* (Mugwe, 1982). Others included dramas like *Mzee Pembe*, *Vitimbi*, *Vioja Mahakamani*, *Fedheha*, *Zuberi* and *Kijiba Cha Moyo* a serial drama produced at the Mombasa station (Mugwe, 1982).

We can argue that the impact of various broadcast periods in Kenya primarily influences the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in the country. In the pre-colonial phase, the programmes on offer were non-indigenous (Natesh, 1964). Thus, the station programming did not reflect the cultural and traditional concerns of African audiences.

After independence, between 1964 and 1989, there was a single television station, The Voice of Kenya (VOK), a department of the ministry of information and broadcasting (Heath, 1992). However, established foreign serial dramas like 'The Little House on The Prairie' and 'The Walton's' continued to dominate the prime time hours of 8 to 9 pm . This was also a period of massive government/political censorship and restrictive creation of local content productions (Kareithi, 2003; Heath, 1992; Kingara, 2014).

The media industry has been liberal since 1990, and for a period, KBC continued to dominate the airwaves. However, imported serial drama fiction continued to dwarf the domestic productions with programmes such as; 'Dallas' and 'Dynasty'. The Latin American telenovelas such as 'The Rich Also Cry' and 'No One but you' also debuted during the period.

The liberalisation also marked the subsequent growth of stations and programmes, more so after the digital migration (Nyabuga, & Booker, 2013). There are about 66 licensed Free to Air (FTA) television stations operating in the country (Opanga, 2015). The industry growth is significant. The CA has so far assigned 333 TV frequencies to signal distributors (CA,2016-2017 Annual Report). However, the Latin American television serial drama fictions continue to dominate the local airwaves. For instance, in January 2016, a Mexican telenovela La Gata; emerged as the most popular programming at Citizen television surpassing even news (Ipsos-Synovate; January 2016). Similarly, another Mexican telenovela Corazon Indomobile (Wild at Heart) indeed was one of the top 10 Kenyan Google searches (Kenya's top searches on Google, 2014). Citizen television grosses some of the highest audiences within its prime hours of 8-9 pm, which averages about 2.6million viewers when the telenovelas are scheduled (Geo Poll, 2016). In September 2015, Citizen Television introduced a locally produced serial drama-Santalal- within the prime time hours and publicized it to compete with foreign productions. However, the

audience reception of the first episode was unexpectedly lukewarm with negative comments on social media (Hussein, 2015).

To deepen the understanding of the audience's relationships with the imported programming, Nguru (2013), published a study on 'Foreign TV Shows and Kenyan Youth' but had little on local serial fiction. However, she concluded that youthful viewers in Nairobi are attracted to foreign programming because of their sophisticated appearance and entertaining stories. It is from Nguru's observation that this study finds its entry point and focus on the issues bedeviling domestic serial fiction attraction and production.

Mueni (2014) conducted a comparative study of the representation of womanhood on local and foreign serials/soap operas. The study concluded that serial dramas/soap operas could play an essential role in the development of gender identities. Though this was a vital contribution to the Kenyan serial drama scene, it did not delve into the other critical areas like audience reception of local versus foreign serial dramas. Neither does the study dissect the viewers' relationship with the local serial drama producers. Such shortcomings call for a further incisive investigation as pursued by this research.

Jiwaji (2010) was interested to understand how young women in Nairobi identify with some of the popular serials regularly screened on Kenyan FTA stations. She conducted a study on how these women in Nairobi shape their local identities in response to watching *Cuendo seas, Mia*; a Mexican serial drama/telenovela aired on Citizen Television. She concluded that the popularity of the genre is foremost attributable to their active rural-urban story themes. The young female participants were able to situate themselves within a similar setup. Though her study bases its

findings on a single serial drama, this research would want to deepen this understanding by exploring the extent to which the audiences position themselves in the domestic productions.

Tully & Ekdale (2012) carried out a study on TV serial drama edutainment production known as *The Team* (2007-2008) in Kenya. They wanted to determine the audience reception to the storyline and characterisation as intended by the producer among other variables. They concluded that there was a disconnect between the producers' message intention and the audiences' reception to a significant storyline segment. Nonetheless, this was an essential step in understanding the audience and producers' relationship in a serial drama genre. However, it did not interrogate the producers' explanations of the choices for their characterization. Scholars like Cohen (1999), Hoffner & Buchanan (2005) argue that Serial drama viewing pleasure is partly engrained by the audiences' building parasocial relationships with the characters, even beyond the intended storyline.

Kingara (2010), studied the producers' conceptualization level of their audiences on two TV serial drama productions - *Reflections* (KBC) and *Wingu La Moto* (NTV). He concluded that the producers of the shows conceived their audiences in 'mass' and regarded themselves (producers) as 'moral advocates'. They select, sanction and set the agenda on the 'moral lessons the audience should learn from the dramas. The producers' in this case have a background of public broadcasting (KBC).

In Kenya, the ubiquitous nature of the foreign TV serial screening on the local TV stations has drawn the scrutiny of the policymakers. For instance, the CA (2016) has a policy that mandates all the free to air (FTA) television stations, to broadcast a minimum of 40% of locally produced

contents in their first year of operations and cascade it to 60% in their fourth year of broadcasting. The policy is meant to promote and support the growth of domestic productions and safeguard the local cultures (CA, 2016).

Studies indicate that the viewers' perceptions towards the domestic content creation is associated with low-quality story lines and weak technical production capacity in areas like camera, sound and set design (Kenya Film Commission, 2013; Communication Authority of Kenya, 2016).

Although the CA 40-60% local content requirement is functional, the implication is that the Kenyan audience have a problem with the domestic story productions, primarily when they refer to them as 'low quality' and 'boring' as indicated by KFC (2013) and CA (2016). A case in point is 'Mali' (2011), which was financed by NTV to the tune of 100 million Kenya shillings (Nation, 2011). The producer, Alison Nguibini, observed that she took up the challenge after feeling 'upset' with the amount of Mexican and international programmes on Kenyan screens (Nguibini interview with BBC, 2012). However, after a period, the programme could not break even with the dwindling audience share. The 'Mali' experience reinforces the above finding that finance alone cannot solve the problems in domestic productions.

Kenya is yearning to build a vibrant film/television industry. There is scarcity and unsustainability in local video content programming (KFC, 2013; CA, 2016). Over the years while Kenya continued to rely on imports; USA, Mexico, Brazil, Turkey and India have built formidable industries in the programme genre (Hobson, 2003; Mato, 2003; Singhal et al. 1994; Russel, & Stern, 2006). In 2012, Turkey doubled its serial drama export market to countries in Asia, Africa and Central Europe at a profit of US\$130 million (13 billion Kenya shillings),

having sold 13,000 hours of programming (Candemir, 2013). Brazil was initially a big importer of television programming, but in the 1980s and 90s, it has emerged together with Mexico and China, as leading producers and exporters of television soaps (Tunstall, 2008).

Desiring to infuse vibrancy in TV drama production in Kenya, agencies like the Kenya film commission (KFC) was set up to guide, and develop policies to promote local film content production. Others are the communication authority of Kenya (CA) 60% quota policy to boost the local TV station intake of domestic productions.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The background demonstrates the ubiquity, popularity and universal audience attraction and consumption of television serial drama fiction genre alternatively referred to as the soap opera. This interest has spawned scholarly studies, mainly from Europe, USA and Latin America (Ang, 1985; Silverstone, 1988; Smith & Holland, 1987; Georgiou, 2012; Morales & Simileo, 2015). Entertaining serials, capture the imagination of the people so that they may cope with their daily life endeavours (Hobson, 1982; Livingstone, 1988; Silverstone, 1988). Despite their popularity, there is no consensus; and an ambiguity exists in the production approach and regional reception. The British serial dramas are described as benign, covering practical social issues, while the American equivalent is perceived as fashionable and panders to the audience fantasies (Livingstone, 1988). Kenya has had the experience of programming the two versions, though neither of the styles can guarantee cross-cutting success with audiences.

There is evidence in Kenya that, despite the genre's popularity, Kenyans favour foreign serials over the domestic productions (Ipsos-Synovate, 2016). Similarly, the Kenyan viewers describe the local TV content as 'low quality and boring'. The negative production perception is as a

result of the choice of story line, characterization and the inappropriate deployment of technical production aspects like the camera, sound, makeup and other nuances (KFC, 2013; CA, 2016).

Several studies (Ligaga, 2005; Gathigi, 2009; Mogambi, 2010; Mwangi, 2011; Ochichi, 2014) have concentrated on grass-root radio audiences to the neglect of understanding television programming. The African Media Development Initiative- AMDI (AMDI-BBC Trust, 2007) and communication scholars, among them; Willems & Mano (2016) are advocating for a refocus to television audience studies, to build more empirical data in the area; which could perhaps shape frameworks for resolving such poor receptive programming.

Kenya is operating in what is called 'digital abundance' with the existence of many media outlets (Mwangi, 2018). However, this abundance has failed to spur significant attractive domestic serial drama productions. Scholars like Ellis (2000) observed an era of 'scarcity' when there were fewer stations and fewer programmes on TV. However, in contrast, Kenya is now in a period of abundance. In a similar observation, Caldwell (2008) argues of the multi-platform and cross-media consumption, which blurs how the audience watch television. Such contradictions require remedies which could be answered by investigating these aspects. In addition to that, some of the domestic serial drama producers are still steeped in modernization theory approach, where they are more focused on development messaging concerns, to the detriment of attractive entertainment (Kingara, 2010).

Indeed, the deficiency in the domestic content productions spurred the government to set up the Kenya Film Commission (KFC) in 2005, partly to gain more focus in local content generation. Besides, this is further reinforced by other government institutions like the Communication

Authority of Kenya licensing regime, which requires the FTA stations to allocate 40-60% of their programming airtime to domestic content. The CA also operates a Universal Service Fund (USF), an ICT kitty which supports the development and capacity building to challenging communication needs, it encompasses the broadcast sector. These efforts points to glaring gaps within the local production environment which needs intervention.

The local audience describes domestic serial drama productions as ‘low quality’ and ‘boring’. In line with this, Cohen (1999) argues that individual story lines and characters can have a higher impact on viewers than others. The study observes that understanding the context of viewership and the production of serial drama production in Kenya could herald a paradigm shift in the approach to serial drama production and programming in the country. The study interrogates the viewership of the serial drama fiction in relations to the audiences', producers' and station executives. Thus, the study broadens TV serial consumption knowledge as well as shade light on the scholarly silences on the context of their utilisation.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Determine the context of viewership of TV serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya.
2. Gain an understanding of the extent of entertainment value in the domestic TV serial drama productions and the causes of their dissatisfaction in comparison to foreign productions
3. Explore the producers’ understanding of the TV serial drama audiences’ entertainment needs.
4. Determine how the TV station executives contextualise the audience and producers’ entertainment value expectations in serial drama programming.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the viewing circumstances of television serial drama fiction among Nairobi urban audience?
2. What elements entertains/dissatisfies the viewers in the domestic serial drama production in comparison to the foreign genre and why?
3. What entertainment value insights do the serial drama fiction producers have about their audience?
4. How do the TV station executives determine their audiences' and producers' entertainment needs?

1.5 Justification of the study

As discussed in this chapter, the television serial drama fiction is popular programming for many TV stations around the world. It is a multibillion-dollar industry and cannot be ignored (Tunstall, 2008; Candamir, 2013). Similarly, in Kenya, the genre is popular with free to air TV stations like Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24, KBC and attract sizable audiences (KARF, 2014; Ipsos-Synovate, 2016). Meaningful story lines attract the viewers' by simulating their lived experiences (Ang, 1985; Martin Barbero, 1993). However, this global success has eluded the domestic serial drama productions, where the foreign productions are equally more popular with the audiences. Within the Kenyan contexts, few studies have taken a concerted approach to understand the audiences' dissatisfaction, the producers and station executives' response to their needs in a serial drama production genre. Kingara (2010) conducted an ethnographic study on how television producers 'construct their drama audiences' which was limited to studying two serial dramas. Nevertheless, he concluded that the producers regarded themselves as 'moral value' advocates for the audience and appropriately selected, and guided meaningful story themes to 'educate' them. He further

recommends the need for increased study in the television drama genre to produce acceptable and enjoyable stories on the Kenyan television screens. This study, therefore, deepens this understanding by dissecting the producers' and audiences' insights into the production and consumption of the serial drama genre.

There is a concern over the poor production quality and consumption of the locally generated film content, which includes television drama (Kenya Film Commission, 2013; Communication Authority of Kenya, 2016). In this regard, the CA policy now mandates locally incorporated TV stations to air 60% of domestic content, with the hope of promoting quality productions and consumption (Ochieng, L. 2014). Some of the findings here could enrich future policies on content development in the television/film industry. As has been discussed in this chapter, the serial drama fiction genre has successfully been used to address development communication challenges on social-economic issues, like family planning, adult literacy and HIV/AIDS (Singhal and Vasanti, 2005; Singhal et al., 2004; Vaughan et al., 2000). Kenya is still bedevilled by these problems among others. Thus, a deeper understanding of how to effectively deploy attractive elements in serial drama production and programming would be beneficial to the country.

Further to that, BBC trust (2007) observes that there is a general lack of varied audience data in Africa, and any new data would be of benefit to the industry. The BBC Trust is well versed in audience dynamics within its international broadcast reach. The study could, therefore, generate additional timely findings for the benefit of the industry. Moreover, Television, by nature, has an insatiable content demand (Tunstall, 2008). Thus; finding solutions to attractive productions could create multiplier effects of more productions in the industry and lessen the demand gap. Researchers will benefit from this study, as it will provide a platform upon which the academia

can advance the understanding and production of serial drama fictions in Kenya. Further to that, there is always a need to discover more about what the television production industry entails (Gray, & Lotz, 2012). This study therefore empirically strings the interrelationship between the local serial drama fiction viewers, the producers, and the station programmers and demarcates aspects which could strengthen its production, an area that has received less scholarly attention in Kenya.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the study

The research, the context of viewership and production of Television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya; restrict the study to television serial drama fiction/soap opera viewers, producers and station executives who interact with the genre. It excludes any other kinds of TV broadcast formats. The study further employs the use of the term ‘drama’ and ‘series’ for a better understanding of the genre. Additionally, a combination of domestic and foreign-produced programmes regularly scheduled in the five TV stations (Citizen TV, NTV, KTN, K24, and KBC) between 2014 and 2016 was sampled to serve as a reference point (when administered to the respondents). The respondents were drawn from Kibra, Embakasi West and Makadara constituencies; the research was further limited to viewers who were familiar with the TV serial drama genre. However, some of the respondents could not differentiate the TV serial drama genre, for instance, with a series. To overcome this limitation, the research assistants who were well trained prompted them with examples before proceeding to administer an interview.

The producers are the creators/planners/managers of a TV serial drama fiction. It was essential to find depth on how they engage with the storyline and the audiences in the drama production processes. Some also double up and work in all manner of programme formatting. However, this study was limited to those who work as TV serial drama producers. The study also engaged

those who previously worked in the serial dramas but have taken up other kinds of programme formats. In their case, the questions were direct towards recollecting their past engagement and experiences with the serial drama genre.

There was a need to talk to an insider who is involved in programming and scheduling to understand the matrices of audiences, producers' and the station perspective. However, the television stations operate as independent institutions and have no standardised positions/job descriptions across all the stations. For instance, the personnel involved in programming at one station would be referred to as programme coordinators/programme marketers and considered as a regular position, while at a different station they would be referred to as a Head of programmes and at a senior level. The study targets those who are knowledgeable, in programming and scheduling in disregard of their title to overcome any discrepancies. Further to that, to standardise and define their position, the study referred to them as station executives.

Kenyan television audience studies have not been entrenched in the academic circles, therefore getting local references and data on the study area is not easy. However, to overcome this, a preliminary field study was conducted by administering questionnaires in selected study areas; this gave the study an overview of the audience sentiments. Further to that, I have used a variety of journals, PhD theses, reports, workshop presentations and scoured the internet for information to build the foundation for this study.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Producer- The lead creative person behind a TV drama production oversees the entire production and brings together all the different elements and could also double up as the writer/director/cinematographer. He/she could be appointed by the executive producer to execute the project on his/her behalf. In this study, the serial drama producer is the final arbiter and responsible for the production elements. His/her responsibility also embodies the reception of the story by the audience and the executive producers'. Thompson (1990) refers to them as persons who can mix familiar and cultural elements to make new combinations to which he/she expects the audience to respond favourably.

Context- The environment/circumstances/reason under which the viewers, producers and station executive engage with the TV serial drama fiction in Nairobi

Context of Viewership- The condition, the circumstances/unique understanding under which TV viewers in Nairobi select watch and interpret/engage and draw meaning from the local and foreign-produced TV drama serial fictions in the domestic stations (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC). Halls (1980) talks of the viewer's Operational position to interpret and negotiate meaning in a television programme.

Actor- a performing role in TV serial drama to depict a real situation, usually auditioned by the director/producer to fit the role. Ang (1985) talking about acting, observes that the 'life-like' acting style minimises the distance between actor and character, In the context of this study, the actor is one who is nominated to perform a role in the domestic serial dramas and is compared to those who similarly perform the roles in foreign productions.

Dissatisfaction-used to express the unattractiveness of one kind of serial drama fiction over the other. In the context of this work, it differentiates and expresses unattractive elements in the serial dramas scheduled in the local Tv stations (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC)

Entertainment Value/Need - The TV serial drama fiction is meaningful to the viewer/audience, it is attractive, enjoyable to watch, and he/she is selective and can roughly measure the extent of likeability. In the context of this study, the viewers who watch the serial dramas scheduled in the local stations (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC), they are selective to what fulfils their viewing pleasure needs.

Executive Producer- The financier/overall manager of a TV serial drama fiction and act independently. He/she works within the context of serial drama production dealing with the producers and the audiences.

The TV Station Executive- Has an insight and takes decisions on what programmes to be aired. He/she could also be appointed to the position as a scheduler/coordinator of programmes at a TV station. In the study, it is used to refer to persons who directly influence the production and scheduling of serial drama programmes in the domestic TV stations (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC)

Drama Producer- One who oversees the entire production of a play and could either work at a television station or as a film producer. He/she could be the writer, director or creator of the drama.

Film Industry- This is the organisation and facilitation of audio-visual productions of different genres using film/video cameras and broadcast on regular television or film theatres. In the context of the study, these are the locally produced film/TV/broadcast content in Kenya mainly targeted for domestic consumption and possibly for foreign markets.

Television Drama: Plays short on video or film and programmed to be screened on television. In the context of this work, it refers to television acted stories (plays) of different genres targeted for TV scheduling.

Local Content- Content that reflects the Kenyan culture/context in different formats (comedy, News, Drama, features, and movies) in this study, it reflects the TV serial drama fiction, which is an original Kenyan story, written, produced and directed by the local personnel.

TV Serial Drama Fiction-Television drama storylines which are produced in instalments, referred to as episodes they are also referred to as soap operas or telenovelas. Hobson (2003) observes that there is usually a cliff hanger at the end of each episode to keep the audience in suspense and encourage loyalty to the programme. In this study, it refers to these programmes produced locally or foreign and scheduled in the domestic TV stations.

Television – a communication system that broadcast video programmes to the audience/viewers. In this study, it refers to the communication system as well as a television set owned and operated by the viewers.

Viewers/Audiences-A group of people/individuals who view or watch television programmes on different TV stations in Kenya (Citizen TV, NTV, KTN, K24 and KBC)

Programming – In this study, it refers to the act of selecting and scheduling television programmes on the local broadcast TV stations.

Production- The centrality of the producer in the execution of a serial drama fiction with an aim to excite the audience through idea to the technical execution, involving camera, sound and post-production

Broadcasting Station- A television station with appropriate equipment to transmit programmes to the viewers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The general objective of the study is to investigate the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya. The chapter starts on a broad theoretical understanding of television as observed by scholars like Silverstone (1981), Turner (1982), Fiske and Hartley (1983). They advance the argument that the television production medium thrives under a systematic cultural world view, a perspective which can explain the audience attraction to serial drama fiction. The Uses and gratification theory, the active audience theory, and cultural proximity theory explain the audiences' entertainment moment and the producers' response to their needs. The study also explores the central role of the station executives in determining the audience pleasure by their positions, which can enable them to influence what they watch.

2.2 Television and Myth

Silverstone (1981, p.23) argues that to understand television narrative and the audiences meaning-making moment, we have to recognise myths in television; He claims that myth and television occupy the same space of 'intimate distance'. Myths are traditional stories which are/were told in different societies to explain certain events and were critical to the societal existence; they could be true or not but they have entertained people for generations (Silverstone, 1981; Newcomb, & Alley, 1983). Myths try to resolve contradictions in our lives and television takes a similar trajectory: 'It acts as a bridge between every day and the transcendent, the known and the unknown, the sacred and the profane' (Silverstone, 1981, p.70). Additionally, Silverstone (1988, p.25) introduces the term 'liminal' space to further explain the television narrative. According to him, television occupies a 'liminal' space; it operates in between the 'taken-for-

granted world and that of the unreachable and otherwise inaccessible world'. In other words, myths are narratives which resolves the conflicts of life, outside the 'structures of power' by entering into a profound experience of a community or getting back one's control with personal deeds or values of our culture.

Silverstone (1981) illustrated his myth argument by an analytical study of the episodic television drama (*Intimate Strangers*, 1974). The programme was broadcast in 13 hour-long episodes on London Weekend Television (LWT) in 1974. The narrative focuses on the lives of Harry, and Joan Paynter, who have been married for 30 years. They are middle-class, and middle-aged couple: Harry works for a publishing company, while Joan takes care of their house and garden in the countryside from where Harry commutes to his London office. There are upheavals in the marriage relationship. Harry, stressed at work, experiences a severe heart attack and ends up in a hospital. On discharge, he is advised to be careful in the future: stop smoking, drinks less and exercise. The drama reveals the conflict; the issues bothering them and ends with a solution, which removes the friction.

Relationships and conflict in a marriage form regular myth stories, and could be enacted in varied forms; others resolve issues for the moment or live the viewers with question marks. Silverstone argument is that conventional television drama narratives draw from 'everydayness' - topics we are familiar with; we situate ourselves in them and are eager to follow through to the resolution. Moreover, television is best at reflecting them. The meaning in the story is that a young British family solves the pressure of city life by moving to the countryside.

Additionally, in the liminal space, and using *Intimate Strangers* drama episode as an example; we are familiar with the fast-paced modern city life, living it to the detriment of our health

(smoking, drinking and lack of exercise). Television is at the verge; it has the liberty to reflect us this reality, which at the same time is inaccessible. Victor Turner (1982) also uses the concept of liminality to explain the television medium. He asserts that television has become our most famous 'liminal', where we are 'betwixt' (1982, p.95). We derive familiar stories from the environment and events, yet at the same time, they are transient and puts us in limbo when we watch television.

Turner (1979, p.488) further illustrates luminal space by using a stage drama. He takes cognisant of the term 'flow', where people act with total involvement or what he refers to as 'willing suspension of disbelief'. However, he is quick to qualify that cheating breaks the 'flow'. An actor gives excellent performance if he can understand the social world one axiomatically portrays. Adapting this to a serial fiction production, the producer creates the story from an 'everydayness' of which the audience is familiar. He selects and directs the actors to perform in a certain way. If the actors get very engrossed in the act and give a flawless performance to the amazement and enjoyment of the audience, the producer will have succeeded.

Conversely, if the audience notices a flaw in what Turner refers to as 'cheating' (1979, p.488). They could comment negatively and disregard the 'acting as poor' and after that, dislike the entire production. This liminal space is what gives credence to believability. The neglect of the 'liminal-space' in production creates a problem. The producer must strive to create a world in her story and characterisation that is believable.

The 'liminality' concept can, therefore, be discussed in the context of viewership and the production of serial drama fiction in the following manner: The audience of the serial drama fiction watch and construct meanings under certain circumstances and motivations. Ien Ang

(1985) study and the book *'Watching Dallas' illustrates* this. The viewers of the serial drama fiction *Dallas (1978)* were drawn by the 'genuine' and 'believability' of the story and the characters. In the TV drama, what attracts the male viewers is the perceived power and influence they can wield with successful business connections, while the women were trying to find meaning in a patriarchal, loveless marriage (Ahmed, 2012). Generally, *Dallas (1978)* was a narrative about a family dominated by money and business and how it was destroying the people involved. The audience is familiar with these kinds of stories; they hook them with the right technical treatment as they seek out the resolution. In connection to the concept of myth and liminality, Fiske and Harley (2004) introduce the argument of 'bardic function', which is going to be discussed in the next section to position the centrality of television as a story medium further.

2.3 The bardic function of television

Fiske and Hartley (2004) argue that TV performs a 'bardic function'. The term 'bard' refers to ancient storytellers who served as the intermediaries of the spoken language in their communities. In mediaeval Wales, the bard was the professional poet who sang the praises of kings, knights and princesses in public but who sometimes also poked fun at his superiors. In our time, television performs something similar to the 'bardic function' (Fiske & Hartley, 2004). It serves as an intercessor, with the producer as the storyteller. However, the medium by its nature sanctions the liberty to create and tweak a story which we would either like or praise but at other moments, rebuke the presentation.

Fiske and Hartley (2004, p.65) illustrate this with another term; they refer to as 'clawback'. For instance, it can represent the wild-life kingdom story on television in terms of structures and hierarchies within that 'society'. The bardic function can relate these resemblances with our behaviour, organisation and culture. We read television by drawing from our lived experiences. How then does a local serial drama fiction, for instance like '*Mali (2011)*' respond to the bardic quest? The story theme is about the wealth and succession battles in a polygamous family after the patriarch 'Gregory Mali' passes on. The widowed families led by Mabel and the other by Usha battle for the control of the businesses left behind. Despite the heterogeneity of television audiences' reading, they should be able to find familiarity or equivalence of the storyline within their culture. The viewer should be able to find the same within the characters. The parallelism of the drama '*Mali (2011)*' and the succession battles are familiar to many Kenyans. The fiction trumpets this. Though the local audiences relatively received the drama and regard it as successful, it is one of the shows this study investigates to determine the extent the viewers situate themselves in the story and if it is meaningful to them. However, Turner (1979), argues that there are moments when the audiences can fail to 'enter' a narrative or have total involvement.

Reviewing the 'Bard' argument in the changing social and media technological advancement, Herbers (2017), in an article '*Would John Fiske use a second screen? Re-reading television culture and reading television in the new media environment*' continues to support the bardic function argument but calls for realignment to fit into the technological and the current audience dynamics. These advancements have spawned second screen viewers who engage in watching more than a single screen and sharing their experiences/influencing others. While at it, these viewers have become performers on the platform of social media, twitter and even YouTube. In

other words, they are 'bard' on a small scale, informing or influencing the small communities. This argument is in line with the study objective of seeking to understand the local audiences' entertainment value in TV serial drama fiction. The penetration of the mobile telephone in the Kenyan market stands at 100% (Tanui, 2018). The phone has become central to many audiences' interpersonal communication and thus we cannot ignore its dynamism and use. The audience watches a programme and quickly pass their sentiments to colleagues, influencing their perspective of the programme. Information gleaned from the social media could reshape their reception.

As discussed in chapter one, *Tushauriane* (1987) is one of the domestic serial dramas considered as widespread and successful. The sponsor of the production was the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) - a government department with the mandate to mobilise, support population well-being, family planning and other related social issues. In the *Tushauriane* television episodes, the strand of stories revolved around rural-urban, families, land problems, inter-tribal marriages and the burning issues of family planning (Odindo, 1987). The story revolved around the main character, Dennis, who has lost his ancestral land to a neighbour and is trying to claim it back. However, he has to gather evidence to prove his case. Another parallel storyline is on intercultural courting and marriage. Dennis is also in love with Esther, who hails from a different tribe; and there is Joe who also has an interest in Esther. However, the production ended abruptly when the sponsor stopped paying the 60,000 shillings (\$600) weekly production cost to KBC for the episodes to continue. The newspaper columnist captured the mood of the country thus;

When last Sunday thousands of fans who religiously awaited the show realised it was not coming, and might never, 'come again, their agony was the agony of a people whose passions are routinely overlooked by the very institutions that' are assigned to service them. This is the

confounding irony of a country that prides itself with momentous development and erects impressive monuments to testify to this, and... yet cannot deliver the one programme its people really want to watch, a programme whose, stark relevance to their lives makes it something of a celebration... Yet this amount of money is a pittance when you think of the number of people to benefit. The cost, in fact, comes to a fraction of a cent per every person who watches it. Indeed, many Kenyans would happily pay this if only to find out who between Joe and Dennis marries Esther. After all, this is Harambee country (Mundia Muchiri, 1989).

The excerpt captures meaningful moments of the audience; they are familiar with the land disputes and inter-tribal relationships among other issues within the Kenyan context. The storyline seizes these issues and needs to resolve them. The centrality of functional characterisation and believable screen performance further accentuate the production, the core to the audience pleasure and expectations in serial drama fiction (Ang, 1985; Enzeogu, 2013). The writer vouches with the viewers for a resolution by saying ‘.... *Indeed, many Kenyans would happily pay this if only to find out who between Joe and Dennis marries Esther*’ (Muchiri, 1989)

Tushauriane was a typical telenovela story ascent and suspense; in fact, the producers had a short telenovela production training in Mexico (Bourgault, 1995). However, the argument is that the viewers could ‘enter into’ the story and construct meanings of their own lives from the drama. The issues of land, inter-tribal marriages are everyday issues which the Kenyan public deals with and are keen to find solutions.

Hatlehol (2009) argues that Hartley re-considers the bardic function, which like the mediaeval praises and television took the top-down approach to storytelling, while several scholars advocate for a bottom-up approach. ‘That we should realise to a greater extent, the anthropological level of everyday life’ (Hartley, cited in Hatlehol, 2009, p.23). He also fears that mass participation might lead to anarchy and degradation in the quality of media text. The application is that every audience who has a story would produce it and a nominated person like the ‘producer’ would no longer load it over others. Already, the digital revolution has created

affordable production technical equipment and cheaper avenues to disseminate the serial dramas. Many persons now claim to be 'producers' and even post their creations on social media platforms but some with a minimal theoretical understanding of the storytelling processes.

The concept of myth, liminality and the bardic function explain the theoretical foundation of television storytelling. It is therefore critical to assess the viewers' entertainment value and the production capacity from this perspective drawing in from other audience theories.

2.4 Situating the TV serial drama audiences in the communication theories

In the previous section, the study looked at the concepts and pivotal role of television as an intermediary in the audience construction of meaning and consumption of the serial drama genre. In the following arguments, the study traces critical communication theories, and focus on a few to explain the viewers' reception needs in the TV serial drama fiction. It further discusses the producers' engagement in the creation of the genre.

The quest to comprehend communication processes and work out appropriate theories in human interactions took off from varied debates (White, 1994). At the end of the Second World War, two schools of thought emerged in the approach to the communication theory. USA studies applied physical sciences research methods. The movement of goods and people and that of information were considered identical processes (Carey, 2009). The Lasswell model (1948) and the Shannon and Weaver (1963) linear model responded to these arguments where the audiences were assumed to be passive and responded in the same way. These debates informed the earlier studies in the USA like the World War I propoganda materials and the Payne Fund Research Studies of the 1920s.

Marshal McLuhan's (1964) famous phrase: 'the medium is the message, and the message is the medium,' also considered a technological approach to communication, the effects of technology on popular culture and how this influenced people's interactions in communities. Audience were considered a homogenous and uncritical mass. These arguments would merge into the hypodermic needle theory emphasising the linear transmission (Barker & Barker 1993, Morley 1992, cited in Ivala 2007). The method further conceives the audience as a body of passive individuals (Bryant & Thompson, 2001), receptive recipients and highly susceptible to influence by media messages. The emphasis is on the text itself and its power to change the audience directly.

Part of the criticism of this theory is that it undermines the right of individuals to choose the media material to consume. For instance, in reference to the local television serial fiction producer, whatever they create would be expected to attract an audience automatically. The hypodermic theory also referred to as the stimulus-response model, anchor the 'fear' of the American television cultural imperialism. For example, the French perceive the American soap opera *Dallas* (1978) as a threat to the local French culture (Smith & Holland, 1987).

The stimulus-response model of behaviour anchors the fear; the assumption is that the audience is passive and can easily be influenced by what they watch. Other scholars reinforce the same argument that one might not be exposed to the media without being influenced (Orbe cited in Kurylo, 2013). Similar concerns were raised over the television drama production and programming at KBC, the only television then. Kingara (2010) conducted a study on production practices in the Kenyan television entertainment programmes and concluded that the television drama producers considered their audiences as 'mass' and modelled the programmes to what they

assumed was morally right for them. Bryant and Thompson (2001) observe these implications of passive recipients of the information.

2.4.1 Uses and gratification theory

Increasingly in Europe, to understand the public, the focus was moving from the linear to the cultural approach, broadly influenced by the Marxist philosophical tradition which argues that the individual cannot be separated from their economic and social context (Carey, 2009). Hoggart (1957) in the 'uses of literacy' interrogates the relationship between the working-class readers and the famous paper and magazines which typically targeted them. His interest was to discover the nature of the interaction between the reader and the content. In the same breath, Thompson (1963) in the book *'The making of the English working class'*, also brought to focus the activity of the ordinary labouring British citizen or what he termed as the dignity of the masses. These debates were beginning to scrutinise the audience 'mass' consideration approach and advocate for other alternatives.

The dissenters of the linear model of communication like James Carey (2009) argued for the cultural interpretation. However, he contended that the American individual rigidity did not position well with the idea of culture and proposed the ritual model of communication, where the public and not just the message originators are considered to be actively contributing in some way to the pattern of meaning in the communication interface.

The uses and gratification theory (Blumler, & Katz 1974; Abelman, & Atkin, 2011) took an active audience perspective where their input was beginning to be appreciated. In this scenario, the audience was no longer passive and could determine how to use the media, unlike the linear model. For instance, why would they select to watch a particular television soap opera? This

model stems from the idea that audiences are a complex mixture of individuals who choose media texts that best suits their needs. The key concept has been that the media are a source of pleasure/ information which is ritually or instrumentally used by audiences for purposes such as diversion, personal relation, self-identification and surveillance (McQuail et al., 1972).

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) builds from a history of communication theories with a notable refinement of the arguments by different contributors (Blumler, & McQuail, 1969; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Blumler, & Katz, 1974). Herta Hertzog 1944 radio soap opera listeners also build into these arguments. West and Turner (2010) argue that apart from the entertainment, the serials were spiced with elements like emotional, wishful thinking and learning.

Some of the criticism of UGT is that it does not have a transparent theoretical process and the assumption of the active audience who should exhibit goal-directed behaviour and disqualify it as a theory (Ruggiero, 2000). Swanson (1987, p.243) affirms the rigour and unforgiving nature of the theory world and concludes that UGT does not offer an 'interpretive process' in its explanation. Another criticism of uses and gratifications theory is that it implies that the media is capable of knowing what audiences want and is, therefore, able to give it to them (Gorton, 2009). The uses and gratification theory has further been criticised for stressing on individual mental state action and ignoring the socio-psychological frame the society imposes on the individual who operates in the community (Ivala 2007).

As has been discussed in the previous section, the progressive insights of how the hypodermic model and uses and gratification theory perceives the audience. In the hypodermic model, the audiences are thought to be passive, and messages on radio, television or film are considered to

have adverse effects on them. In the uses and gratification theory, the audience is active and selective on programmes and media choice. Despite the criticisms, scholars are acknowledging, the versatility, adaptability and currency of the UGT especially with the new digital media technology and innovation (Ruggiero, 2000; Sandar, & Limperos, 2013; David, 2016). Research in the internet use, mobile telephony, virtual reality, multiple channel platforms are the new favourable frontiers in what Ruggiero (2000, p.28) refers to as 'new dominion of human activity' with 'new dominion of U & G researchers'. This study also finds that UGT is the most appropriate to the questions it seeks to answer, like how do the audiences' select the serial drama fiction to watch among a multitude of programme choices? Also, what is the extent of gratification in a foreign and a domestic serial drama production? However, other theories are also needed to explain the audience activity, as described in the section below.

2.4.2 Active audience theory

The criticism against uses and gratifications studies at the time birthed an alternative approach to audience research was developed at the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies at the University of Birmingham in the 1970s, steered by Stuart Hall (1973). The audience interaction with the text became the centre of interest. Hall (1980) argues that audiences interpret texts differently (for this study, television serial drama) depending on their cultural backgrounds. He identified three types of audience readings of a text (or decoding). First, the dominant reading is where the audience decodes the message as the producer intended them to do and broadly agrees with it. For instance, the audience watches a serial drama and becomes engaged as per the producers' expectation. Second, reading the text can be negotiated; the audience either accepts rejects or refines elements in it, in light of previously held views, e.g. the person is disinterested in such programme genre, losses concentration and attraction of the serial fiction. Third, the

oppositional; is where the dominant meaning is recognised but rejected for cultural, political/ ideological reasons. For instance, an American TV drama could be perceived and dismissed as repulsive by the Kenyan audiences' if it contains explicit love scenes; Many Kenyan cultures are sensitive to such expressive materials. Nonetheless, the active audience theory is appropriate to this study and more specifically, as suggested by Hall (1980). The audience reception and production of a media material are well captured by it and would answer the question on the producers' insights of their targeted viewers'. The next section enriches this understanding by introducing the active audience model.

2.4.2.1 The Active Audience Model

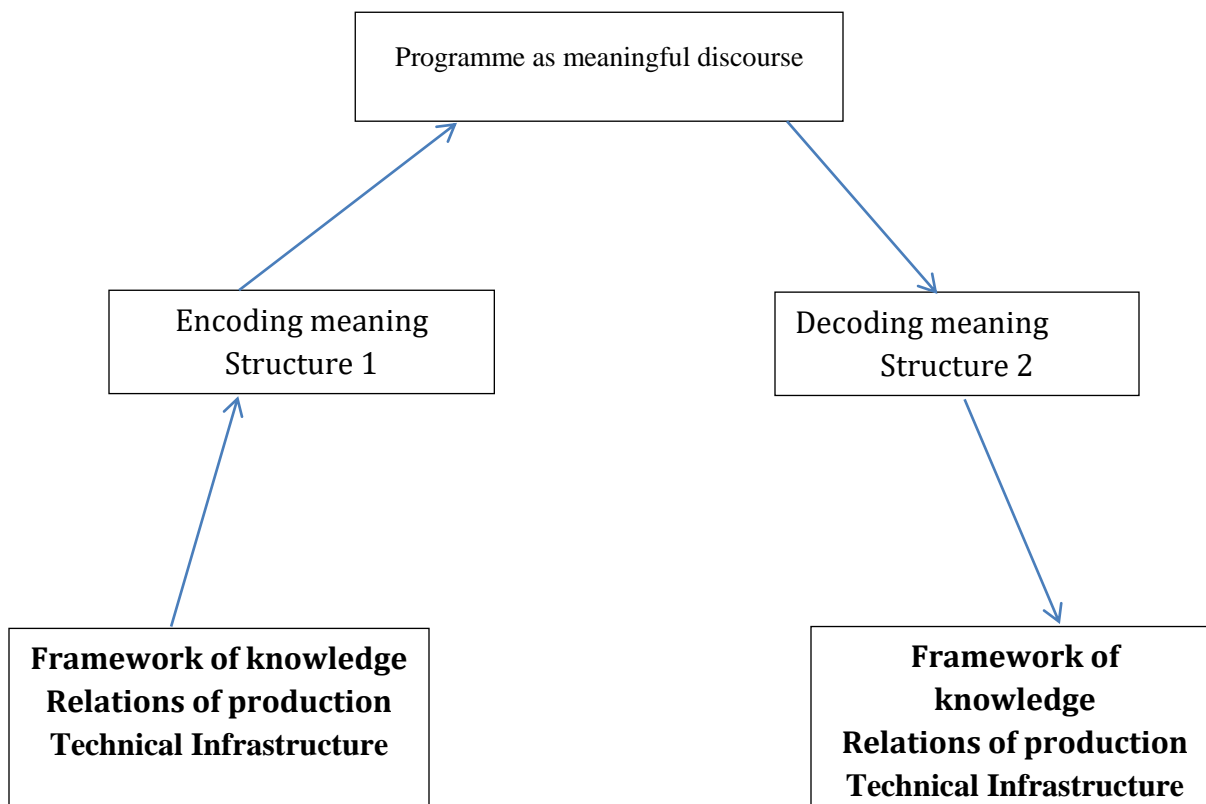


Figure 2. 1 Stuart Hall (1980) Encoding and Decoding Model of Communication

Source: Culture, Media & Language (1980, p.130)

The active audience model (see figure 2.1 above) is a graphic explanation of the interrelationship between the media producer and the audience (Halls, 1980). The base of the model is that no text has one meaning. The meaning has to be extracted (decoded) by the receiver. The study intends to adopt the model to capture the local serial drama producer, intentional production processes. However, first, the producer works from the serial drama fiction framework differentiating it from other TV story genres. The producer is aware/possesses the knowledge and skills of the programme.

In the encoding meaning structure 1; the producer has his/her drama story concept ready. He/she has an idea of the target audience and the plots and sub-plots likely to engage them. Together with the director of the drama, they can audition characters the audience can identify with (Ang, 1985; Fiske, 1987). The programme takes a meaningful discourse, created from the dominant framework of the producer who has an 'assumed clear' understanding of the audience reception needs. The audience reception and enjoyment is the story peg. In the decoding meaning structure 2, the audience interpretation and response could have varied results to the chagrin of the producer, some would accept the meaning, and some will negotiate and could be lukewarm, probably with some aspects of the story treatment.

The technical infrastructures, in this case, involve the availability of cameras, sound gear, post-production facilities and the transmission system. The production process is cyclical, and the producer receives audience feedback at the decoding meaning 2. In the current digital media communication age, the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, SMS, and Twitter) could provide quick feedbacks, though for a comprehensive data other systematic research method would have to be applied at an extra cost. From this theory and model, we can capture the TV

drama producer creation creative moment and the audiences' reception to their output (meaning/context of viewing). Additionally, the theory can also explain the foreign dramas reception and perceptions.

Halls (1980) model has spawned several studies and formed the foundations of other broadcast audience research (Morley, 1980; Ang, 1985; Livingstone, 1988; Geraghty, 1995b; Abu-Lughod, 1997). These active audience studies were interrogating the viewers' text reading and engagement with TV programme genres, the majority of which are the drama serials. The findings were that audiences interpreted and draw out meanings from programmes as influenced by their backgrounds. The serial drama enthusiasts are attracted by the story realism; believable acting, where the audiences can identify with some of the characters in a story. The previous studies deployed Halls (1980) proposition of encoding (by the creator) and the decoding by the viewers to understudy their subjects. This study, investigating the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction is in many elements similar to the mentioned research. Therefore, the active audience theory would as well be appropriate to the study. The serial drama producer develops the story from personal/institutional meaning (encoding). The audiences interpret the story from varied backgrounds. At the scheduling stage, the station executive encodes/decodes the serial fiction dramas in perception to their stations and the targeted audiences' understanding.

However, the active audience studies have been criticised for gravitating towards, and examining the viewing pleasure of the middle class; ignoring the media houses ownership and their ideological and political leaning which are strong determinants on what goes on air (Gray, & Lotz, 2012). Scholars from the quantitative tradition challenge the small sample sizes in the active audience research over their generalizability. Murray (2005) Beltran (2009) and Bennet

(2009) argues that the resilience of the producer can turn the programme around even in the face of pervasive textual resistance and audience activity,

In the convergence and digitalisation era, the reception studies theories and model continue to be widely applied by researchers. In an analytical study, mapping out ten years of TV reception general usage by researchers and scholars, Zaborowski and Dhaenens (2016, p.457) concluded that; Stuart Hall model of encoding/decoding continues to influence a generation of audience researchers, ‘...which suggests that the attractive concepts of the model extends to a new body of topics’. It is a well-established framework in assessing audiences' interaction with the texts. Similarly, as discussed in this section, the study finds the encoding/decoding appropriate to answer questions on how the producers determine entertainment values of their audiences and extend the same to station executives' efforts to meet their entertainment needs by programme selection.

Nevertheless, Moran (2009) argues that audiences prefer to watch local programming in comparison to anything foreign. Part of the argument of this study is that the TV serial drama fiction viewers prefer to watch international serial drama fictions in contrast to the domestic productions, which would seem to contradict the cultural proximity arguments. According to Straubhaar (2007), the audiences will prefer to watch programmes that are closest or directly relevant to them in cultural and linguistic terms, and this could be the appeal of local stars, local knowledge, the environment, clothing and even food. The study would apply the cultural proximity theory to further interrogate the intricacies of audiences' foreign/local viewing preferences.

However, the television serial drama is mired in competitive programme selection and scheduling. Moreover, many a TV station executive seeks a balance of audience satisfaction and market successes of these programmes. Gray and Donald (2010) developed a market-oriented approach to television drama production, in what they refer to as a longitudinal model of audience satisfaction. The findings indicate that expectations, involvement and connectedness is what draws them to the programme. The station executives have an interest in this for them to contextualise their audience and producers' expectations in the serial drama programming.

2.5 The context of TV serial drama viewership

As has been discussed in chapter one, the fundamental attraction to television serial drama viewing is in the construction of meaning (Silverstone, 1981; Livingstone, 1988). The medium operates in a cultural myth and creates a 'mirror image' of the society in what Silverstone refers to as 'intimate distance' (Silverstone, 1981, p 23). Other scholars also refer to the 'distance' metaphor in varied forms (Turner, 1979; Fiske & Hartley, 2007). The impact of television can further be gleaned from La Ferrara, Chong & Duryea (2012) argument that, the expansion and uptake of TV programmes in Brazilian rural communities have directly led to the population reduction within those jurisdictions as the audiences try to emulate the 'small family in the drama settings'.

The serial drama fiction is a TV programme genre. The context of its viewership, entails how the audience engages and interpret the story. As has been observed in chapter one from the historical perspective, the concept of the serial broadcast was to target the female gender, where the advertisers of food and detergents promoted their products (Levin, 1995; Porto, 2001). The primal elements of the genre content usually gravitate towards issues such as love, family, intimate relationships and other domestic concerns (Porto, 2001). Female viewers, the bulk of its

audience; have made the soap operas part of their lives, as a source of friendship, pleasure and networking (Modleski, 1984; Allen, 1985; Hobson, 1982). Modleski (1984) further argues that, women audience sometimes derive episodic meanings and pleasure from the soaps, for instance, some of the female viewers identify with the overwhelming villainess characters in soap operas as a way of exerting fictional revenge on a social system that belittle women power, work, and social contributions.

Many of the soap opera setting and characterisation watched in the developing countries, are associated with social economic mobility, freedom and choices, a powerful model to the viewers. The main characters are portrayed to have smaller families, marry late and the actors work out of the homes (Della Vigna & Eliana La Ferrara, 2015)

This can explain why the soap opera storytelling style has successfully been adopted and applied in social change communication fields (O'Sullivan, 1998; Singhal, & Rogers, 1999). For instance, televised narratives on HIV/AIDS prevention have been used to create awareness and prevent risky behaviour in communities (Brinson, & Brown, 1997; Eva, 1998; Galavotti et al., 2001). Additionally, many entertainment-education scholars have studied the effects and full adaptation of the narrative style to other social issues like gender equality, environmental conservation and adult literacy (Singhal, & Vasanti, 2005; Singhal et al., 2004; Vaughan et al., 2000).

In the evolving digitalisation world, Karlson (2007) compares the soap opera convention and the female viewers to the blog readers enthusiasts. Just like the TV soaps, the blogs are seen as deeply personal, emotionally loaded and never ending. The regular updates affords a sense of

connectivity between reader and writer, the reader feels connected to the writers life, the way the soap opera viewers would feel attached and connected to the ensuing story or the characters..

2.5.1 Watching TV serial drama fiction

Comstock et al. (1978) argue that women: the old, the young, the ill and housebound, unemployed, lonely members of lower social class and minority groups-watch TV more than average. Livingstone's (1988) further support this line of thought. In an empirical study, she found that those who are old and the unemployed generally watch much television.

The popularity of television serial drama fiction cannot be overemphasised; various reasons have been advanced to explain why specific categories of people watch soap operas. In comparing gender tastes, more women than men watch soap operas (Ang, 1985; Livingstone, 1988). However, in Southern American regions like Brazil, the Telenovelas are a family affair patronised even by men (Lopez, 1991). Other empirical studies indicate that television viewers are happier watching soap operas than any different kind of TV programming (Lu & Argyle, 1993).

It is a practice in TV production and programming to determine one's viewers and to know when and how to deploy a programme for maximum impact. The regulatory authority could also require these details. In Kenya for instance, the Communication Authority of Kenya (2016) regulations and licensing clause segment children's and adults programming requirements. Moran (2009) further observes that, the operational standards for the producers and the station executives of television programming have an apparent gender and demographic demarcation of their targeted audiences. Television stations are further interested in audience numbers, which in effect depends on the quality of the programmes on offer (O'Donnell, 2015). The leading five

free to air (FTA) TV stations in Kenya, i.e. *Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, KBC* and *K24* currently have accumulative audience share of 62% (Geo Poll, Q 1, 2017)

However, there are emerging debates on the prevailing viewing circumstances and consumption of television with the evolving technologies and digitalisation (Dhoest, & Simons, 2016). The current viewing patterns are different from the earlier years of broadcasting (Gray, & Lotz, 2012). The multi-platforms and cross-media consumptions are blurring how we watch television (Caldwel, 2006). The evolving technologies enable the viewer options of live view, recording the programme or download; Because of the several enabling technologies, the current viewers demand 'convenience' more than ever before as much as there are indications that many of them still prefer social viewing (Dhoest, & Simons, 2016, p.180).

The suggestion in the above arguments is that television drama fiction has a broad audience base and mainly from those who are not economically engaged and housebound. Could this be the same in the Kenyan context that the least involved spend more time on television? These are some of the questions the study interrogated about the serial drama genre. Additionally, the producers', station executives and market survey institutions target the audiences as markets to 'sell' to advertisers. To find a more in-depth understanding, exploring the storyline and characterisation of actors would be appropriate for the study; the subsequent sections discuss these further.

2.5.2 Storyline treatment

An excellent serial drama fiction should pay critical attention to visual, aural and text (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Kim & Wang, 2012). Besides, television narratives naturally have a 'heavy emphasis on character development and continuous storylines that flow between episodes of a series' (Porter,

Larson, Harthcock, & Nellis, 2002, p.1). This study suggests that for a serial fiction producer/writer to be successful, he/she must understand what interest the viewer has in a storyline. There are attractive and non-attractive elements in story flow. Wilson (2008, p.75) argues that viewing pleasure in a TV serial drama fiction is the constant delay of a narrative resolution. She references nineteenth-century British serialist, Willkie Collins in saying 'Make them cry... make them laugh...and make them wait'. That good writing for TV fictional serial drama includes a deliberate and structural style to delay unfolding stories in the soap operas- meaning that there must be suspense. According to Fiske (1987), for a storyline to gain an interest in an audience, they must 'experience' it and share a social platform with the story world.

One of the characteristics of the TV serial drama fiction is that many of them have at least three to four different storylines running concurrently within an episode and with overlapping characters that are related either through birth, love or living in the same neighbourhood (Hayward, 1997). The stories could progress at different paces. The 'resolution' of one could lead to the picking up of another one. The stories are not resolved but are always in limbo and open to any new direction. For instance, a pregnancy plotline with one of the characters could either be true, false or does not exist and could continue for several months. The audience seeks to know what happens next, a critical notion flow of narrative pleasure. The disconnection in the storylines, where the plotlines are at various stages create gaps, but the joy is further heightened by the audiences who 'write'- contribute to the story by speculating what happens next in the storyline (Allen, 1992; Fiske, 2013). These spaces invite the viewer to participate in the construction and the enjoyment of the episodes.

Livingstone (1988) conducted a comparative study on the audience perception of the British and American soap operas. She discovered that the British preferred their soap operas, which they described as real and believable and dwelt on contemporary community issues like rape, alcoholism and drugs. Further to that, elements such as romance, love, glamour and hate on equal measure attract the audiences. The soaps included: *The East Enders*, *Coronation Street* and *Brookside*. The British audiences regarded the American Soaps as less realistic and pandering to the viewer's unreachable fantasies (Livingstone, 1988). Enzeogu (2013) adds that the viewers of *Coronation Street* take pleasure from the reflective storylines of the genre. They can feel the uncertainty of life as portrayed by some of the character stories. She cites one of the viewer's reflections as 'its great thrill to hear local....' Also, the writer must cultivate to work in a team; creatively think of stories with a quick turnaround, understand the serial drama writing formula, poses a genuine interest in writing such scripts and one who is ready to tweak local gossips to suite the story context (Kennedy, 2012). Stott (2013), a script reader for BBC continuing dramas, shares the requirements of several script editors/producers to include humour, intense emotions, contemporary stories with influential individual voices, and precise dialogue that is ordinary and captivating. American soaps characteristically promote extravagance and wealth (Ang, 1985). They may give viewers something to aspire to, envy or adore. Kilborn (1992, p.79) observes that some American viewers have described *Dallas* and *Dynasty* as super-soaps, as they reach areas of their fantasy lives that other fictions do not. They regard them as 'out of this world'.

Uwah (2012, p.8) argues that proper story treatment tries to give an impression of 'reality'. He further observes that the *Naija Movies* peg their storylines on a rich tradition of storytelling which revolves around familiar African themes like corruption, the wicked mother-in-law, the

king and their subjects. The idioms, proverbs, songs and even riddles enrich the stories (Uwah, 2008).

Kim et al. (2009) conducted a mixed-method study on the influence and perception of a famous South Korean Soap Opera-*Winter Sonata* among the Japanese audience. He carried out a content analysis on published articles of the programme from the Korean and Japanese newspapers. The variables investigated included: The attractive aspects of *Winter Sonata* to the Japanese viewers; they also examined any evidence of media effects as a consequence of the programme.

The findings were that the overall popularity and quality of *Winter Sonata* was grounded in the realism, narrative coherence and the emotional appeal. Kim et al., (2009) further argue that the way the audiences perceived *Winter Sonata* influenced their buying behaviour of *Winter Sonata* memorabilia. Television has a substantial impact on peoples' everyday lives (Kwak et al., 2002; Lee, 1989) and significantly influences our consumption (O'Guinn, & Shrum, 1997) Additionally, The *Winter Sonata* finding is reinforced by Fisher's (1987) observation that people identify with stories when they consider it consistent with their own lives.

An excellent serial drama fiction should, therefore, pay critical attention to visual, aural and text (Kim et al., 2009; Kim & Wang, 2012). The Korean dramas pursue comfortable themes like family value, love and controlled violence presented in an exciting way that resonates with the audience, an attribute to their success. The dramas are also unique and do not imitate any other successful western shows and are self-explanatory (Ariffin, 2016). However, the entertainment value in a serial drama could be triggered by perceptions and influenced by family, religion, culture, peers and even previous media experience (Moran, 2003).

In the Kenyan contexts, Mosongo (2015) in a newspaper article observes that; the local television scriptwriter's role of creation and bringing characters' to 'life' is not recognised and given the respect it deserves. In the same article, Abel Mutua, a renowned television actor and scriptwriter states that Kenya has weaknesses in churning out good scripts in comparisons to what comes out of Nigeria and Tanzania. Abel further says that many people want to act but not to write and that one has to have a deep passion for it. On several occasions, Abel has tried to train people on scriptwriting, but they have given up before they are halfway with the sessions. Patrick Oketch also a veteran actor and scriptwriter for the local TV drama series *Mother in Law*, in the same article reiterates similar sentiments as Mutua, that not many people want to take the challenge of writing a script but want to act. Oketch further observes that there are local writers who create unrealistic storylines, for instance, one infuses stories on submarine or statehouse while the person lacks the grasp of such themes.

Besides, the problem with numerous local TV drama scripts is that they are poorly structured and the characters do not develop, argues film critic Anderson Wekesa (2013). For example, the long-running drama like *Papa Shirandula* on Citizen Television, the characters lack motivation; they have never grown in their story trajectory, outfit and makeup. For this reason, Wekesa (2013) observes that, the station managers have no option but to continue buying the foreign soap operas where the stories and characters are so developed. The *Mali* serial drama, which was commissioned by NTV, was commended for its production quality. However, some segments of its storyline and acting were singled out for lacking realism and therefore affecting its believability. A case in point is where a group of women are portrayed to be in a 'rural setup', they are reading a newspaper, and engaging in politics, but even their accent is noticeably unconvincing. According to Ogolla (2012) another film/television drama critic argues that in

reality, such gatherings are frequent with young men in an estate, in what he refers to as '*Mtaani*'-neighbourhoods. Thus, an audience would identify with such a situation more than the women scene.

The suggestion is that engaging storylines for a TV serial drama fiction should emanate and reflect familiar community stories targeted at them. Therefore, adherence to cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991) is a critical factor in the story's acceptability. Further to that, there is a deliberate suspense element which creates gaps and apprehensions in the storyline, generating pleasure moments for the viewer. However, Scannel (2007) argues that technological advancement in broadcast television has influenced multiple channels and myriad of serial drama content and might offer different viewing experiences. The interesting questions here would be how the audience selects the storylines. The UGT theory and the cultural proximity theory undergirds these questions.

2.5.3 Characterisation

Newcomb (2004, p.413) argues that television is a platform where 'human experiences are reconstructed' and reflected to the audience. The audience can identify with the familiar environments which encompass the characters. One of the most successful television drama serials '*Lost*' co-creator Damon Lindel states that the drama "Is all about character, character, character...." which has to be in the service of the people.

Eder (2010) defines characters as "identifiable fictional beings with an inner life that exist as communicatively constructed artefacts" - in other words, characters are triggered by the text, but come to life within our consumption of fiction and are best understood as constructs of real

people, not merely images and sounds on a screen (Mitell, 2012). Characters and their complex relationships with each other serve as the connecting points between the various storylines.

Individual performance and regularity of the serial fiction characters in our living rooms make them close to us (Logan, 2015).

Cohen (1999) argues that individual storylines and characters can have a higher impact on viewers than others. Riegal (1996, p.7) comments that 'when Dallas (1978) character, J.R. Ewing 'was shot', it made the evening news worldwide'. The universal interest in the character of J.R. was terrific. Cohen (1999) Hoffner, & Buchanan (2005) suggests that the character has more influence over the audience than the storyline.

The longevity associated with serials gives rise to the development of a kind of attachment to the characters by soap audiences (Abu-Lughod, 1995). According to Ang (1985, p.33), the role of characters in soap operas is to facilitate and establish audience involvement with viewers who often find themselves identifying with certain characters. Some are judged to be 'genuine' and held in high esteem and the unreal, not held in high regard.

Identification is an essential element in character interpretation. An audience tends to become less aware of self as a viewer but instead imagining being one of the characters in the story. He/she adopts the values and perspective of the characters and in effect, feels 'with' rather than 'for' the character (Cohen, 1999). Thus it is hard to imagine a television programme affecting one without identification (Cohen, 2001). We relate character models with the models we have of ourselves (Eder, 2010).

Ang (1985, p. 30) observes that the 'life-like' acting style minimises the distance between actor and character, which creates an illusion that one is dealing with a 'real person'; therefore the

viewer imagines the characters as active subjects. The study of the *Dallas* soap opera, reveals this in some of the audiences' comments such as; 'Sue Ellen is my favourite; she has a psychologically believable character...' Other extracts from their letters reads as follows; '.... then I find that all the actors and actresses act very well. So, well ...I find J.R a bastard or Sue Ellen, a frustrated lady' (Ang, 1985, p.33). Mato (2003, p.4) argues that in the various interviews he has held with the authors and producers of *Telenovelas*, points to the centrality of the audience' 'identification with the 'actors and actresses' as critical to the success of the stories.

A study by Enzeogu (2013) on the long-running British serial drama *Coronation Street* (1960), popularly referred to as '*Corrie*', reveals that the social reality storylines where characterisation takes precedence affects the audience pleasure and longevity of the soap opera. The characters are refreshed to reflect the changing social reality. The fans engage in scrutinising their favourite characters by enjoying the gossips in the show and talk about it with friends. Enzeogu (2013) adds that, there is a correlation between viewing soaps and gossips and that it creates a cultural meaning moment. However, the production environment in the serial drama fiction filming is fast-paced. Clifford (2014) argues that casting directors favour actors who trust their instincts and can achieve their performance in the first take, creatively improvise on dialogue lines, and even bring out the colour of the- unspoken words.

Angela Shapiro (1988); one of the original publishers of *Soap Opera Digest*, observed that viewer loyalty is not necessarily to a show or an actor but the character. The feelings of empathy, friendship, similarity and liking of the characters denote identification with the characters (Cohen, 2001). There is an aspect of role clarification on the part of the viewer (Fiske, 1987). *Simplemente Maria* (1969); a Peruvian telenovela enabled a vast number of women to identify with the main character '*Maria*' especially among poor working-class women. She represented a

role model for upward social mobility (Khalid & Ahmed, 2014). She encountered similar problems to what they faced and presented solutions that they found helpful. In Kenya: *Tushauriane* (1987), an educational-entertainment soap opera, was more on a similar level. The audience identified with the character 'Denis and Esther'; this was one of the most popular television shows then (Muchiri, 1989) their effort to consummate their marriage was always full of hindrances.

Hoffner and Buchannan (2005) carried out a study on how young people engage with television, fictional characters. A total of 208 university students (78 men & 130 women) with an average age of 20 years were enrolled in the study. The respondents were to identify their favourite female and male fictional character and estimate the length of time they spent watching. The findings were that the participants identified more strongly with characters that they considered akin to themselves. Other scholars have made similar observations (Hoffner, 1996; McDonald, & Kim, 2001; Miller & Reeves, 1976). However, respondents registered higher levels of wishful identification with characters of the same gender that they perceived to share in attitudes. Both genders identified more strongly with strong characters and admired characters of the opposite sex. Nevertheless, they differed on ideals that predicted their wishful identification with same-gender characters. Men acknowledged male characters that they observed as successful, intelligent and violent while women identified with female characters they perceived as successful, intelligent and attractive.

Miller (1995) conducted a study in Trinidad on '*The Young and The Restless*' a successful serial in America and other regions in the world, including Kenya. The findings indicate that the popularity of the programme tightly ties with the idea of the 'bacchanal', a descriptive term used to denote a mixture of scandal, gossip and disorder which the Islanders consider the essence of

their character and local traditions. The Caribbean viewers found the anarchy of the 'bacchanal' and recognised it as a vital element of their own cultural identity. The pleasure they derived from this identification was all the greater, because 'local television programmes reflected the official culture and had few points of contact with popular traditions' (Buonanno, & Radice, 2007, p.100).

Tager's (1995) study of black South African women's' identification and interpretation of 'The Bold and The Beautiful' found that the majority of the viewers identified with the female characters that strongly persisted against all the odds. Mary Oshea (2004) pinpoints the attraction of the South African soap 'Generations' to selected university students as follows: 'it seems to lie in the combination of identifying with characters and enjoying communication it sparks in the residence common room and in the programme's easy but gripping storyline. Van Der Merwe (2005) also studying 'Isindingo' found that the local nature of the programme, its true-to-life portrayals and the likeable characters were the centre of interest.

Drawing an example from a world-renowned social change Telenovela writer and producer; Miguel Sabido, his hero/heroine character would be designed and created in such a way that they would start as villains and turn around to be the change agent and a model for the viewer. Soaps like *Tushauriane* (1987) and *Makutano Junction* (2009) employed this method and succeeded in attracting sizable audiences.

When the character in serial fiction does not identify with the audience, they could develop a dislike for the show. Citizen television inaugurated a domestic serial drama- *Santalal* (2015). In its second screening, it elicited over 800 comments on the social media platforms, majority of them negative on the choice of the main character. The viewers castigated the audition of the

doctor character as a poor representation of the profession. Gerald Langiri (2017) an experienced Film/TV drama actor and casting director, observes that there are a few excellent actors in the country. From auditioning experience, he says that, out of a possible 1000 people, just about 10-30 will impress and stand out, while the majority will not impress. This study infers that characterisation is central to audience attraction to a TV serial drama fiction. The research further suggests that the audience actively interpret the character roles and determine their level of 'genuineness' in a given story. Therefore, to answer the question on characterisation in the domestic and foreign serial dramas, UGT personal identity aspect would capture the extent of the audience perception towards the performance of an actor.

2.6 Serial drama fiction producer

The study contends that viewership of TV serial drama fiction is closely associated with the quality of the production. Therefore, it is critical to determine the operational world of the producer. The following sections, thus, situate the creative environment of the serial drama producer and how it impacts on the entertainment values of the audience. Television is considered the producers medium where he/she plays an intricate role of juggling between personal taste, the audience and coping with the market trend expectations. Newcomb & Alley (1983, p.33) describes the producer as walking a narrow bridge towards 'a dreamed-for success'. The producer is usually the centre of the creative process. It is he or she who guides the project through all of its stages from inception to broadcast, working with the writers in the development of the treatment; to writing the teleplay, casting, rehearsals, rewrites to taping, editing and promoting the show and airing of it. (Interview with Norman Lear, a writer-producer-director of *All in the family*, *Good times*, *The Jefferson's* among many cited in Newcomb, & Alley, 1983). However, the critical role of the TV drama producer which differentiates him/her from other TV

roles is the instinctive creativity and intuition to a successful story and pushing it to the public arena (Newcomb, & Alley, 1983)

2.6.1 Producer as a Bricoleur

Television is a meeting point of the audiences seeking and the producers responding. The producer is most successful when he or she can respond (Newcomb & Alley, 1983). Marshall Sahlins (1972) refers to producers, writers and those who create for the media like television as 'hucksters of symbols' and that as cultural 'bricoleur'; they are able to develop and mix familiar and cultural elements to make new combinations to which he or she expects audience to respond favourably" (Thompson, 1990, p.1). The term bricoleur was first used by Levi Strauss (1962) to define someone who uses whatever material is at their disposal to complete a project. The key concept is that a community of practitioners develop cultures and traditions which every member should ascribe by to logically conclude a project. A 'bricoleur' in this case adapts to the prevailing situation and creatively employs available tools within the environment to come up with unique solutions to a problem. In response the viewer, the producer is also considered as 'bricoleur' who matches the creator in the meaning-making, by 'examining, acknowledging, and makes texts of his or her own' (Newcomb, & Hirsch, 1983, p.570). How then is the producer a Bricoleur?

The serial drama fiction producer does not work in a vacuum. In competitively liberalised television environment with many new and innovative technologies seeking the audience attention, it is a monumental task to attract and maintain audience pleasure in a given programme. The central role of the producer is to meet the entertainment needs of the audiences.

Bansal (2012) argues that it is not a simple matter, to predict the audience response to certain characters or situations, and for this reason, producers spend significant time and resources evaluating their soap's impact.

Thompson (1990, p.2) argues that television programmes are 'recombinants bricolage' that rudiments within previously successful shows are recombined all the time to make 'new' shows. Annas (1995, p.40) observes that, over 24 million viewers watched the TV Medical drama series ER (1995) at its peak, the creator (Michael Crichton) and executive producer (John Wells) were successful in reading the mood at that time on what would excite American audience as 'sex, violence and youth....and the absence of money'. They put together youthful, attractive actors, notwithstanding their ethnicity and financial ability and working under emergency room (ER).

Serial dramas like *The Waltons* (1974) was built around a more sentimental and morally upright society (Newcomb & Alley, 1983) where the woman's role was central in the home. The producer's success lay in his insight to make the audience relieve those fleeting moments and identify with it. Hill (2010) argues that in the earlier popular soap operas like *I Love Lucy* (1951-57), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-70), the woman always played a traditional domestic role and was situated within the home. The audience identified with characters and their roles within the prevailing norms. *Desperate Housewives* (2004), another successful serial drama popularly screened in Kenya, plays on the 'past and the audiences existing cultural knowledge as a means through which to access and interrogate contemporary social conventions' (Hill 2010, p.163). *Sex and The City* also broke with conventions by offering a new representation of women on television. Mitell (cited in Hill, 2010, p.165) argues that 'the mixing of genres is a cultural process enacted by industry personnel in response to audience viewing practices'.

Further to that, the 'bricolage' producer can discern the dynamism of the audience and the subtle cultural flux in which they draw their knowledge and reading to create what is pleasurable to them. Stephen Johnson (cited in Hill, 2010, p.165) asserts that the audience now rewards narrative complexity and the producers' accommodation of audience demand. The same approach worked for *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002), a popular drama series on Fox Television. Over 18 million viewers watched the show; it was also screened in Kenya. Created by David E Kelley, 'Ally' as a character, allows women to explore their feelings of anxiety about their position within a male-dominated workplace-about being 30-something and the issues marriage and children. The pleasure is about the conflicting inheritances of feminine desire for both independence and companionship. The producer as a 'bricoleur' must quickly be able to discern ideas and combination which will work with the audience.

Neighbours (1985), is one of the most successful serial drama fictions ever produced in Australia. It has been screened in several parts of the world, including Britain, the USA and even in Kenya. However, what is it that made *Neighbours* so successful? Stephen Crofts (1995) generated a list of 10 things responsible for *Neighbours*' popularity, particularly in the UK. His list consisted of the following: identification with everyday experiences; camerawork; women doing things; teen sex appeal; un-rebellious youth; 'feel good' characters; wholesome neighbourliness; resolve, dissolve differences, or repressed; depoliticised middle-class citizenship; and writing skills.

Mr Shwahn (cited in Arthur, 2005) the producer of '*One Tree Hill* (2005), a teenage serial drama fiction in the USA argues that the drama was on the brink of being cancelled in the season because the ratings were appalling, the plot lines concentrated on male-driven sports and had to 'step back and learn from the audience response' that the core audience were ladies, so the

subsequent episodes in the new season had ladies in prominent roles. The rating shot to number one.

Moreover, the success of long-running British soap opera *East Enders* 'emphasised the importance of strong stories born out of believable characters and good writing (Smith & Holland, 1987, p.5).

Kingara (2010) conducted a study on the local television drama practices but focused on two serial drama fictions: *Reflections (KBC)* and *Wingu La Moto (NTV)* by interrogating the producers. He concluded that at best they 'imagined their audiences' as existing in mass', and further arrogated themselves the role of 'societal moral code advocates' by sanctioning the nuances in a story, determining its suitability to the audiences, and what lessons/moral teaching it could impart to the viewers, thus it could impede the creative demands of television production and alienates the audiences' entertainment needs.

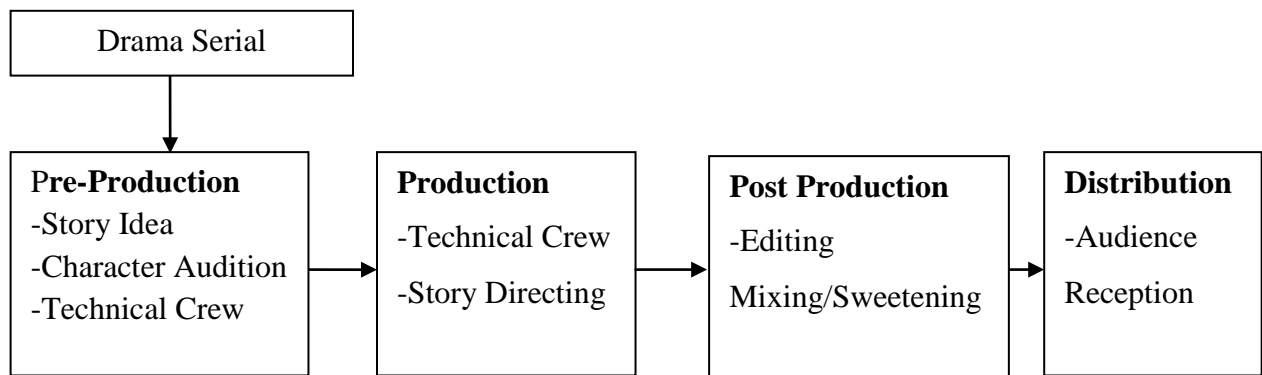
Allen (1995) observes that soap opera producers have learned to sustain the audience pleasure in TV serial drama viewing by quickly responding to fans reactions. Through the feedback, they can extend storylines and strong characters and spontaneously rest the unpopular arcs. Mittel, (2010) in a conference paper in honour of Fiske further argues that there are increasing incidents where the producers of television serial fictional dramas deliberately encourage audience conversation on the social media platform which eventually guides their subsequent storylines.

The producer, as a 'bricoleur' might not always be successful or lucky in audience reception. The audience might not register a production which is highly acclaimed by the production team. Kingara (2013) observed that a highly publicised South African version of serial drama,

edutainment-Heart & Soul (2001) did not find favour with the local Kenyan audiences, some of the cultural aspects in the story treatment did not register as 'real' to them.

Thompson (1990, p.2) concludes that to be a bricoleur in television, one must have amassed a great deal of power within the production organisation. In most cases, the people who have done this is the writer-producer....as writers, they create and solve the dramatic problem of storytelling. As producers, they are in charge of the production, and they can protect their stories from many people who are anxious to alter them.

2.7.1.1 The TV Drama Production Process



**Figure 2.2: The TV drama serial production & reception process
Researcher 2020**

The TV drama production process is the precise planning of how the programme will be executed (see figure 2.2 above). Also, since the TV drama story process is closely linked with film drama production in Kenya, as observed in chapter one, appropriate film references will be made to enrich the comprehension of this section.

The producer can exercise decisive influence in drama production in the following stages; at the selection of the original concept, the choice of a writer and supervision of the script, the selection

of a director, the approval of the creative crew, control over the editing process, and the promotion and sale of the film (Pardo, 2010).

According to Negus (1999, p.19), there is a 'culture of production', while, Henderson (2007) talks of the philosophy and team ethics in a serial fiction drama production which on instances produces a hybrid in the genre. The production teams in TV productions develop their style of executing a project, and different groups might come up with different outcome on a genre. The ubiquitous, popular Nigerian films can illustrate this, the producers create within the neighbourhood community where they live, so they are part of 'the everyday life of the people' (Uwah, 2008, p.89) with the familiar landscape and distinct regional characteristics.

Allen (1985, p.8) argues that soap opera productions require efficient and detailed division of labour. The idea is conceived and designed at the management level and fabricated by workers responsible for only a small portion of the production process. Decision-making power rests with a small group of persons perched at the top of the production hierarchy and purposely isolated from those who work under them. Franco Sachi, in the film '*This is Nollywood*' and quoted by Uwah (2008, p.91-92) observes that:

'Nollywood producers know that they have struck a lucrative and long-neglected market-movies that offer audiences characters they can identify within stories that relate to their everyday lives. Western action adventures and Bollywood musicals provide little that is relevant to life in African slums and remote villages. Nollywood settings are familiar. Nollywood plots depict situations that people understand and confront daily; romance, comedy, the occult, crooked cops, prostitution and HIV/AIDS'.

Turner et al. (2014) observe that there are moments of conflicts in the production process when a producer and a technical expert express their interests. For instance, a serial drama genre producer could be more interested in a story development while a health expert could want to pursue a realistic portrayal of a health condition. Bouman, Mass & Koki (1998) studied the

collaboration between health professional and television professionals to reveal power relationships during the production process. She found out that health communication professionals are in a power position during the implementing stage while television professionals take over the initiative during production and editing. This possible tumultuous relationship might influence the outcome of a drama.

Newcomb and Alley (1983) conducted several in-depth interviews with veteran TV drama producers. In summary, they reveal that after technical considerations in a drama production, the core attributes to audience attraction is in the plot, believability of the character and the emotional string in the story. David Victor states that 'if the central figures are not somehow believable...if we do not experience in these fictional creations some resonance with our humanity then the show will fail...lessons or information will have no impact because there will be no audience' (Interview with David Victor, a writer/producer of *Dr Kildare* cited in Newcomb, & Alley, 1983, p.76).

The production process encompasses the use of cameras, sound recorders and editing facilities. The following section explains how the technical elements are deployed in a drama production to enhance the aesthetic reception of the story.

2.6.1.1.1 Videographic style

The videography (camera style) is the center of interest in the recording of a serial drama episode. The use of single or multiple cameras with a varying primary camera takes of LS (Longshot), MS (Medium shot) and CU (Close-up shot) are some of the necessary executions (Millerson, & Owen, 2008). However, it also entails camera technical creativity by the operators to achieve an 'impression of reality' to retain the viewers' focus and attention on the screen

(Millerson, & Owen, 2008, p.57). In the study of the visual technical production of the TV serial drama fiction '*As the world turns*', Butler (1986) argues that there are serial drama conventions in the *mise-en-scene* (sets, lighting and figures). Producers maneuvers lights in a variety of ways to create actors' emotions. Set lighting is 'dominated by three-point lighting-key light, fill light and backlight'. The genre is heavily punctuated by close up zoom-ins to further heighten the actors' emotions (Butler, 1986, p. 59). The selection of different camera angles guides viewing reception which determine character identification (Benjamin, 1969; Cohen, 2001). The producer should be familiar with the impact of the technical camera operations and appropriately nominate those to carry the task.

2.6.1.1.2 Sound

The primacy of the television medium is primed on its visual imaging capacity and fits in well with the adage 'a picture is worth a thousand words' (Hepting, 1999). This best describes the supremacy and effectiveness of the visuals over the descriptive dialogue of the script. However, Butler (1986, p.66) argues that television inherited the historical development of the radio serial drama fiction, which emphasised the audio (listening). It is, therefore, possible to 'view' the soap opera without actually seeing it.

Nonetheless, good sound is paramount in a television production, operated by qualified technicians (Millerson, & Owen, 2008). Butler (1986, p.66) further observes that the images in the TV serial drama are 'constructed to illustrate the words rather than vice versa and the characters talk and talk and talk'. However, apart from the actors, dialogue music is vital to set the mood, make the emotional connection and segue the viewer from one segment to another

(Butler, 1986; Millerson, & Owen, 2008). The selection and appropriate mixing of the sounds in a serial drama, therefore, influences the viewers' reception.

The preceding argument suggests that television is a producer's medium and that he/she is foremost a creator, writer and marketer. They should be analytical and understand the mood and circumstances of the community where they produce. Certain elements like the story familiarity and character identity takes precedence if the serial drama is to be meaningful to the targeted audiences. However, robust camera, sound and other technical elements are critical. Further to that, the financiers or the station executives can also hold sway in a production. Nevertheless, the critical position undergirding these is the understanding of the producers and the entertainment needs of the audiences. Two theories guide these aspects; the active audience theory (encoding/decoding model) and the cultural proximity theory. For instance, to answer the question of what entertainment insights the producer has on his audiences? There are elements of familiar stories within the environment. More so, the producer starts with a concept (encoding), with the hope that the audiences will receive it (decode) per his expectations.

2.7 TV stations executives

As discussed in the previous sections, the reception to the television serial drama genre involves a range of production protocols. A final phase of this encompasses the distribution of programmes at a TV station. At this juncture, the onus is with the station executives who also seek to meet the audience entertainment needs. Thus, he balances the economic interest of the TV station, audiences' and the producers. The subsequent discussions explore this scenario.

It has been argued in this study that, television is a 'producers medium' (Newcomb & Alley, 1983) implying a free reign for the producer or creator of television programmes and that three

of the significant creative parts of television series production, i.e. 'story, casting and editing are under the producers' control (Cantor cited in Thompson 1990, p.7). However, this is not so; television executives could hold sway on programming and even productions. Television series balance the delicate need to turn a profit to remain on the air and also meet the audiences' recreational needs (Ang, 1991; Brinker, 2015). It is therefore critical to understand the television institution, why new programmes are created, scheduled within a given timeframe while others are rested (Gray, & Lotz, 2012).

In the vibrant Nigerian 'Nollywood' video industry, entrepreneurial production demands total control of film's production units, under the executive producers, and this could be at the expense of creative decisions (Okwuowulu, 2012). The serial fiction has it more pronounced. Allen (1985, p.58) points out that if soap operas did not serve an economic function as an advertising vehicle, their utility 'would be... nil', this can also be explained from their inception in the 1930s. Companies like Proctor and Gamble, for example, was interested in capturing the housewife audiences, by sponsoring many household products.

Lallo (2014) argues that the executive producers and their analysis of programmes hold sway in serial drama productions. He further quotes Francesca James, the executive producer, director and an actor in the TV serial drama *All My Children*, saying that "Focus groups are the killers of daytime television". These controls are under the station executives and marketing departments, so writers and producers have little say. Hill (2010) observes that their intervention could, in some instances be in order; she cites the case of the pilot episode of *Desperate Housewives* (2004), a one-time popular soap opera. The suggestions of the executive producers, at an advanced screening, partly contributed to its success.

Cantor and Pingree (cited in Allen, 1985, p.50) observe that 'no soap opera writer operates under the delusion that the soap opera is a canvas upon which to bear his/her creative soul. The writer's job is to generate the largest possible audience of consumers of the sponsor's product. Similarly, Edward (2000) argues that most film funding sources and distribution in the US, who would want to exercise creative control in the production processes like in the cast and script changes. Thompson (1990, p.1) agrees that 'creation in television is an issue of power, not just imaginative power or intellectual power but organisational, occupational and entrepreneurial power as well; or a producer has to go the extra mile to mobilise a team to bid on their behalf and a clout to talk to station executives'. Henderson (2007) points out that when there is a contention on a producer, script or an actor, it is evident that the executive producer's decision will override the rest.

In the Kenyan context, empirical studies are emerging which explain the creative and business confluence between the production team and the station executives at a television station. As has been argued in this thesis, the commercial interest is an overbearing factor in many a drama production (Allen, 1985; Caldwell, 2008; Okwuowulu, 2012). Thus, the station executive closely monitors the marketing/commercial department. Wamuyu (2018), a scholar and a veteran television drama producer, conducted a study to determine the convergence of creativity and marketing of two long-running drama series genre, on Citizen television- *Inspekta Mwala* and *Machachari*. The findings were that there was a disconnect between the creative production team and the marketers. The marketers were unaware of the content they were to sell; similarly, the producers were also oblivious of their viewers' and advertisers' reaction to their productions. The suggestion is that part of the disaffection of the domestic drama productions could emanate from lack of focus by the management teams to position the creations to refinance their costs of

production, and therefore improve their quality, if only they forged a close working relationship between the creative team and the marketers.

In an attempt to discover a successful television drama path in multi-episode television production, a longitudinal study by Gray and Donald (2010) revealed that television consumer behaviours (expectations, involvement and connectedness) and program performance emerged as the precursor of audience satisfaction. Caldwell (2009) observes that in Hollywood: the producers, executives and writers, spin everything to serve their commercial interest first and their organisation reputation before anything else.

The previous arguments suggest that to comprehend the gamut of TV serial drama production; there is a need to understand the position and influence of the TV stations executives. They are the gatekeepers and final determinants of what gets scheduled. They also have insights into the audiences. They further draw in from the station's legislation, programming regulations and financial implications of each programme. However, despite their endeavour to meet the audience's entertainment needs, they operate under a strong current of economic/commercial interest of a TV station and could, therefore, fail to entertain their audiences satisfactorily.

2.7.1 Serial drama fiction and fandom community

The book '*Watching Dallas*' by Ien Ang (1985), was as a result of 42 feedback letters from fans of the TV serial drama fiction. Ford (2008) argues that soap operas are created as much by the audience that debates, critiques, and interprets them than through the production team itself. This brings us to the question of 'fandom', Jenkins (Cited in Melisa Ames, 2010, p.21) observes that the use of the word was first about women theatre-goers referred to as 'Martinee Girls', whom

male critics claimed had come to admire the actors rather than the plays, for Jenkins, fans are 'active producers and manipulators of meaning'. He further defines Fandom as communities built around a collective enjoyment of an element of popular cultures such as movies and TV shows. In this discussion, it involves fan communities of TV serial drama fiction.

The television serial drama fans have contributed to the setting up of specialised magazines such as *Soap Opera Digest* (1975) which is still in circulation to date (<http://www.soapoperadigest.com/>). Fulton et al. (1995) point out that most soap opera viewers do not comprehend how much power they have through their letters, telegrams and phone calls which can 'kill' characters and even storylines. Jenkins (1988) argues that a once-popular television series- *'Star Trek*, fans went to the extent of re-appropriating the original producer's creation of characters and storylines to their versions to further gratify their desires. He referred to them as 'reluctant poachers'. Modleski, cited by Jenkins (1988, p.491) adds that 'the mass culture does not empower fans; fans empower themselves over mass culture'. The soap fans, regard themselves as co-authors and "moral" co-owners of soaps and are "expected guests at the [industry] party," their pleasures "sanctioned by the industry and their struggles with producers legitimated by the daytime press" (Harrington, & Bielby's, 2007 p. 182). Nevertheless, empirical studies indicate that pleasurable TV drama engagement still involves group watching and follow-up discussions, which is an essential part of the show (Simons, 2015).

Social media is the most prominent example of what Jenkins (2006) refers to as participatory media culture, which has evolved due to the establishment of new information and communication technologies. What role does the audience have in determining gratification in a given serial fiction? For many years before the internet, the quickest way of audience interaction with the programme maker was through letter writing to a newspaper editorial or a magazine;

those were the only ways their feelings and views could be known, and this is still prevalent.

Veronica Onjoro (2015) writing to The Nation Newspaper, letters to the editor says;

When Mexican soap operas are showing, I stay glued to the TV in my house. Soaps are Kenya's favourites for women, girls and house helps, followed by a dose of Nollywood because their themes are centred on love.

The digitalisation and convergence now enable a quick re-circulation of texts to a broader audience and the producers of the dramas alike (Jenkins, 2006). Kenyans are very active on the social media which is powered by the mobile phone penetration in the country which has had a consistent growth over the years to cover as much as 88.6 % of the population (CA, Q4: 2016-17). The audience influence and interaction with local programming has radically changed. An example occurred in February 2014, when a well-known comedian '*Teacher Wanjiku*' launched her TV drama-comedy on *Citizen Television* referred to by the same name. There was audience backlash on social media just after a single screening, forcing the station to take it off the air. Omondi (2014), quoting Larry Madowo, a one-time host of a popular NTV show '*The Trend*', says that social media is probably the biggest game-changer on how people consume TV content in this decade. "The ability to get feedback instantly, be it positive or negative was previously impossible, and even SMS was not nearly as effective."

According to these discussions, the fandom communities now have a prompt communication loop courtesy of the digital revolution. The TV serial genre can, therefore, be instantly evaluated and critiqued, these put pressure on the producers' and programmers dealing with fans (audiences) who might have unreasonable demand on programmes quality. However, Baym (2000) supports the notion that fans activities could address flaws on the part of the writers in a serial fiction; that soap opera producers have much to gain by the fans ability to voice complaints because the very act of participating keeps their interest in the programme going longer.

The preceding argument is that the audiences can have instant leeway and determine the direction of a drama story on the social media platforms like face-book pages and twitter accounts where many soap opera audience comments abound, for example, on the face-book page of the local soap opera '*Mali*' one Julia comments: 'I like when Mkamazee slaps them around'. Omondi (2014) asserts that those behind TV shows cannot run away from social media but have to embrace it. However, Evans (2011) differs that the endless social interaction might be at the expense of substantive engagement with television-related content.

Harrington, & Beilby (1995, p.180) observe that, far from being confused about the reality of soaps, fans make a clear distinction between the personal histories of the actresses and actors, and of the characters they portray. Fans are interested in discussing both the narratives of the soap and that of the real lives of characters. 'Viewers enjoy the fictional world of soaps not because they lack fulfilling lives themselves, but because the real and the fictional are not so clearly separable. Instead, the TV serial drama offer viewers the chance to stand on the boundaries and see real-life as connected and informed by a variety of perspectives.

The above discussions infer that as producers and station executives, there is a need to understand that the audience (fans) response to a serial drama fiction is critical to its survival. They are the core of good story production. The digitalisation enables them quick response, and therefore, the producers and station executives must adhere to these to meet their needs. The audiences are active in seeking out serial drama entertainment. In a similar trajectory, the station executive sets off from the same theoretical understanding like the producer to entertain the audience. However, the 'fandom' community could interpret the story differently.

The next section highlights the briefs of three sampled local and foreign TV serial dramas. They are of interest to the study, in that the audience response to them were at different levels, and we can learn why this was so.

2.8 The sample dramas on FTA TV stations

This study investigates the context of viewership and the productions of serial drama fiction in an urban setting. An aspect of this involves the audience entertainment value in a domestic produced serial drama fiction in comparison to foreign productions. The following section highlights three dramas at various levels of audience preferences. They also form part of data collection tools. At the FGDs stage, a short replay of the segments was done; the purpose was to trigger their recall and create vivid conversations. The local television stations have screened the serials. Among them is '*Mali*', on NTV; it has shown consistency in higher audience rating as compared to all other locally screened dramas. *La Gata*, a Mexican soap on Citizen Television, achieved a higher score than the rest and generated interesting social media conversations. *The Tussle* (KBC), a serial drama almost with a comparable storyline like *Mali*, it has been on the air for years but has very few followers even on the social media platform.

2.8.1 Mali, NTV (United in Blood: Divided by Greed)

A Kenyan television serial fiction dubbed the first soap opera in East Africa. It premiered on October 12, 2011, on NTV in Kenya and was screened three times a week and later once. It has also been broadcast in Uganda since 2012. *Mali* revolves around a rich and wealthy family led by its patriarch; Gregory Mali (George Ohawa) who is married to two wives. Mabel (Mary Gacheri) is the first wife, a Ugandan and a staunch Christian. The other one is Usha (Mkamzee

Mwatela), a Tanzanian who is free-spirited and the cause of the family drama. Mabel has two daughters, Nandi (Mumbi Maina) and Lulu (Brenda Wairimu), while Usha has two sons, Richard (Kevin Samuel) and Arthur (Daniel Peter).

The succession wrangles start with the children. While Mabel is the first wife and is in control, she is "disadvantaged" as she has only daughters, while Usha has sons who will possibly take over 'Mali's' estate when he dies. Their children, however, are not interested in the disputes and admire each other's mothers. Arthur loves Mabel while Lulu wishes her mother was as cool as Usha. Lulu has a crush on a waiter who works at her father's hotel, while Arthur finds himself drawn to their house help, Selena (Carolyn Ngorobi). Nandi, who is currently abroad, is rumoured to be pregnant with their dad's Chief Operating Officer Tony Babu's (Tony Mwangi) child. In addition to the two wives, *Mali* also has an affair with one of his employees. Further to that, It makes for an exciting drama. It has a strong cast, a mixture of experienced actors and young ones. (see figure 2.3)



Figure 2. 3: Opening Frame of TV serial drama Mali
Courtesy Al Is on Production

2.8.1.1 The producer

Alison Nguibini creates and produces *Mali* (2011) under 'al is on production company'. She has also worked as a series producer for other successful television dramas like *'Shuga'* (2012) and *'Siri'* (2010). She observes that she took up the challenge after feeling 'upset' with the amount of Mexican and international programmes on Kenyan screens (Nguibini interview with BBC, 2012). She states that Kenyans are in love with Telenovelas, albeit there are good actors and stories to tell in the country. On the *Mali* serial development, she was guided by Mfundu Vundla veteran South African executive producer of *Generations* a long-running serial drama screened in many countries across Africa.

2.8.2 La Gata-Stray Cat, Citizen TV

This is a Mexican Telenovela popularly screened on Citizen Television. The title: *La Gata* is a Spanish word meaning Stray Cat. The story takes place in the outskirts of Mexico City in a landfill, where a 12-year-old girl, Esmeralda (La Gata) is regarded as a societal misfit: she is scruffy and dirty; she grew up without her parents and learned to be happy with the little she had. She was raised from childhood by an older woman named Mrs Rita, who exploited her by making her beg or sell candy and newspapers. She is also illiterate. She meets Pablo Martínez Negrete, a high society rich boy who teaches her to read and write and with whom she becomes friends. However, Pablo's mother opposes his friendship with *'The Stray Cat'*.

Agustín, Pablo's father convinces Pablo that he should study for his masters abroad and marry a high societal girl named Monica once he returns. Nevertheless, Pablo and Esmeralda decide to marry secretly before he proceeds abroad. From New York, Pablo emails his father Agustín to

assist Esmeralda to prepare her papers, so that she can join him elsewhere, but the father instead organises for her kidnap, which never succeeded. Esmeralda gives birth to twins from this relationship. Her biological father is also released from prison. Pablo returns from New York feeling betrayed and prepared to marry Monica. *The Stray Catfights* to win her love back.

2.8.2.1 The producer

Nathalie Lartilleux is a producer at Televisa, a TV production organisation in Mexico. He has produced other Telenovelas like *Wild at Heart* (2012) *Rafael* (2011) *Mar De Amor* (2009/10). All these soap operas have been screened at the local TV stations within the prime hours and enjoyed good ratings. Some of his actors have been nominated in various awards in Latin America for their roles in Telenovelas. I sent out an email request for a possible interview with him which has not been responded to. I have, therefore, scanned the internet for available information about the production. Tager (1995) in a study of black South African women's identification and interpretation of 'The Bold and The Beautiful', was unable to interview the producer because of the logistics; however, she was able to search the internet and return with much enriching information for her study (see figure 2.4)



**Figure 2. 4: Opening Scene- La Gata
Courtesy of Televisa**

2.8.3 The Tussle- KBC

A locally produced TV serial drama started in 2001 and has changed producers over the years. Timothy Ondere has produced the later episodes. They have shot over 156 episodes to date. The drama is about a family, the principal character Zak has two wives Yolanda who is separated and Ludia the second wife. The struggle in the family or 'Tussle' comes after Zak falls sick, and the two wives with the help of their grown-up children go against one another. Steve's first wives' son and Jason the son to Ludia; at the centre of the struggle is the inheritance of Zak's property. Even though the drama has been in production for over 10years, it has a limited audience. Its face-book account has attracted not more than 15 followers and seems to be dormant. It also has poor ratings in comparison to *La Gata* and *Mali* (see figure 2.5)



**Figure 2. 5: Screenshot of the Tussle
Courtesy of the Producer**

2.8.3.1 The producer

Timothy Ondere is the producer of *The Tussle*. He also produces other dramas like *Plot 10*, occasionally a weekly entertainment magazine *Grapevine* and even reality shows. The study conducted an in-depth interview with him. Additionally, some Kenyan media critiques have lambasted the local TV drama productions for being unattractive to the audience and for lacking in freshness, poor scripts, screen performance and creativity (Ochieng, J. 2014)

2.9 Conceptual Framework of viewer reception to TV serial drama fiction

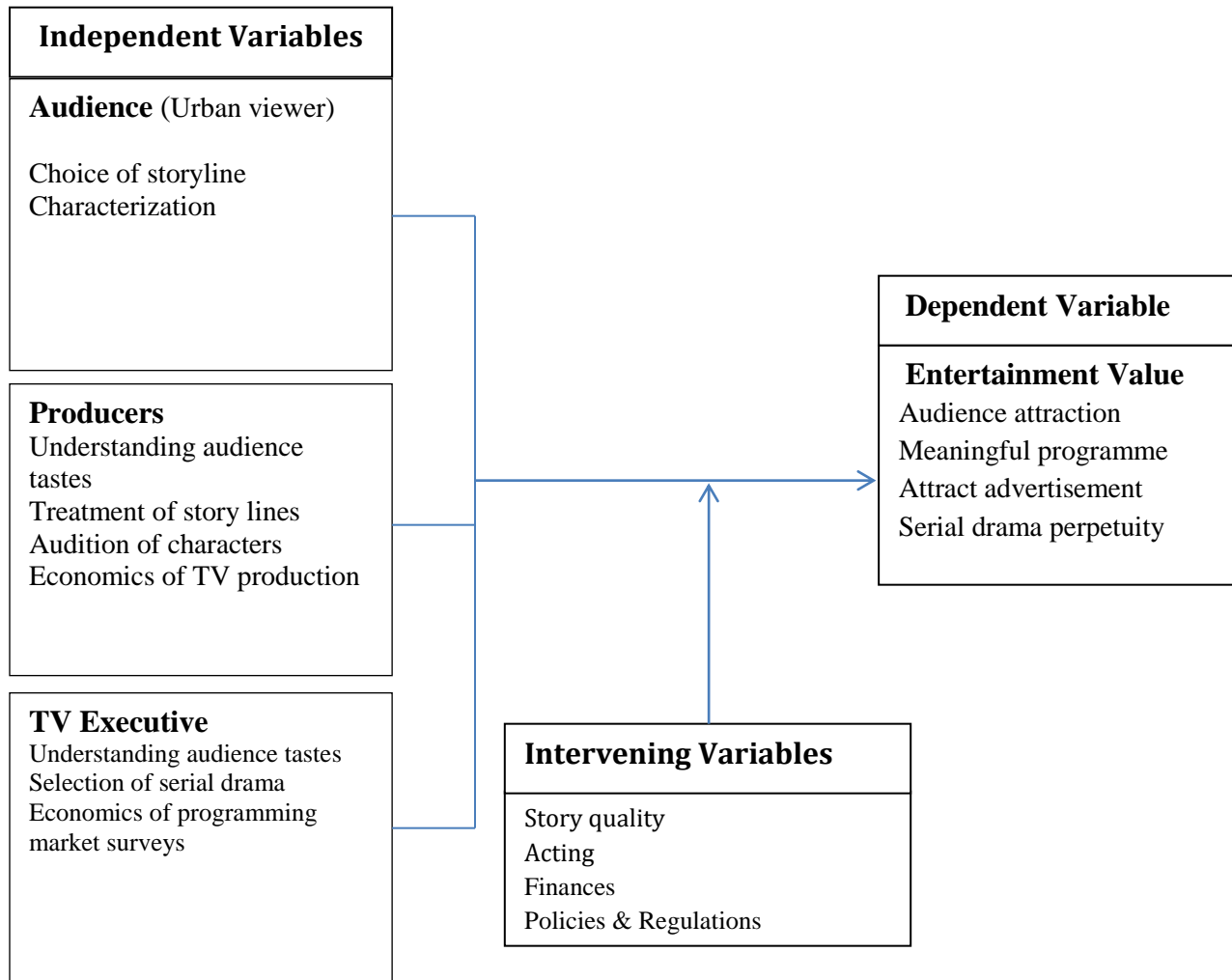


Figure 2.6: Viewer reception framework to TV serial drama

Researcher Data 2020

This section discusses the conceptual framework from the urban audiences', producers' and the station executives' confluence (see figure 2.6). The groups should give a more profound understanding of the context of viewing, reception and a guide to reorganise continuity of the domestic serial drama programming and production.

Miles and Huberman (1994 p.18) define the conceptual framework as a visual or written product, that explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, - the key

factors, concepts or variables and presumed relationships among them. Kombo et al. (2004) reinforce the argument by adding that it outlines the possible course of action or only how the solution to the problem will be generated, using a systematic arrangement of the variables in a study.

In the study, the urban viewer is the independent variable, who selects the serial drama to watch from several TV channels. He/she looks for meaningful, entertaining and familiar serial drama fiction stories. They can situate themselves in the stories as they drive towards a resolution. The other important consideration to the viewer is the characterisation and performance identity. Character identity is actors who fit their performance roles; the viewers perceive their enactment as realistic and believable.

Nevertheless, it can draw empathy, sympathy, liking or dislike on an equal measure (Ang, 1985; Harrington, & Beilby, 1995; Fiske, 1987). The viewer could also dispute by time and the choice of multiple programmes available for viewing. The bricoleur producer and the station executive are the other independent variables. The producer has the vision for the story or has been hired by the executive or influenced by the station executive decisions. He/she works as a 'bricoleur' within the production process. He/she can conceive/ mix ideas to the pleasure of the audience. However, the economics of TV drama production should balance with the viewer's needs. Same storyline, different producers and production processes would return a varied outcome. Henderson (2007) refers to this as 'team production philosophy and ethics' which could create a hybrid in genres. Besides, the producer could be constrained by finances to fund the production adequately. There is a need to source for professional writers, actors and technical personnel.

The TV station commercial interest is what motivates most of the station executives. They are interested in good attractive stories, which they can subsequently sell to the advertisers, as underwriters of the programme. Therefore, to be successful with production, one has to understand their role. In other words, they are the distributors of the programme. They understand the audience as a market through regular surveys and also resolve production budgets and schedules. Many serial fiction producers could be working under the production manager or the executive producer. Henderson (2007) contends that executive producers of Television fiction are subject to 'the commercial pressures of the rating battle' (p.174) and they might have a better market understanding of the audience activity than an independent producer. Their action could determine the reception of a programme. Some of them, therefore, have a controlling influence over the producers' output. They can sanction a storyline or the characters in a production.

In conclusion, the pleasure in television serial drama viewing is a concerted effort through a web of relationship between the audiences', producers' and the station executives. The viewers could be receptive to a story and the characterisation if it is familiar and reflective of their experiences. They draw meaning from it. Nevertheless, the producers should also have the intuition of meeting the audiences' needs and together with the executive producer seek ways to maintain programme continuity, which is beneficial to both of them.

2.10 Summary

The chapter reviews the literature on how the TV serial drama fiction attracts an audience and the impact of the technical production processes. However, the chapter starts on a general understanding of television theory as observed by scholars like Silverstone, Turner, Fiske and

Hartley. They argue that television production and programming is a reflection of our society, cultures and environment. It thrives on a mythical narrative formula which tries to resolve contradictions and conflicts just as portrayed in real life, and by this, it entertains.

The television serial drama fiction is one of the medium's popular programming genres. Part of its attractive elements includes storylines which respond to the problems and questions the audience is experiencing (Ang,1985). Various segments of the story develop simultaneously but reach a crescendo at different moments. The dialogue script has a style, flow and deliberate manipulation of suspense (unfolding storylines) to delay the climax (Wilson,2008). The audience speculates on what will happen next, creating anxiety and enjoyment, which Allen (1994) refers to as syntagmatic gaps.

In a good story, the audience identifies with the characters, who are understood to be constructs of real people. Ang (1985) points out in her study of *Dallas* serial drama that some of the audiences identified with the superb performance of the Sue Ellen character, describing her performance in details including her gestures and concluding that, she portrayed a 'real woman'. Thus, the audiences are attracted to the serial dramas which they perceive the storyline treatment, characterisation to be genuine, believable and thematically relevant (Ang, 1985; Livingstone, 1988; Kim et al., 2009). In the Kenyan contexts, critics and audiences are pointing out the poor quality of scripts which lacks creative dialogue and build-up of suspense and other nuances, thus resulting in low-quality output (KFC, 2013; CA, 2016). Similarly, some of the creators decry the poor screen performance (their actions, gestures, poise and intonations) and the difficulty of finding suitable characters for roles in the Kenyan productions (Langiri, 2017).

As discussed in the chapter, failure by the producers to capture some of these nuances are the reasons why the Kenyan viewers prefer to watch foreign serials over the domestic productions. The dearth in local TV content consumption is a much more significant national concern, especially in the new digital dispensation. To boost the quality and consumption of the domestic content, the government now mandates all the FTA stations to allocate 60% of their airtime to local programming (CA, 2016).

The discussion has observed that audiences are attracted by stories which they deem to be 'genuine' and 'believable'. Thus 'outrageous' themes are bound to create disillusionment which also draws in the cultural proximity arguments (Straubhaar, 1991), one of the theories which have also been used to explain the audiences' phenomenon. However, to crystalise these explanations, the chapter further draws from communication debates. The context of viewership and the need to understand the audience entertainment value in serial drama productions takes a communication process. The earlier audience reception to messages was assumed to be linear or regarded as passive and susceptible to media manipulation (Shanon, & Weaver, 1963). However, this was gradually overtaken by new arguments which perceived the audience to be active seekers of the media; Uses and gratification theory (Blumler, & Katz, 1974) is a culmination of these debates.

Newcomb and Alley (1983) distinctively describes the role of a television drama producer as an intuitive creator, with intuition to a successful story and pushing it to the public arena. The producers are recognised for mixing different ideas and concepts, in what is referred to as 'bricolage' (Thompson, 1990). Successful ones can 'read', and work within the prevailing culture

and mood of the moment. David Victor (a writer/producer of *Dr Kildare* cited in Newcomb & Alley, 1983), states that a central actor should be believable and the audiences can identify with his/her emotions. This line of observation is further reinforced by Smith and Holland (1987) in the book *East Enders*, where they state that a prodigious producer can sieve exciting stories and good acting.

In the Kenyan situation, Kingara (2010) conducted a study on the practices of local television drama producers, focusing on their roles on two serial drama fictions: *Reflections (KBC)* and *Wingu La Moto (NTV)*. He concluded that the producers' conceived their audiences as 'mass', and regarded themselves as 'social ambassadors' and determined the 'appropriate stories' laden with lessons/moral teachings. From these perspectives, we can discern that the local producers operate within a confined creative environment, with no recourse to the audiences', in shaping what they are to watch. However, a winning producer should be one who can read and analyse the ever-evolving environment, technological changes and integrate these experiences in their narratives. The encoding/decoding model (Hall, 1980) undergirds the producer working processes. He/she conceives the idea and narrative approach; the audiences' will watch and interpret the texts from their understanding producing varied results. The study would, therefore, want to find out the extent to which the local producers are aware of their serial drama audience entertainment needs and their insights of the genre.

The television station executives determine what programmes to produce and schedule on-air (Gray, & Lotz, 2012). In a commercial television station, their foremost interest is to select or create programmes which turn in a profit for the shareholders. Allen (1985) argues that the role of the television serial drama is to serve as a commercial vehicle, and the writers and producers, should bear that in mind. The executives, therefore, continuously analyse the programmes to

satisfy the economic needs, and on occasions, at the expense of creativity (Lallo, 2014). The domestic producers criticise the stations' executives for impeding the growth of local content productions, through what some perceive as favoritism and nepotism in the commissioning of drama productions (Omondi, 2014; Wamathai, 2013).

The discussions also touches on the KBC station executives' approach to local productions. It was criticised after the sudden end of the famous serial drama production, *Tushauriane* (1987). The suggestion is that the management was implored upon to ride on the programme's popularity and secure sponsors for it. Nevertheless, they were least motivated to promote the growth of the local content and answer the audience's needs (Muchiri, 1989). Perhaps, this also reinforces Kingara (2010) arguments (also discussed in this chapter) that the television drama producers still conceive the audiences as passive, and determine the appropriateness of stories presented to them. Other study findings discussed in this chapter (Wamuyu, 2018) suggests that there are lapses in the television drama creative production team and the economic sustainability of the programmes. Moreover, the persons who could harmonise such working relationships are the executive producers', their failure to spot and correct such glitches could mean failure in meeting audiences' entertainment needs.

This study would, therefore, further delve into how the station executives fulfil the audiences' entertainment needs and meet the producers' expectations in serial drama programming. The executive producer approaches these from two theoretical perspectives- uses and gratification and the encoding/decoding model. He/she would want to gratify the audiences with the best

entertainment, but similarly, he sets off the concepts of the programme with the best intentions (encoding) though the reception (decoding) could be interpreted differently by the audiences.

Three television serial drama fictions have been selected to serve as a stimulus at the in-depth interview stage. They are '*Mali*' on NTV; It has shown consistency in higher rating as compared to all other locally screened dramas. *La Gata*, a Mexican serial drama on Citizen Television, has a higher rating at its slot and generates vibrant conversations than others on social media. *The Tussle* (KBC) a serial drama almost with a comparable storyline as *Mali* but with a poor rating.

2.10.1 Summary of the study Propositions

To understand the context of viewership and the production of serial dramas, first, it is essential to have a precise figure and information on the audiences, a pointer to successful production. The producers and the station executives are expected to be knowledgeable about their target audiences' to adequately fulfil their entertainment needs. Further to that, one cannot coerce the viewer into liking a TV serial drama; there should be a natural ascendancy as he /she votes with the remote control. Television is a producer's medium, and when they fail to marshal the right concept, personnel and technical elements, the production suffers. When the local viewers prefer to watch domestic productions, it is suitable for the industry, the producers and the countries cultures and traditions are likely to be enhanced in the stories. However, when the domestic audiences prefer to watch foreign productions genre, then there is a need to find the reasons why, one of the considerations for this study.

The TV serial drama fiction producers do not have a clear understanding of their audiences' entertainment needs and how they can reconstruct their lives through a fulfilling narrative. If that is the case, then, they are unlikely to create engaging and entertaining programmes. It is therefore

critical, for the producers to develop a sense for good stories; appropriate character auditions which all jell with the viewers. An excellent quality serial drama production is more than adequate financial backing but is attributed to the story treatment, directing actors and set designs all contribute significantly to the drama reception.

Nationally, there is a problem of adequate/quality of locally produced broadcast content. In this regard, the government has taken notice and intervened by creating and enforcing supportive policies. The Communication Authority of Kenya (CA), mandates every licensed free to air TV station to allocate 60% of their programming to domestic productions. There is a need, therefore, to invigorate these requirements. A good option would be to create and produce more serial drama fiction genre by interrogating the producers and station executives on their challenges to content creation.

Additionally, there is a need for the producers to understand the attraction aspects to the foreign serial dramas and draw lessons from them rather than dismiss them as cheap fillers. To comprehend this link will improve the industrial output of serial drama programming. However, the centrality of all these is to understand how the elements of storyline treatment and characterization converge to give meaning to a story the heart of TV serial drama viewing pleasure.

The above propositions demonstrate the specific conditions on the viewership and production of serial dramas among urban audiences. The study seeks to approve or disapprove them.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the research methodologies, strategies, and designs employed in the study. These include sampling procedures, data collection tools, and analysis methods. It also discusses data credibility and validity issues.

3.1 Research Design

The study has taken into consideration two research paradigms (positivists and interpretivism) to give a deeper understanding of the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in an urban setting. Walsham (1995) and Willis (1995) argues that the positivists believe that, observation and reason is the best way to understand human behaviour, and it is quantifiable with facts. Nevertheless, the interpretivism approach is that reality consists of peoples' subjective experiences. Klein and Myers (1999), reinforces the interpretive line of argument by saying that we gain knowledge, or at least it filters through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings.

A mixed-method approach draws an aspect of each of the paradigms. Ivankova et al. (2007, p.261) define mixed method research as a procedure for collecting, analysing and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study at some level of the research process to understand a research problem more thoroughly. However, there have been debates and controversies on the incompatibility of the philosophical foundation of the mixed method (Hanson et al., 2005; Teddler, & Tashakori, 2009). But some argue that the research questions

should be of primary importance superseding either the method or the theoretical lens (Tashakori, & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell, & Plano, 2007).

Cresswell (2009) argues that research designs are plans and procedures for a study that influence decisions from broad assumptions to specific methods of data collection and analysis. Creswell (2009) further observes that, within the mixed method approach, there are 6 aspects of designs to a study among them; sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, sequential transformative, concurrent triangulation, concurrent nested and concurrent transformative. This study takes the concurrent triangulation approach where the quantitative and qualitative data are concurrently collected and analysed to overcome a weakness of using one method with the strength of another.

There are television serial drama audience studies which have followed a similar mixed-method approach, though with varied degrees of tools application. They can serve as a suitable benchmark for this research. For instance, in the study; '*interacting with Dallas: Cross-Cultural Reading of American TV*,' Liebz and Katz (1990) used a mixed-method approach with a bias to qualitative techniques to study the cross-cultural reception of '*Dallas*', an American soap opera. They recruited participants from families and friends who watched similar episodes of the drama either during transmission or a video recording of the same; followed by focus group discussions made up of 55 small groupings. A total of 50 plus conversations were later transcribed and translated. The findings were that each group interpreted the drama from their cultural background and produced differing meanings.

In Kenya, Kingara (2010) conducted a study on the producers' approach to TV drama production titled; '*Imagining Audiences: The Production Practices in Kenya Television entertainment*

programmes,' this is the closest research to this thesis. His data collection included observation, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. He concluded that the producers were more guarded in their productions and carefully selected moral lessons themes which prohibited their creativity. Livingstone (1988) undertook a study on why the British viewers watched soap operas. Her study design involved both aspects of quantitative and qualitative research. The data collection procedures included posing a question (advertisement), in a national magazine *'Soaps'*- 'Why is soap opera so popular?'. She obtained 52 responses, which were further coded and analysed. The findings indicated that people tried to reconstruct the meaning of their lives through the programmes, by 'entering' into the storylines to resolve deep-seated issues. A further discussion compared and analysed the approach between the British and American serial drama fiction production.

The above study designs and findings have involved small samples and might not be generalised. However, they are insightful in understanding the audiences' reception to the serial drama fiction and the producers' approach. This study is going to adapt aspects of Liebes and Katz (1990) and Kingara (2010) as projected in their study. The study design has an aspect of guided questionnaire interviews (quantitative) directed at the television viewers selected from Nairobi constituencies, followed by FGDs, made up of a smaller sample of the initial quantitative interviewees. They are first exposed to short preview sessions of selected serial dramas; this is to trigger their memory and open up the discussion for a lively exchange. They are also observed, and any nuances noted. The design combines descriptive and analytical techniques and will allow the researcher to engage in explanatory as well as a descriptive study to understand the context of viewership and the production of serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya.

3.2 Population and Sampling

This study targeted the Nairobi urban households with television sets, the serial drama producers and TV station executives. Nairobi has a population of 3.1million. Among these, 1.6 and 1.5 million are male and female, respectively (KNBS, 2009). Access to television is relatively high: 606,700 households or 78% of the county's population have television sets (2011, Socio-Economic Atlas of Kenya). However, the study was interested in the total population of 394,450.

3.2.1 Population

The study targeted three constituencies in Nairobi, with a total population of 394,450 (KNBS 2009). This population was drawn from the following selected constituencies: Embakassi West (164,037), Kibra (114,860) and Makadara (115,553). The following section explains how the population and the sample sizes were drawn from the targeted constituencies and wards.

3.2.2 Sample size determination

The sample size was determined by applying Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) sample size determination formula. They propose a figure of 384 for a population that exceeds 10,000 and an additional 10% to compensate for persons that the researcher is unable to contact as suggested by Fischer et al. (1984). Thus, a total of 422 persons were targeted to be interviewed. See the formula below.

$$n = z^2pq$$

d²

n-The desired sample size (assuming the population is greater than 10,000)

z -The standard normal deviation, set at 1.96, which corresponds to 95% confidence level

p-The proportion in the target population estimated to have a particular characteristic. Fifty per cent can be used (the study will use 0.50).

$q = 1.0 - pd$ = the degree of accuracy desired, here set at 0.05 corresponding to the 1.96. In

Substitution= $(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) = 384$

0.052

Additional 10% = 38

384

+38

Total 422

Thus, the study will draw 422 participants from the constituency for the survey questions interviews.

3.2.3 Selection & Sampling of the constituencies

There are 17 constituencies in Nairobi, which are further broken down into 85 wards. The study was interested in interviewing participants from three of them. The three were selected by applying Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) argument that, a 10-50% sample size would be sufficient in a given population. Thus, using a simple random sampling technique, each of the constituency was assigned a number ranging from 1 to 17 after which three were picked. The selected constituencies were Embakasi West, Kibra and Makadara, which have a total population of 394,450. These constituencies are administratively divided into 13 wards. Once more, using simple random sampling, and for practical purposes; 3 wards were selected in each of the constituencies bringing the total to 9.

3.2.3.1 Selection of participants in-Embakasi West Constituency

Embakasi West is divided into 4 administrative wards, namely; Mowlem, Kariobangi South, Umoja 1 and Umoja II. The study randomly selected Kariobangi South, Umoja 1 and II

respectively, which have a population of 164,037. A total of 177 participants or 42% of the sample size was proportionately selected from the constituency. See table 3.1 below

3.2.3.2 Selection of participants in-Kibra constituency

Kibra constituency has a population of 170,070 (KNBS, 2009). It is administratively made up of 5 wards, i.e. Laini Saba, Lindi, Makina, Saragombe and Woodley/Kenyatta. Three wards were selected for the study, using simple random sampling; these were Makina, Saragombe, and Lindi. The wards have a population of 114,860. A total of 122 participants or 29% of them were selected for the study. See table 3.1

3.2.3.3 Selection of participants in-Makadara constituency

Makadara constituency is made up of 4 wards, namely; Harambee, Makogeni, Maringo/Hamza and Viwandani. The selected wards were Maringo/Hamza, Makogeni and Harambee with a total population of 115,553. It contributed a proportional 123 participants or 29% of the respondents towards the study. See table 3.1 below

Table 3.1: Study participants, tabulated in constituencies, wards, percentages, and households

Constituency & Ward	Population per constituency & ward	Proportionate participant per constituency & ward in %	Proportionate selected participants per constituency & ward	Participant per household	Targeted households
Embakassi West Constituency	164,037	42%	177		58
Umoja I Ward	50,739	31%	55	3	18
Umoja II Ward	50,738	31%	55	3	18
Kariobangi South Ward	62,560	38%	67	3	22
Kibra Constituency	114,860	29%	122		40
Saragombe Ward	54,347	47%	58	3	19
Lindi Ward	35,158	31%	37	3	12
Makina Ward	25,355	22%	27	3	9
Makadara Constituency	115,553	29%	123		41
Maringo/Hamza Ward	52,293	45%	56	3	19
Harambee Ward	32,238	28%	34	3	11
Makongeni Ward	31,022	27%	33	3	11
Grand Total	394,450	100%	422		139

Note

The study targeted to interview 422 participants from 139 households within the wards and the constituencies. Using systematic sampling technique, the research assistant would start at a given household with a TV set, skip one, and to the next until the indicated households (139), and respondents are reached. According to KNBS (2009), the average household occupancy in Nairobi County is four persons. Applying this reasoning; the study interviewed three persons per household as detailed in table 3.1 above. Gans (1968) and Livingstone (1999) argues that Television studies widely apply the use of households as the unit of analysis in determining viewers of a programme. Geraghty (1995) and Ang (1985) reinforces this observation by saying that television viewing is a family or group activity. The study, therefore, used the same perspective to settle on the households to draw the participants.

3.2.4 Sampling FGDs participants

The study is done on two levels. The FGD respondents for the second level were identified at the first level of survey interviews. The FGDs were meant to give an in-depth insight into the viewers' understanding of the TV serial drama fictions. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2004) proposes that at least three to six FGDs to draw any meaningful data. Johnson and Christensen (2004) propose a minimum of six participants per discussion group. Thus, the FGDs were organised from these scholars' understanding. A total of 21 participants were recruited from Embakasi West, from different wards of Umoja I, Umoja II and Kariobangi South Ward. In Kibra Constituency, a total of 17 respondents were recruited from the various administrative wards. Further to that, 19 participants were selected from Maringo/Hamza, Harambee, and Makongeni wards. A detailed distribution of participants who took part is shown in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 FGDs Participants

Constituency& Wards	FGDs Participants	Total Number of FGDs
Embakassi West		
Umoja I	7	1
Umoja II	7	1
Kariobangi South	6	1
	Total 21	
Kibra		
Saragombe	6	1
Lindi	6	1
Makina	5	1
	Total 17	
Makadara		
Maringo/Hamza	7	1
Harambee	6	1
Makongeni	6	1
	Total 19	
Grand Total	57	9

3.2.5 Sampling the TV stations that schedule serial drama programmes

There are 66 licensed domestic TV stations in Kenya (CA,2016). However, the stations designated for this study were; *NTV, KTN, Citizen TV, KBC, and K24*. They were purposively selected based on their dominant audience market share of 87% (Ipsos-Synovate, 2015). Besides, they regularly schedule the broadest mix of foreign and local serials within the primetime time hours of 5pm-10pm daily. For instance, this study identified 21 serials of both foreign and domestic scheduled at various stations between May 2014 and May 2016. Some of these programmes were as follows;

The Promise, Avida, La Sombre Del Passado, Carousel, New Beginning, Skandal Kibao, Dear Mother, Moyo, Santalal, Two Wives, I don't trust men anymore, Pray and Prey, Pendo, The Hostel, Mali, Beats of Love, The Tussle, Tabasamu, Bridges of Love , La Malquarida,La Gata and Corazon Indomable (Wild at Heart).

Three of the above programmes were selected and administered in the follow-up FGDs. They included *La Gata*, *Mali*, and *The Tussle*. The criteria used to select the programmes was that they were scheduled regularly over the weekdays between 7.30pm and 9 pm. Further to that, *La Gata* had a higher audience share as a foreign serial drama fiction, while *Mali* had a better audience share as a locally produced serial genre and *The Tussle* had the least attraction (KARF, 2016). Their segments were played back to the audience to serve as a trigger for the discussions.

3.2.6 Sampling the serial drama producers

There are in-house productions of television serial dramas. However, it's a common practice for a station to commission independent personnel to create the programmes; they are referred to as independent producers. The study sampled the producers, by confining itself to those who had heard their productions broadcasted in the five stations between 2013-2017. Since they are few, purposive sampling techniques were used to identify 11 producers for in-depth interviews. Their distribution is indicated in table 3.3 below.

Table 3. 3: Sample of the producers for In-depth interviews

TV Station	Number of serial producers
KBC	2
KTN	2
NTV	3
Citizen TV	3
K24	1
Total	11

3.2.7 Sampling TV stations executives

A station executive was purposively identified from each of the five stations (*NTV, KTN, Citizen TV, KBC, and K24*) for key informant interviews (KII). The stations' executives are critical cogs in understanding the context of viewership and the production of serial drama fiction. They are significant decision-makers in determining the audiences, the production, and programming of the genre at the station. Their detailed breakdown at each of the station is captured in table 3.4

Table 3.4: Sample of the KII Interviews for the station executives

TV Station	TV station executives
KBC	1
KTN	1
NTV	1
Citizen TV	1
K24	1
Total	5

3.3 Data collection instruments

The collection of data was done through structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The use of the audio-visual machine and direct observation were also employed. In the first level of the study, a structured questionnaire guide was used to administer 422 questions to participants in the selected constituency wards of Embakasi West, Kibra and Makadara. The second level of the study, involved FGDs, where nine group discussions were held of between 5-7 respondents, using semi-structured, unstructured and direct observation techniques. A total of 57 respondents participated. However, to set off and stimulate the discussion, three minute

segments of *La Gata*, *Mali*, and *The Tussle* were played back to them at the beginning of each discussion session. Their reactions to the productions were observed with critical interests to the storyline and the actors. Some of the elements noted were the small talks, laughter and the level of attention to the screen. All the conversations were recorded by an audio recorder and later transcribed and analysed.

In-depth interviews (11) were also conducted with the serial drama producers using a range of semi-structured to unstructured questions. Five key informant interviews were also carried out on the station executives. These are people who are knowledgeable about the TV station programming scheme as well as dealing with the audience and the producers. Once more semi-structured and unstructured were used. See the detailed breakdown of the participants and the instruments applied in table 3.5 below.

Table 3. 5: Study instruments and participants

Method	Instrument	Sample
Survey Questionnaire	Closed/Open questionnaires	422
Interviews-FGDs	Semi-structured, unstructured and direct observations	57
In-depth-Interviews	Semi-structured and unstructured	11
Key informant interviews (KII)	Semi-structured & unstructured	5
	Grand Total	438

3.4 Data collection procedures and process

Before embarking on the field study, the necessary licenses were obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The authorisation copy was made available to all the research assistants. Data collection (by administering guided survey

questionnaires) was conducted in Umoja I, II and Kariobangi-South ward by three research assistants. These are wards within Embakasi West constituency. Various roads and pathways cut through the estates. The assistants had to pick a given starting point at one of the streets, but ignore any business which might have a TV set. After visiting the first house, they were to skip the next- cross the street and into a different household. A similar method was used in Kibra and Makadara constituencies. When the required number of individuals and households was reached, the data collection ceased.

The second level of data collection took place two weeks after the guided survey questionnaires were concluded. A Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) was organised in each of the wards. The participants were identified during the survey questionnaire stage. In Kibra constituency, the FGDs were conducted in a church hall within Lindi Ward. Lindi was also more central, and the entire 3 FGDs of Kibra constituency were conducted at the location. The timing for groups was staged from 10 am-4pm on a Saturday. A maximum of 2 hours was spent with each group. At the start of each discussion, a short segment of selected serial dramas was played. Loeb et al. (2007) argue that such a process is an excellent visual retrieval aid to the respondents and enlivens the participation. The research assistants observed the audiences' reaction during the previews. A guided discussion by the research assistant using semi-structured to unstructured questionnaires followed. The discussions lasted between 45 minutes to 1 and a half hours.

A similar procedure, as explained above, was followed in the FGDs conducted in Embakasi West, at a church hall at Umoja Innercore and a nursery school in Harambee ward, Makadara constituency. All the discussions were captured on an audio recorder, which was later transcribed and analysed. The final phase of data collection involved the KII with the producers and the TV station executives. A total of 16 interviews were conducted, mainly face to face and one on the

phone. They lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours each and were audio-recorded. The interview guides are attached in appendix I, II, III & IV and the research permit VI, VII, VIII

3.5 Data analysis and presentation

The study uses various data sets. The data was first cleaned for completeness, consistency and further converted to numerical form. SPSS was used for data analysis and to produce descriptive statistics and appropriate graphs. The second phase of the study involved qualitative. Patton (2002) observes that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. The data was first logged according to the dates and time, the place where they were conducted, and the persons with whom they were gathered. After the transcription, thematic coding was used as suggested by Hansen et al. (1998), and Silverman (2003), categories and patterns on the data started to come out. The thematic areas were derived from the theoretical framework, which was the attraction, dissatisfaction, the producer relationship with the audience and the station executives contextualising of the viewers and producers. The likely themes were picked out as derived from the literature review. See table 3.6

Table 3.6: Code for analysis of qualitative data

Research questions and concept themes	Meaning/Definition	Examples
The Attraction/likes in TV serial drama programming	<p>The story is realistic</p> <p>The story entertains/escapism</p> <p>The viewer relationship with character/actor</p>	<p>-The story is believable/ reflects common issues in the community, where I live like finance, relationships, land, drug abuse problems.</p> <p>- I 'loose myself' in the story, feel bad when I miss, there is excitement, panic, suspense when I watch as a habit, make me forget my problems</p> <p>-Identity with actor, I feel empathy, emotions, attachment, sometimes hate for some actors. They remind me of certain persons in my neighbourhood</p>
Dissatisfaction/dislike of TV serial drama programming	<p>The stories are perceived as unrealistic</p> <p>Predictable storylines and slow-paced</p>	<p>-The story is fantasy cannot connect/experience it as part of my problems/community issues, like, relationships, gossips, drug abuse etc. The actors are unconvincing, their costumes, looks, expressions, face, eye movements are unreal</p> <p>-Uncreative, common story boy meets girl, fall in love and marries, no challenge to my intellect.</p>
Producers & Audience reception needs	<p>Knowledge of their target audience</p> <p>The selection of stories and actors who suit the viewers</p>	<p>-To know their age, gender likes/dislikes what makes them happy/angry/excited</p> <p>-Familiar, connecting stories identify with actors</p>
TV station executives conceptualizing of their audiences and producers	<p>Knowledge of their viewers 'Likes/dislikes in serial drama programming.</p> <p>Producers' understanding of the serial drama requirements and the balancing act of TV station executives</p>	<p>-Empathy, suspense, identification with characters, emotions, good familiar storylines, timely schedules</p> <p>-intuitive producers, understanding the commercial interest of TV stations i.e. finances, audience shares, programme ratings</p>

Research Data 2020

3.6 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability refer to how other scholars can replicate the study and achieve almost the same outcome. Validity is mainly concerned with the extent to which the measuring devices would yield accurate results and capture the essence of what they are intended to represent (Payne, & Payne, 2004). Additionally, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson observe that a study can be described as high, low or somewhere in between, but should be defensible before research and practising community for whom the study is used and produced. A pilot study was conducted in 15 households in South C and 10 in Mungoini wards, which are in Langata constituency to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot study is critical in that it refocuses the research, serves as a correction mechanism in question framing and is an excellent training ground for the research assistants to test their skills before the actual data collection (Mwangi, 2011).

At the pilot phase, it was noted that there was a slow return in the self-administered survey questionnaires. Additionally, some of the participants exhibited inertia at the length of the questions and therefore left some unanswered, there was also a need for further clarification on demarcating the meaning of TV serial drama and other kinds of drama genre. In this regard, some questions (2, 3, 6, 8, and 16) were revised for brevity and clarity after extensive consultations with communication experts. Collecting survey questionnaires was also changed from self-administered to the interviewer guided approach where they could clarify and explain any confusing issue. The final selection did not consider the pilot participant groups and areas to further check on internal validity. The research assistants for each constituency were recruited and trained to reduce external threats. A total of 7 research assistants were recruited for the exercise in Embakasi West (3), Kibra (2) and Makadara (2). They were trained and briefed

similarly, but each group did not get to know the existence of the other, to avoid any collusion which might affect the validity of the study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This is a mixed-method study where the use of quantitative and qualitative aspects are applied. The researchers deeply interacted with the participants but were careful not to infringe on their domains when collecting data. Silverman (2000) and Creswell (2009) suggest that entering these private spaces is an ethical issue that one should address during and after the study. Given these concerns, the researcher took the following approach;

It was made clear to the participants that the study is only for academic purpose, and their participation is voluntary. Further to that, there was no monetary compensation. The FGDs participants were informed of the process of previewing the serial drama segments as a stimulus to the discussion and their roles before the commencement of each exercise. The discussions were held in secure schools and church halls within the neighbourhoods which they considered comfortable in comparison to the chief's compounds or in a restaurant setting. Though total anonymity is not possible, the study has ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants have been maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before widespread dissemination of information. For anonymity, pseudo names have been used to identify the participants. Appendix VI indicates these.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Overview

The chapter presents the study findings on the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in an urban setting. The research answers the following questions:

What is the context of viewership of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya? Moreover, how do the viewers gain an understanding of the entertainment value of the foreign and domestically produced TV serial drama fiction? The study also investigated the domestic serial drama insights towards their audiences' entertainment needs. The study also sought to determine how the TV station managers/ programmers define their audiences' entertainment needs and meet the producers' expectations. The findings are organised and presented per objectives.

4.2 Response rate

There were 422 questionnaires administered to the participants in Kibra, Embakasi West and Makadara constituencies. Out of these, 415 were filled and returned, which represents a 98% response rate. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observe that a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% and above good, while 70% rate as 'very good'. Bailey (2000) also concurs that a response rate higher than 70% is considered very good. The implication is that the response rate is strong enough to draw adequate conclusions from the study.

4.3 The context of viewership of TV serial drama fiction

The first objective of the study was to investigate the context of viewership of the TV serial drama fiction in Nairobi. This was delivered through a variety of guided survey questionnaires,

focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews which revealed further audience insights and reasoning. The survey questionnaires were converted to numerical form and subjected to statistical analysis by way of SPSS. The results were then presented in narrative form with appropriate figures and tables. The interview questions were transcribed and coded in thematic areas.

4.3.1 Gender respondents

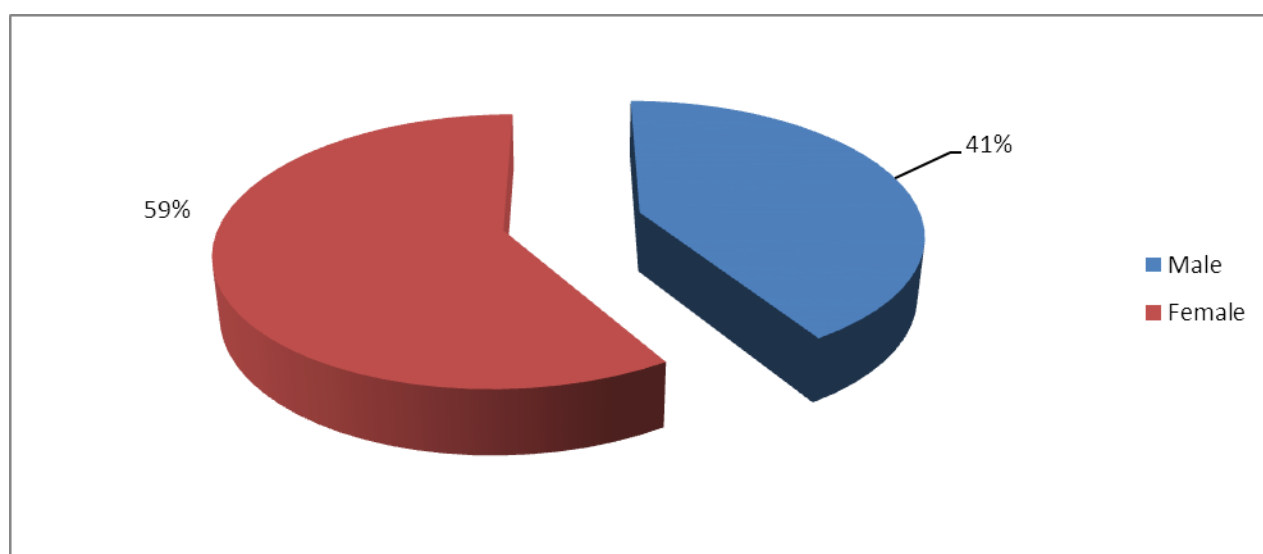


Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents

Source: Research Data 2020

Figure 4.1 above indicates the respondents' gender. It was essential to understand the backgrounds of the participants for further insights. The practice in television drama conceptualisation and processes has a vital first step referred to as 'the programme proposal'. The writer/producer is expected to be knowledgeable about the demographics of the targeted audience which comprises elements like gender, marital status, age, education and income (Hilliard, 2011)..

The study found that the majority (59%) of the respondents were female and 41% male. Nairobi has a higher male population than females (KNBS, 2009), and therefore, one would expect male participants to take the same trajectory. Nevertheless, Embakasi West has a slightly higher female population in comparison to males, which would explain the favourable data findings. However, historically, the broadcast serial drama fiction from its inception in the 1930s was targeted at the female audience (Lavin, 1995). The primary target was the housewife, and detergent manufacturers like Proctor and Gamble-heavily sponsored the programmes thus the name soap opera. Subsequent studies have heavily targeted the genre as a women's programme (Modleski, 1994; Ang, 1985; Hobson, 1982; Geraghty, 1991; Brown, 1994; Brunson, 1995). Further to that, Ang (1985) argues that the female population, generally make up the majority of the volunteer respondents whenever a researcher is seeking answers on the genre. In the discussion forums, the gender issue also featured prominently and was expressed in various perspectives:

A3: *Hivi vipindi sana sana nizawanawake....unaona hawo ndiyo huwa wengi kwa hizo mchezo (These programmes are meant for women...you see they are the majority as casts)*

A5: *Na watch sana jioni...ama mchana saa zile kazi za nyumba hazijakuwa mingi...na kama sina job, pengine umetembelea marafiki zako.. kuna zile ziko na mafundisho vile kuishi na shida za watu (I watch them in the evening or day when the house chores are still minimal or when I don't have a job...at times I do this when with friends....some of them teach us how to live with others and highlight other people's problems)*

B3: *These programmes do not find you in the house...unakuja kama saambili au tatu so unapata familia ikiwatch sana sana mama (You come back at 8 or 9 and find the family watching...more so my wife I do not want to interfere so I join, but they are not my kind of programme).*

In FGDs, the study found that women were a more active audience for the TV serial drama fiction in comparison to their male counterparts. While observing the previews, observations revealed that females concentrated more and whispered to each other often, unlike some of the males who showed less interest and even answered cell phones. Further to that, the males were quick to refer to the soap operas as 'women's programmes'. The females were more forthcoming to accept and share their viewing habits. The meanings the programmes bring to the viewers' lives and learning other people's problems are what attracts some of the viewers. This concurs with Modleski (1994) and Ang's (1985) arguments that the soap opera is designed to appeal to the feminine sensibilities. Puertas (2005) adds that they are the primary consumers of the genre.

Arguments like **A3** (*These programmes are meant for women...you see they are the majority as casts*) reinforce the founding ideology of the genre as a female programme (Lavin,1995). Further to that, the males also feel the programmes are culturally isolating, especially when the casting does not 'favour them'. However, to the female audiences' it is a platform of sharing and talking out issues- **A5** (*...at times I do this when with friends*). It also suggests that, since the serial drama genre is popular with female audiences, it is a potential forum to promote female issues though it would be a challenge when a programme targets both genders.

4.3.2 Marital status

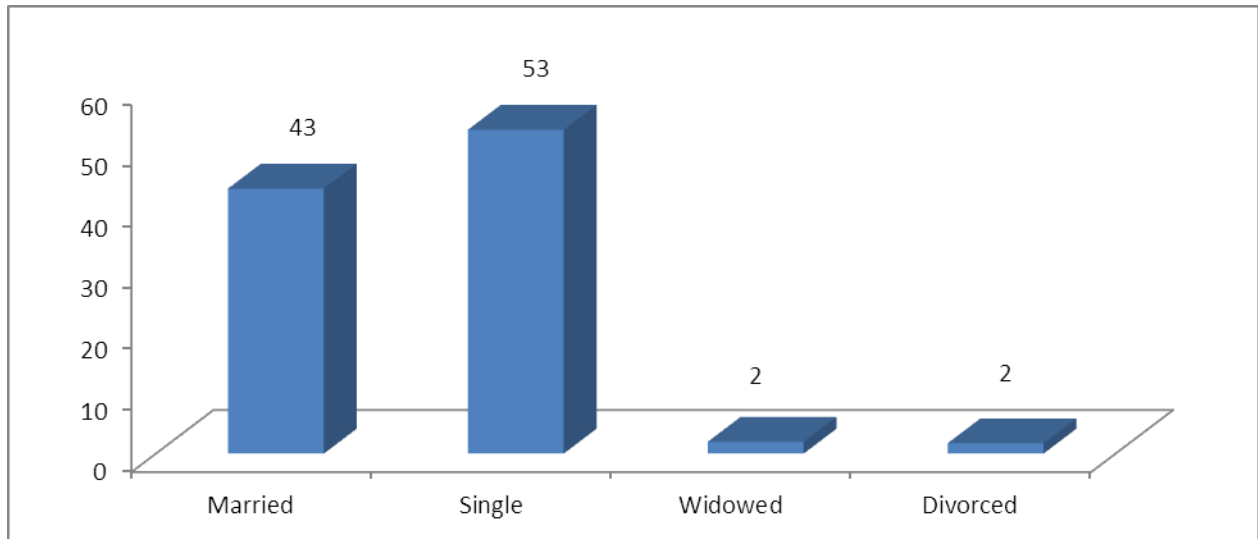


Figure 4.2: Marital status of viewers

Source: Research Data 2020

The above figure 4.2 indicates that 53% of the respondents interviewed in the three constituencies are single, while 43% of them indicate that they are married. There are 2% who are widowed and a similar percentage that is divorced. This finding reflects the KNBS (2009) survey data which reveals that Nairobi city, at 26.1%, has the highest number of single households in comparison to other cities in the country.

The data imply that viewing of television serial drama in the three constituencies could be 'alone affair'. However, other studies point out that the pleasure of serial drama viewing is associated with groupings and the ensuing conversations (Ang, 1985; Brown, 1994). Therefore the 53% who indicate that they are single could be a reflection of the changing 'family television' arguments, that watching television is a family/household affair (Morley, 1999). Nevertheless, it could also mirror many single households in Nairobi, a disadvantage to group formation and viewing. However, the constituent of viewing might not matter; it is not just a matter of leisure

but a deeper level of consumption, that some seek answers to their regular problems from the programmes. Statements from the FGDs like ‘...some of them teach us how to live with others and highlight other people's problems...’. In line with this observation, Askwith (2007) argues that television stations no longer have the power to control when, where, or how audiences consume their programming.

4.3.3 Age category of the participants

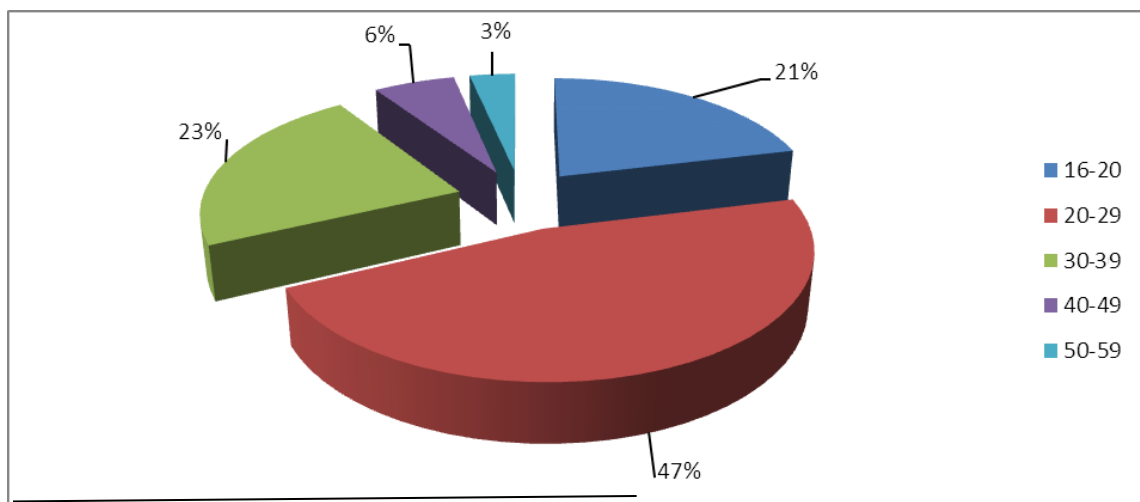


Figure 4.3: Age category of the participants
Source: Research Data 2020

Figure 4.3 indicates that 47% of the respondents are aged between 21-29 years. Another 23% are aged between 30-39 years. As the age band increases, the percentage figures decrease to 6 % for those aged between 40-49 and 3 % for those who are 50-59 years. These could infer that TV viewership takes place under a relatively young population. Further to that, it reflects the general youthful nature of Nairobi population distribution (KNBS, 2009).

Additionally, this is in line with the broadcast industry practice, which mostly targets the 18-49 age brackets, the intimate group for many consumer product advertisers (Tunstall, 2008). These findings therefore further indicate that the three constituencies viewing patterns of the television

drama serial are consistent with broadcast industry expectations where the programmes target a relatively young population. A further implication is that TV could still be an effective medium of choice in transmitting educational/critical information to the relatively younger Kenyan population.

4.3.4 Gender and marital status of the respondents

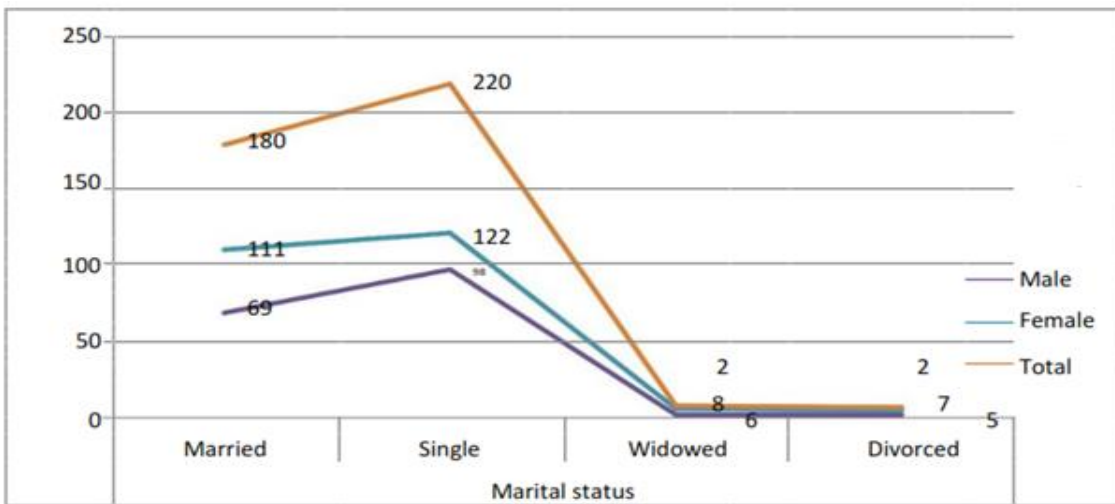


Figure 4.4: Marital status of the respondents

Source: Research Data 2020

Figure 4.4 above indicates the gender and the marital status of the respondents. The findings show that of the 171 males, 69 (40%) are married, 98 (57.3%) are single, 2 (1.2%) were widowed, while 2 (1.2%) were divorced. On the other hand, out of 244 females who participated in this study, 111 (45.5%) were married, 122 (50%) were single, 6 (2.5%) were widowed while 5 (2%) were divorced. The findings suggest that the majority of the viewers of the serial drama fictions are female, young and single. The production context of serial drama fictions (soap operas) primarily targets the housewives (Ang, 1985). However, the findings increasingly indicate that most of the female audiences are single and not homemakers; a

suggestion of the dynamism in TV serial drama programming and audiences. There could be a need to rethink the housewife reference to the serial drama programming.

4.3.5 Respondents level of education

Table 4.1: Educational level of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
No Education	4	1.0
Primary	35	8.5
Secondary	147	35.3
Collage	117	28.2
University	112	27.0
Total	415	100

Source: Research Data 2020

Table 4.1 indicates that the majority of the respondents have received secondary to tertiary education with a combined percentage of 90.6%. The high literacy level of the respondents is supported by similar ascendancy level of Embakasi West constituents where persons with secondary education and above stand at 63% (KNBS-SID 2013). Therefore, the viewership of television programmes is a highly literate population. These are persons who can discern and critique the quality of programming. Further to that, the programme producers should consider appropriate programme ideas to meet their high literacy needs.

4.3.6 Occupation of the respondents

Table 4.2: Occupation of the respondents

	Frequency	%
Retail trade and restaurants	46	11
Sales or service workers	50	12
Production and factory workers	53	12.8
Clerical and related workers	20	4.8
Administration and managerial workers	26	6.3
Professionals	62	14.9
Mixed occupation	82	19.8
Housewife	123	32.1
	415	100

Source: Research Data 2020

Table 4.2 indicates that 32.1 % of the respondents consider themselves housewives, however on a more in-depth interrogation at the FGDs reveals that, a sizable number of them operate small vegetable kiosks, vend clothes, shoes, utensils and other small households' items. 12.8 % are engaged in production and factory related activities, while 14.9% of the participants in these areas regard themselves as professionals and in gainful formal employment. Thus this seems to reflect a new demographic employment status finding in Kenya where 16% of the respondents indicate that they are either in public or private employment (Ipsos-Synovate, 2018). We can infer that a more significant number of homemakers are predisposed to watching more television, which is in line with the underpinning argument of the serial drama that it targets the housewife (Lavin, 1995).

4.3.7 Income level of the respondents

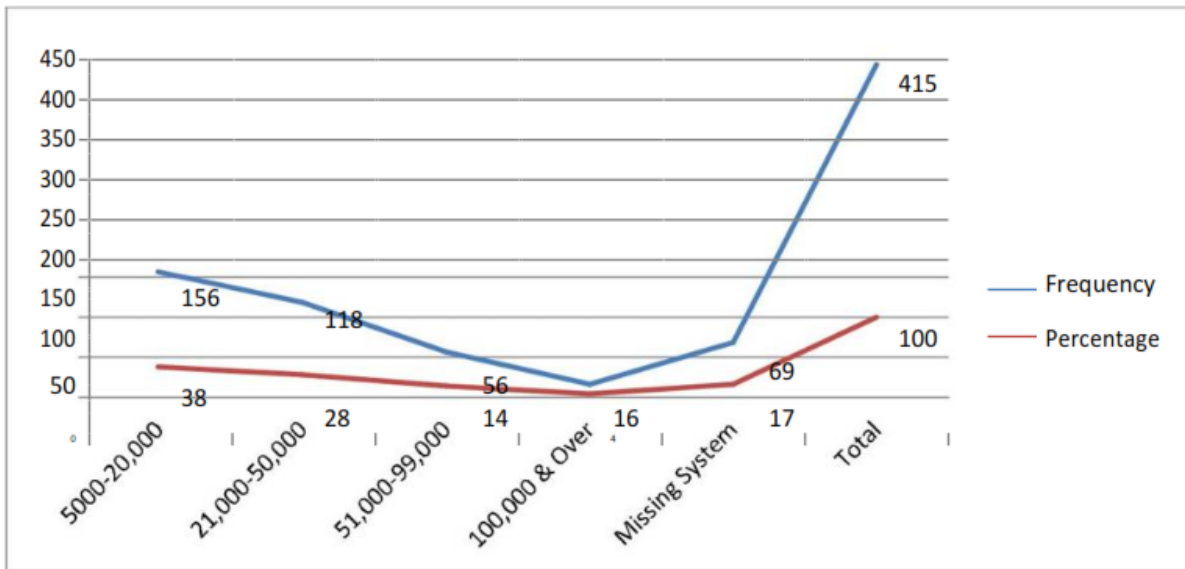


Figure 4. 5: Income levels of the respondents

Source: Research Data 2020

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents 37.6% earn between 5,000-20,000 Kenya shillings in a month (see figure 4.5). They are within the Nairobi monthly family expenditure of 7200, which is the highest in the country (KNBS-SID, 2013). The implication is that the majority might not afford other kinds of leisure and subscribe to quality TV programming. As we shall see in the next section, the digital era has enhanced pay television where even FTA has lost meaning to some viewers, as the majority of the signal distributors charge a monthly subscription ranging from 200-1000 shillings on average (CA, 2016). If these figures are juxtaposed with the monthly family expenditure income of 7200, it means that television is viewed under a family financial constraint which could defeat the 'entertainment and affection' audiences seek in television.

4.3.8 TV Signals distribution & reception

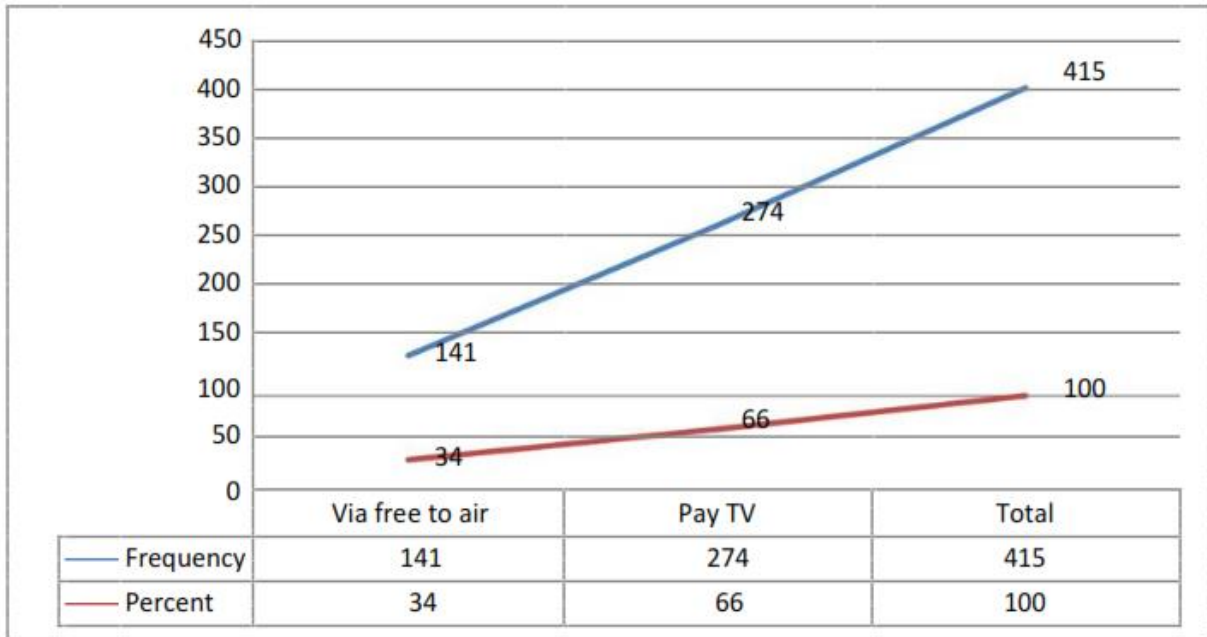


Figure 4. 6: TV signals reception

Source: Research Data 2020

Data in Figure 4.6 indicate that 66% of the participants in Nairobi pay to receive their television signals, while 34% of them receive their signal via free to air television stations. This study took place amid broadcast technological changes. Kenya is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which mandated all its member states to migrate to digital transmission platform by June 2015 (Oxford Business Group, 2014). In February 2015, the CA discontinued the analogue transmission to force all broadcasters to migrate to the digital platform. In protest, the three main popular TV stations, i.e. *Citizen TV*, *KTN* and *NTV*, with over 55% of audience share (KARF, 2016) switched off their signals for a month.

The Communication Authority of Kenya indicates that the Digital Signal now covers 78% of the Kenyan population (CA, June 2017). They further observe that the cumulative number of digital set-top boxes purchased as at 30th June 2017 stood at 729,477 for free-to-air set-top boxes (FTA-STBs) and 3,788,417 for pay-tv' (CA, June 2017). Other market studies seem to reinforce the changing trend in the broadcast industry. The ownership of set-top boxes (STB) now stands at 56% countrywide, and two brands have the lion share-Go TV (35%) and Star times (33%) while the digital TV sets which do not necessarily require STBs now stands at 27% (KARF tracker, September 2017). The participants raised the matter in the focus group discussions:

G4: *TV ya free iliisha...lazima ulipie...the only station wanakuachia ni KBC (the free television ended, when you are late with your subscription the only station, they do not disconnect is KBC) KBC which I rarely watch*

C5: *The TV has become expensive in this country you pay for everything they say that there should be free stations like KTN, NTV Citizen but those are the first station they take and leave for you KBC... (Chuckle...)*

B6: *There is no free to air TV because even the top box they say is not free even the ones you don't pay for every month...it's not easy to pay always so when you are broke it is the first thing you let go*

The above findings infer that technological innovation and the digital transition enable viewers' access to multiple stations with a variety of content-but at a cost. What the viewers have popularly referred to as free to air television is blurred in the new technological lingo. As argued in chapter one of this thesis, the broadcast model which gained traction in Kenya was the public broadcasting approach as opposed to the American strong commercial concept. Many of the viewers are not comfortable paying for 'TV entertainment'. There is a, gain reversal; there are those who cannot afford the STB or service their monthly subscription fee. Also, as we have seen in the previous section, the majority of the viewers survive on a low monthly income of between

5000-20,000 shillings. Ironically, the audiences now have choices which also expose the local serial drama producers to a competitive open broadcast market.

4.3.9 Programme preference

Table 4.3: Respondents programme preferences

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
News	F	204	59	31	33	19	11	17	41
	%	49	14	8	8	5	3	4	10
Soap Dramas	F	114	71	56	44	26	24	22	58
	%	28	17	14	11	6	6	5	14
Music Shows	F	125	78	56	41	25	23	19	48
	%	30	19	14	10	6	6	5	12
Documentaries	F	78	44	36	42	41	31	57	86
	%	19	11	9	10	10	8	14	21
Reality Shows	F	95	53	43	47	39	25	41	72
	%	23	13	10	11	9	6	10	17
Movies	F	209	67	36	30	13	10	23	27
	%	50	16	9	7	3	2	6	7
Sports	F	93	43	38	40	29	20	41	111
	%	22	10	9	10	7	5	10	27

Source: Research Data 2020

Television programmes are selected and scheduled to reflect audience preference (Tunstall, 2008). However, there are different genres and hybrids of the programmes. Table 4.3 above indicates that the majority of the respondents, (50%) with a frequency of 209 rank movies as their preferred kind of programming, (49%) rank news as their favourite choice of programming, 30% of the respondents rank listening and watching music programmes as their preferred choices. Likewise, 28% prefer watching soap dramas over other kinds of programmes. Other preferences include; reality shows 23%, sports 22% and documentaries 19%. A follow up a focused group discussion on their preferences revealed further insights:

E3: *News nimuhimu unataka kujua vituzina happen zingineni kujifurahiya...kuna mambo nyingi za siasa na pengine hali ya maendeleo....na sana sana mi uwatch*

Citizen(News is important you want to be updated on whats happening other programmes are just for pure entertainment and usually I watch Citizen TV)

D2: *At least I want to catch-up with what happened in the day...I like to know about politics ...and other development issues...in job you don't have time and I scan through the stations if there is something interesting then I wait for it.*

D3: *I watch movies though TV stations don't have many. At times from DVDs...It is how I relax*

C6: *Sana sana news ni muhimu...but I don't look forward to it there are the same things of what politicians did.*

E5: *I Watch news but not as much...I think I spend more time watching movies and may be documentaries kiasi.*

C2: *mi huwatch hizo soaps za 6 ama 8pm kama siko busy unafollow kiasi zikona mambo uhappen na unaenjoytu vile wana act....zakenya siombaya lakini huwezilinganisha na foreign (I watch the 6 o'clock soaps or the 8 o'clock ones when am not busy they depict reality issues and also I like the way they act...the Kenyan ones are not bad but you can't compare them with foreign ones)*

The respondents prefer to watch movies and the news. In the focus group discussions, they indicate that the movies 'relax them' meaning that their priority in TV programming is entertainment the male viewers prefer action movies while the female viewers prefer non-violent/family-based stories. Similarly, the male viewers' follow political and development news stories. This is in line with the uses and gratification arguments (Blumler & Katz, 1974) that audiences are selective in media which suits their needs; in this case TV programming. The serial drama is closely linked to movies. It is only that the programming creed further divides them into genres, but basically, they consider them as acted dramas. It might therefore not be surprising that in the discussions, they mention the realism and characterisation as their critical reasons for watching serial drama fiction dramas. In a subsequent comparison study in January 2016, *La Gata*, a Mexican soap opera scheduled at 8.00pm on Citizen Television, was found to be the most popular programming by the viewers (KARF, 2016).

News is also popular with the audience and has almost similar trajectory as the movies. In fact, in the five studied stations, the audience numbers spike towards or at the news hours (KARF, 2017). The discussants' sentiments on the news suggest that the audiences acknowledge the centrality of continuously updated news to their wellbeing. Further indications are that the serial drama productions are essential to TV station programming and business model, and there is a need for more investment in them since they still attract sizable followers.

4.3.9.1 Ranking of TV stations

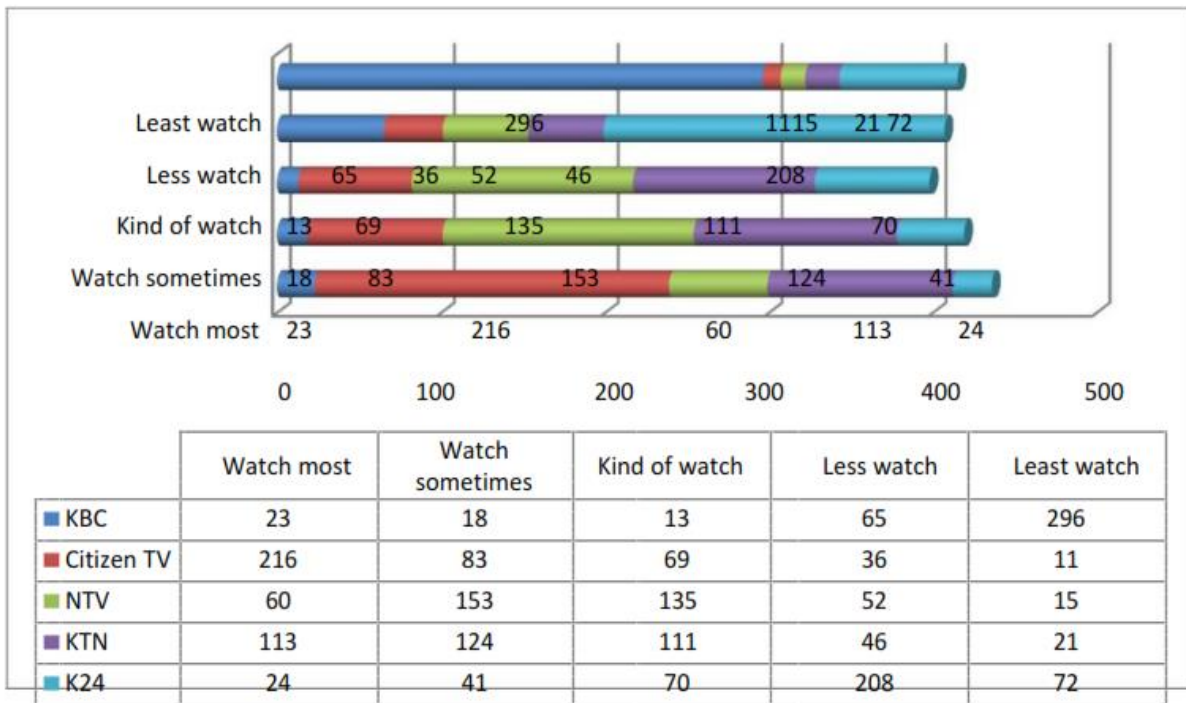


Figure 4.7: Ranking of TV stations

Source: Research Data 2020

Overall, slightly more than half of the respondents in the three constituencies (See figure 4.7 above) indicate that *Citizen Television* is their favourite station among the five studied (*Citizen TV* 52%, *KTN* 27%, *NTV* 14.2%, *K24* 5.8% and *KBC* 5.5%). The finding generally reflects the dominance of the station among its commercial peers. It almost conforms to other independent

survey outcomes in Nairobi as follows: Citizen TV 43%, KTN home 12%, NTV 10%, K24 4% and KBC 1% (KARF tracker, July-September 2017), while this study was confined to the three constituencies of Embakasi West, Kibra and Makadara it mimics Nairobi and the broader National findings of the stations ranking. The focus group discussions elicited the following sentiments concerning the viewing patterns.

A4: *I just like the way they are organized the news and the kind of programmes they give us...you know it feels local...na inapatia vijana job kuna wasee wamtaa hapo kwa Machachari inasaidia yenyewe (it employs young people and some of them like in Machachari are...our own.... familiar faces from the neighborhood)*

D2: *I don't know why but many a times my TV is just between Citizen and KTN especially for my favorite dramas, though when it is time for news, I would try to watch the 3 including NTV. However, citizen still has good news presenters and they have good programmes, both local and foreign.*

D5: *Citizen is full of commercial and soaps so I prefer to watch news from NTV... and that is the reason why I don't like it at times...but it's a good station even for news and some dramas.*

B4: *I Watch KBC only when I have not renewed my Go TV subscription...it is the only channel they leave for me...(laughter) but inakaa hivyo hao watu ni wakitambo (it's just there and the staff looks old)*

E2: *But we can't just dismiss KBC, most of the people who work in other media houses started there. It is good training ground.... you know it is government so it will always be there.*

The attraction of Citizen Television over the other stations stems from its programming mix of local and foreign. The viewer identifies with its strong aspect of cultural proximity where the viewers' regard the programmes as a reflection of their lives (Straubhaar, 1991) like when the discussants (**A4**) respond that '*...it feels local...*' and that some of the actors... '*are our own*' It means that part of the station popularity is anchored on the audiences 'experiencing' the station as their own in comparison to other stations. However, in KBC, the viewers feel detached to their programming and only watch it as a last resort in the absence of other station signals. Therefore,

a successful TV station has an aspect of audience identification with its programming. They ‘see themselves’ in the programme events. However, they would disengage if the programmes do not meet specific quality, like in the case of KBC. Tunstall (2008) adds that television programmes are selected and scheduled to reflect audience preferences. The context of viewership is that the programmes have to reflect on their environment and carry their hopes and aspirations, which deepens the understanding of cultural proximity.

4.3.9.2 Preferred hours of TV viewing

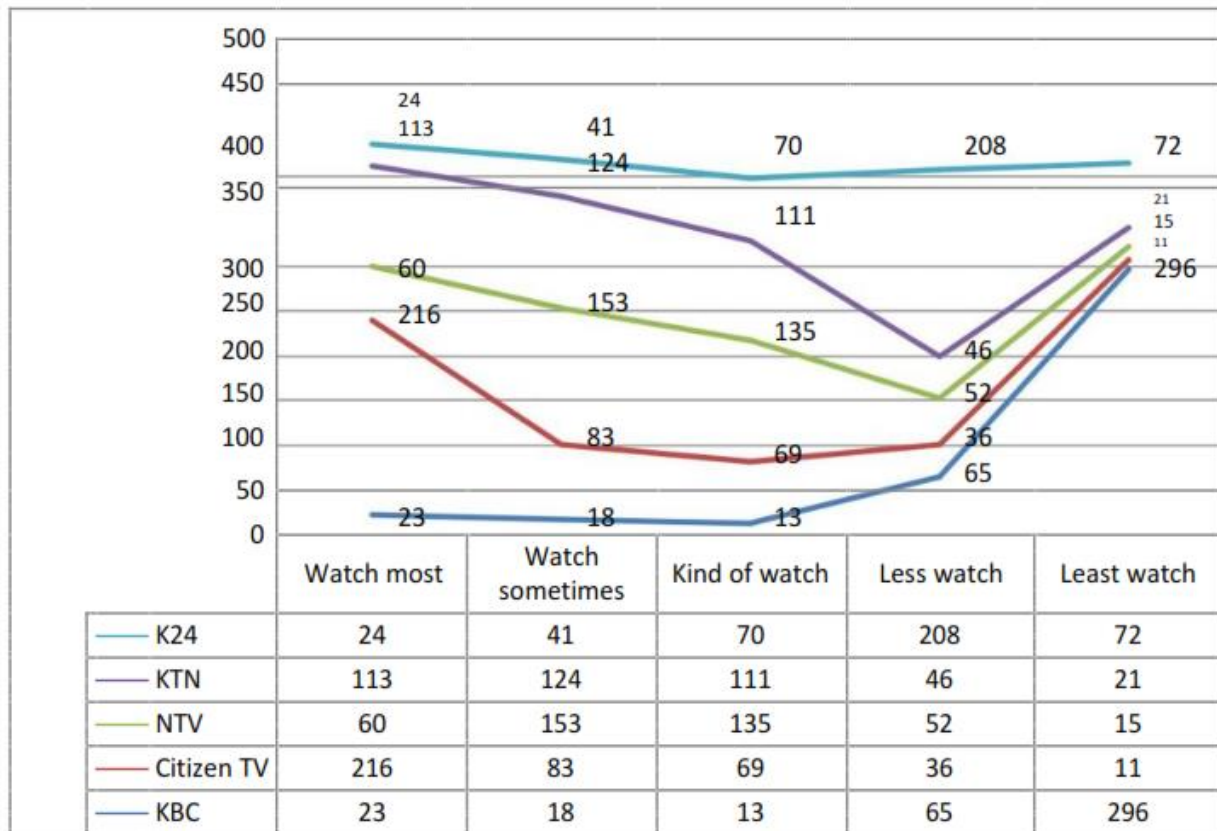


Figure 4.8: Hours of viewing

Source: Research Data 2020

The study further aimed to investigate the viewers' time preference for watching Television. They were to select at least two-day parts in TV programming when they were likely to watch. As indicated in Figure 4.8 above. The majority of the respondents 86%, watched TV in the night hours from 8 pm to midnight, while 58% watched in the evening hours from 4.00pm to 8 pm.

Meanwhile, 21% watched their programmes during mid-morning hours from 10 am to 1.00pm, while 19% viewed their schedules in the afternoon hours from 1.00pm to 4 pm, and another 15% preferred to watch TV in the morning hours from 6 am to 10 am. Elis (2000) argues that the practice in broadcast television is to organise programmes on a daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. According to Eastman & Ferguson (2010) regarding the commercial broadcast stations, their ultimate goal is to deliver the programmes to the audience at the moment they are likely to watch and further deliver them to the advertisers in a manner that makes their advertising most likely to be effective. Television stations organise their programming in terms of dayparts where they refer to the famous viewing hours as primetime, and they would fall between 5 to 10 pm (KARF). Many stations schedule their best programmes within the primetime hours, which attract maximum exposure.

The findings suggest that the best time frames to schedule a TV serial drama within the five stations is between 4.00 pm to midnight when most viewers are likely to watch. TV programmers have mastered the audiences' patterns/habits, and that they enjoy viewing when they are least engaged in any economic or social activities (Eastman & Ferguson, 2013). There are few viewers' between 6 am-10am, the possibility that many people are engaged in social or economic events. This further implies that producers' have to come up with exciting and outstanding programmes to warrant the limited prime hour slots.

4.3.9.2.1 Time spent watching television

The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents spend between 1-20 hours watching TV in a week. The climax is over Saturdays and Sundays, where 73% and 71% respectively watch for more hours. The least viewing hours occur over weekdays, where 44% of the participants indicate that they watch for between 1-20 hours. The average daily viewing hours for the respondents are 3 hours. However, all the studied stations operate for 24 hours, which means that 21 hours of broadcast could be 'wasteful' lacking meaningful viewers. Further to that, the primetime hours of 8 pm to 12 midnight, could be regarded as a 'scarce' resource where every producer could seek a slot, yet it can only accommodate a few. See table 4.4

Table 4.4: Time spent watching television

		1-20hrs	21-40hrs	41-60hrs	61-80hrs	81-100hrs	above 100hrs	Missing	
Saturdays watching hours	F	304	35	27	20	11	10	8	415
	%	73	8	7	5	3	2	2	100
Weekdays watching hours	F	183	136	31	25	9	13	18	415
	%	44	33	7	6	2	3	4	100
Sunday watching hours	F	294	52	21	18	9	10	11	415
	%	71	13	5	4	2	2	3	100

Source: Research Data 2020

4.3.9.2.2 Viewers perception towards television serial drama genre

Table 4. 5: Viewers perception towards TV serial drama fiction

		SA	A	N	D	SD	M	
Television programmes reflect society we live in	F	174	156	35	33	12	5	415
	%	42	38	9	8	3	1	100
Serial drama portrays the full range of social truth	F	71	202	70	58	14		415
	%	17	49	17	14	3	0	100
Serial drama is not truthful but exaggerated story	F	71	115	114	93	22	0	415
	%	17	28	28	22	5	0	100
I sometimes wish to be a hero or heroine in a serial drama	F	97	133	62	82	41	0	415
	%	23	32	15	20	10	0	100
Serial drama reflects ordinary peoples way of life	F	89	170	85	53	17	1	415
	%	21	41	21	13	4	0	100
Characters are far from my reality	F	57	129	109	100	19	1	415
	%	14	31	26	24	5	0	100
I am touched with pity for tragic characters	F	112	164	66	52	19	2	415
	%	27	40	16	13	5	0	100
Characters accomplish what I would like to do	F	82	133	110	63	27	0	415
	%	27	31	30	15	7	0	100
Watching drama tends to make me forget the daily problems	F	70	104	89	87	62	3	415
	%	17	25	21	21	15	1	100
Serial drama represents delicate emotional events & situations	F	87	172	95	45	16	0	415
	%	21	41	22.9	11	4	0	100
I am often moved to tears while watching drama	F	92	100	79	85	59	0	415
	%	22	24	19	21	14		100
Serial drama is a romantic story	F	83	131	104	63	33	1	415
	%	20	32	25	15	8	0	100
Dramatic events may occur in my life	F	93	163	104	40	13	2	415
	%	22	39	25	10	3	1	100
Drama represents the conflicts or contradictions in our society	F	101	194	75	33	11	1	415
	%	24	47	18	8	3	.2	100
Serial drama depicts an ideal life	F	93	123	85	84	30	0	415
	%	22	30	21	20	7		100

Source: Research Data 2020

Key: SA –Strongly Agree

A-Agree

N-Neutral

D-Disagree

SD-Strongly Disagree

The study also aimed to investigate the viewers' perceptions of the Television Serial Drama genre (See table 4.5). Statements which defined the TV serial drama fiction and the audience reception processes were asked to the respondents. A total of 80% of the respondents agreed that television serial stories reflect our society. At the same time, 66% of the participants agreed with the statement that serial dramas were a reflection of a range of social truths.

Further to that, 45% of the participants agreed and believed that the serial dramas are not truthful but exaggerated stories. Other aspects which the respondents agreed with were that: they would wish to be a hero/heroine in a serial drama at 55% that the stories represent the way of life of ordinary people at 62% and that tragic characters touch them at 67%. Further questions involved the viewers' expectations of characters accomplishing their roles at 58%, and that the stories involved emotional events and situations at 62%. Additionally, 52% of the respondents regard the serial drama fiction as reflecting ideal life and with romantic storylines. However, 71% agree that serial drama stories are full of conflicts and contradictions. The respondents suggest that television should reflect common societal issues they are familiar with and even reinforce what they already know. To an extent, they are aware of the fictional television and the critical position of good acting.

This question was to test the domestic viewers' general perception of the television serial drama fiction. Their understanding corroborates the arguments of Turner (1979), Silverstone (1981), Ang (1985) and Fiske and Harley (2007) on the centrality of the narrative story. They are open and seek meaning in a well-told story. Besides, they identify acting and character identity as substantial aspects of the story believability. Television is a mesh that creates narratives that reflects our daily lives. We can detect well-conceived stories and defective ones and even critique their interpretation (acting). However, when we further try to understand the television

intricacies, it leaves us in limbo. The additional implication for a TV drama serial producer is to understand the psychological linkage of viewership and the larger society and create stories and treatment with this in mind. The forward section discusses a deeper introspection of the viewers' engagement with specific serial drama fictions.

4.3.9.2.3 Gender comparisons in programme preference

Table 4.6: Gender comparisons in programme preference

		Most favourable	More favourable	Favourable	Neutral	Somehow favourable	Not favourable	Less favourable	Least favourable
News	Male	91	26	12	11	6	3	5	17
		53%	15%	7%	6%	4%	2%	3%	10%
	Female	113	33	19	22	13	8	12	24
		46%	14%	8%	9%	5%	3%	5%	10%
Total		204	59	31	33	19	11	17	41
		49%	14%	7%	8%	5%	3%	4%	10%
Drama	Male	25	21	25	23	12	15	11	39
		15%	12%	15%	13%	7%	9%	6%	23%
	Female	89	50	31	21	14	9	11	19
		36%	20%	13%	9%	6%	4%	5%	8%
Total		114	71	56	44	26	24	22	58
		27%	17%	13%	11%	6%	6%	5%	14%
Music Show	Male	50	29	25	17	11	10	7	22
		29%	17%	14%	10%	7%	6%	4%	13%
	Female	75	49	29	24	16	13	12	26
		31%	20%	12%	10%	7%	5%	5%	11%
Total		125	78	56	41	25	23	19	48
		30%	19%	13%	10%	6%	6%	5%	12%
Documentaries	Male	35	19	16	21	14	13	24	29
		20%	11%	9%	12%	8%	8%	14%	17%
	Female	43	25	20	21	27	18	33	57
		18%	10%	8%	9%	11%	7%	14%	23%
Total		78	44	36	42	41	31	57	86
		19%	11%	9%	10%	10%	7%	14%	21%
Reality Shows	Male	30	18	18	18	22	8	23	34
		18%	11%	11%	11%	13%	5%	13%	20%
	Female	65	35	25	29	17	17	18	38

		27%	14%	10%	12%	7%	7%	7%	16%
Total		95	53	43	47	39	25	41	72
		23%	13%	10%	11%	9%	6%	10%	17%
Movies	Male	71	37	16	12	5	5	10	15
		42%	22%	9%	7%	3%	3%	6%	9%
	Female	138	30	20	18	8	5	13	12
		57%	12%	8%	7%	3%	2%	5%	5%
Total		209	67	36	30	13	10	23	27
		50%	16%	9%	7%	3%	2%	6%	7%
Sports	Male	61	26	22	19	9	7	5	22
		36%	15%	13%	11%	5%	4%	3%	13%
	Female	32	17	16	21	20	13	36	89
		13%	7%	7%	9%	8%	5%	15%	36%
Total		93	43	38	40	29	20	41	111
		22%	10%	9%	10%	7%	5%	10%	27%

Source: Research Data 2020

The study further sought gender comparisons in different programmes consumptions. Table 4.6 above indicates that males prefer watching the news at (53%) in contrast to 46% of the female respondents. However, the TV drama programming is most favourable to females at (36%) in comparison to males at (15%). The female respondents also favour the music shows at 31% compared to 29% of the males. Nevertheless, the males' forte is found in documentaries and sports where the respondents cite them as the most favourite at 20% and 36% respectively in comparison to the females who identify them as the most favourite at 18% and 13% respectively. On the other hand, reality shows and movies are also most preferred by female participants at 27% and 57% correspondingly.

The findings indicate that news is a significant driver of TV viewership amongst the genders, and the males form the majority of the viewers. The results conform to viewer studies in other regions. Krishna (2014) studied viewer's attitude towards watching national English news channels in Kerala (India) and found that almost all the segment of the population favoured news updates on the local news channels ahead of other kinds of programmes. At the same time, the

programme preferences note gender disparity. For instance, more women watch dramas than men. The focus group discussions, highlight some of the reasons for varied choices, for example, a male participant expressed his sentiments as follows;

E5: *I watch sports and may be... I could find a good movie... the soap opera stuff I don't have time for those...people cry and you need something to keep you excited. Many of the programmes don't and they are boring...our TV can be boring.*

However, some of the female discussants felt otherwise:

F4: *First I am not a sports person. . I would look for something else...I used to watch a lot of soaps after high school. . I still do but not as much they can waste your time...but you see how other people live their lives...and also you just relax yourself...why would I want to look at people chasing a ball. . maybe if someone I know is in the team.*

In in-depth interviews conducted by the station executives and programme coordinators reiterated their process of programme choice and their audiences

H3: *We can say we target the family. But we are interested in women and the children so everything we programme we are sensitive to them first...I would say they are the primary target audience*

H2: *There was a time we had a lot of sports programme and realised even the advertisers were not very interested in us...if you look at what is advertised household regular staff...So you can't leave the women behind as they play a great deal as our target audience.*

Factual information is still paramount, where both genders identify news as their most favourite. The TV audience surveys further support this assertion that the foremost preference for the majority of the Kenyan viewers' is news (Synovate - Ipsos, 2016). Nonetheless, the men seek more factual information while the females are more into fictional programming like the dramas and the movies a close link to TV serial drama programming. These findings could further reinforce the literature review and the prevailing ideology that the TV drama serial fiction genre or the soap opera easily find favour in women viewers in comparison to men. The implication is

that those female viewers are more likely to embrace serial drama programming than their male counterparts. The findings further suggest that there could be a need to encourage more male viewers in serial drama programming to grow its market share and for the economic viability of the genre production.

In summary, the first objective was to determine the context of viewership of television serial drama fiction among Nairobi audience in Kenya. 59% (6/10) of the respondents were female in comparison to 41% (4/10) male. The viewers are more attracted to movies and news in contrast to serial drama fiction. However, more females prefer to watch fictional programming as opposed to their male counterparts who favour factual programmes like news, sports and documentaries. These findings corroborate Nathanson, Perse & Ferguson (1997) gender differences in television use. Walker & Bellamy (1991) further reinforces this argument that males are more intentional and inclined to informational programmes like news. Fundamentally, the findings still answers to the serial drama fiction foundation as a female programme genre (Levin,1995) The uses and gratification theory (Blumler & Katz,1974) where the audiences' choose their programmes according to their preferences is also depicted in the way the male and female viewers defer in their programmes selection. The majority of the viewers are young and single, aged between 21-29 years, which corresponds to the Nairobi population census (KNBS, 2009). The respondents are agreeable to the narrative fiction ideology and situate themselves to stories that appeal to their conscience. For instance, Citizen Television is their favourite station and describes it as 'local', with the right programme mix of foreign and domestic productions. Some of their dramas like *Machachari* which engage familiar actors from 'mtaani' (familiar faces who hustle, and can quickly identify within the neighbourhood). Citizen television offers almost similar programmes like its competitors (NTV, KTN. KBC and K24). However, La

Pastina & Straubhaar (2005, p.274) argues that the cultural proximity theory has many discrete dimensions, which could include, ‘...gestures, body language, the definition of humour and ideas about pacing...’. The audiences, therefore, perceive the Citizen TV station in these differentiated fulfilling manners in comparison to its competitors.

Further to that, the context of serial drama viewership takes place under a ‘digital upheaval’. The transition to digital broadcast is perceived by the viewers as a gain reversal. Because of the introduction of a monthly charge for signal reception, once considered free. This is constrained by the low income of the majority of the viewers’.

4.4 Understanding the entertainment value of local and foreign TV serial drama fiction

The viewers have a choice of watching their favourite serial drama fiction at the five FTA stations (Citizen TV, NTV, KTN, KBC and K24). The schedules to many of them is within the primetime hours of 6 to 10 pm. It was, therefore, essential to examine how the viewers evaluate the entertainment value in local and foreign-produced dramas. However, it was also important to understand their language preference in drama fiction. Additionally, there were questions on their viewing habits (from a selection of serial dramas on television), whether they regularly watched, occasionally or never. These questions were analysed using SPSS and reported in percentages. Focused group discussions and interviews conducted were carefully cleaned, coded in thematic areas and also analyzed to enrich the findings.

4.4.1 Language preference in watching TV serial drama fiction

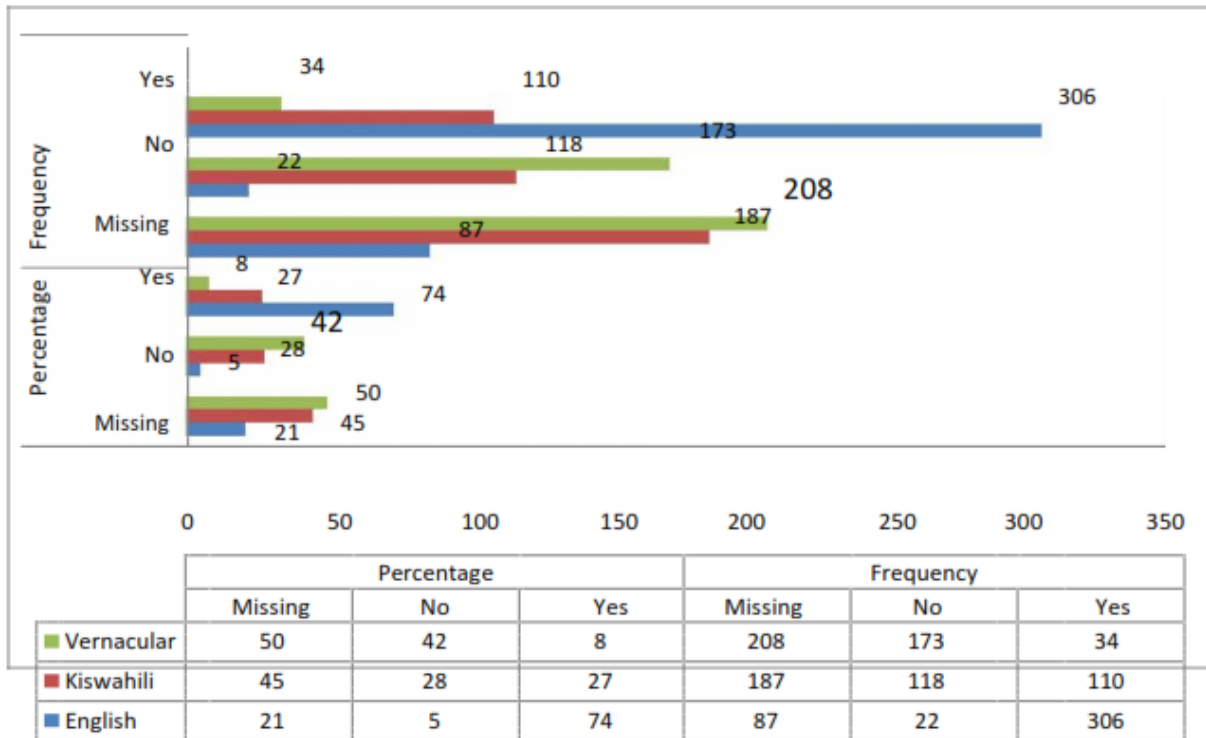


Figure 4.9: Preferred languages of viewing serial drama fiction

Source: Research Data 2020

It was essential to understand the participant's language of preference in programming. The television productions in Kenya are recorded either in English, Kiswahili or Vernacular. It was important because it could inform future producers in the scripting of the genre. The findings indicate that 74% of the respondents prefer to watch their programmes in English, while 27% would welcome TV drama serial fiction done in Kiswahili. A paltry 8% prefer watching their programmes in vernacular language. The FGDs reveals more insights into the participants' choice of language.

D1: *I think Kiswahili or English is okay. I know there are vernacular ones but they are not as many...and some of us are used to sheng speaking (Colloquialism) proper mother tongue is not simple...(chuckle)...si unajua(As you know).*

E2: *I do watch the vernacular programmes and they are very funny if you want to laugh...but you cannot do a serious movie...laugh...that you have romantic scenes hizo wachia soap operas*

F3: *I think all my life I speak English or Kiswahili or let me say sheng (Colloquialism) ... actually in our house people don't speak luhya. It's funny and none of my brothers can speak it well...so I don't see how I would understand and enjoy a drama in mother tongue...it could sound funny (laugh)*

However, there are producers' who are taking the initiative to exploit the potential in vernacular television drama production and feels that it could be the future

H6: *I have done many scripts and dramas for Inooro...in fact I have an ongoing project and even kameme TV. Vernacular is the future they understand the language and its nuances... at times actors struggle with English and Kiswahili but one would be more at home in kikuyu or even Kamba. So, I believe there are many takers to watch the dramas in the vernacular languages.*

Tragically, there is a strong perception among the serial fiction viewers that the drama is more enjoyable in English than in either Kiswahili or the vernacular language. For instance, **F3** statement that '*I think all my life I speak English or Kiswahili or let me say sheng... actually, in our house, people don't speak Luhya....*' Such statements reinforce scholars like Mustapha (2014) arguments that the English language hegemony has its adverse effects in other world's languages. Thus, he argues for the support of local languages in Nigeria, and says that the enhanced use of regional dialects creates a well-balanced citizen that are educationally, culturally and socially well-grounded, further to that, it raises 'the functional usefulness, prestige and the social status of the language' (Mustapha, 2014, p. 95).

Regarding his arguments, in this study, the participant's statement that (**F2**) '*...you cannot do a serious movie...laugh...*' in vernacular, portrays the lower regard of the language over English. However, the '*chuckle*' could further mean that they are aware of the style, richness and connotations which these dialects hold; and an insightful producer could creatively fill this gap.

There is a glimmer of hope that some TV drama producers are already creating scripts in the vernacular languages. Nevertheless, they need to be careful and first conduct ground studies to determine the magnitude of the vernacular audiences' especially in a cosmopolitan city setting. Many of the respondents here are young and have distanced themselves from vernacular dramas. There is also the notion of style and sophistication in the city where some might not want to be identified by the 'mother tongue' probably to fit in the cosmopolitan city life.

4.4.2 The TV serial drama viewing preferences

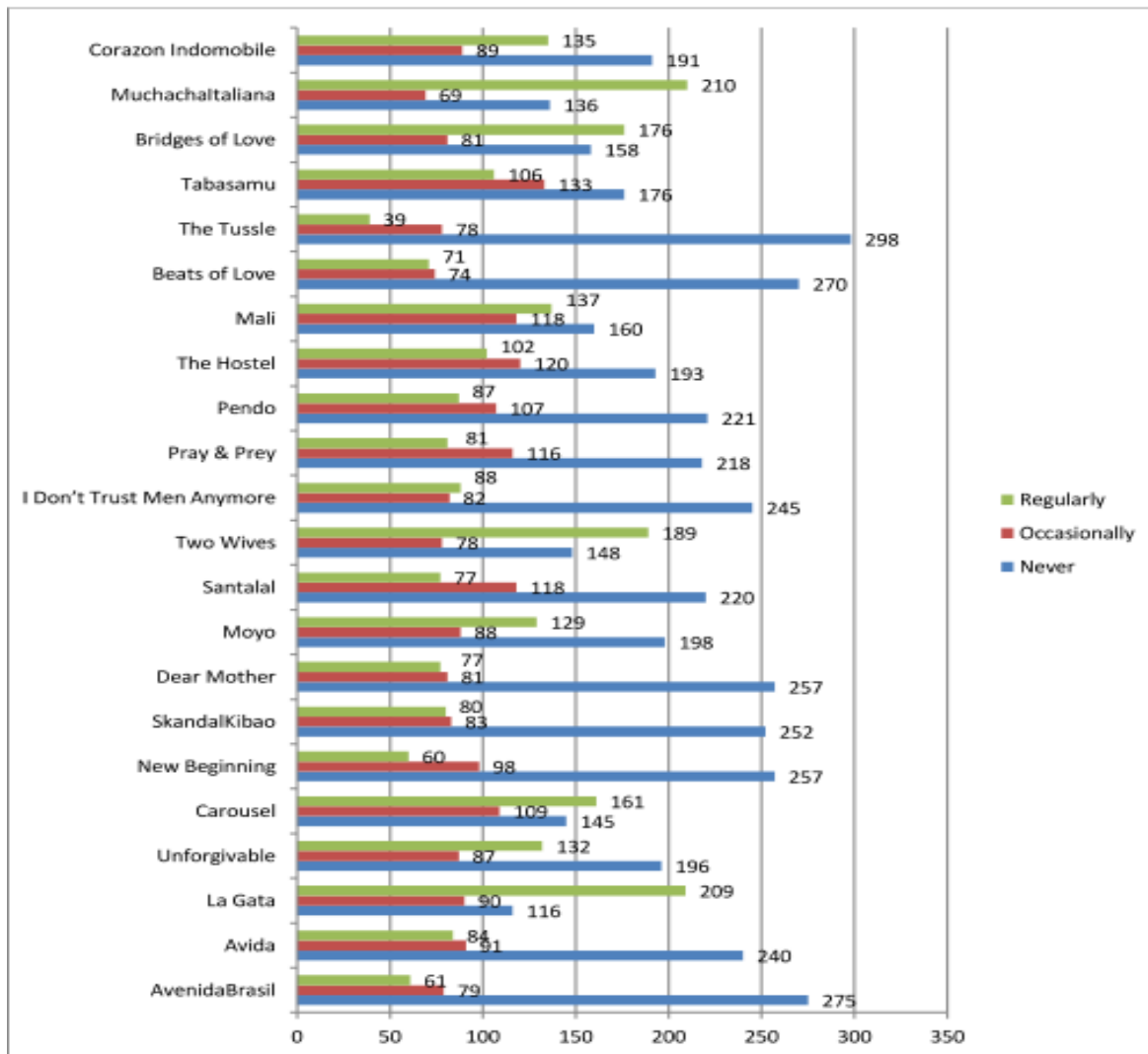


Figure 4. 10: TV serial dramas viewing preferences

Source: Research Data 2020

Figure 4.10 indicates the serial drama audience viewing preferences. The listed programmes are a mix of local and foreign dramas scheduled at the five free to air TV stations (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, KBC and K24). The show themes are recurrent, and the stories revolve around a community/family issues (love, hate revenge, wealth & poverty). Also, they schedule them between 6.00 pm - 10 pm on various days of the week. The context of their consumption could give us a deeper understanding of the audience's perceptions towards them and their production styles.

The participants' responded that they regularly watched *La Gata* (50.4%) *Muchacha Italiana* (50.6%), *Two Wives* (45.5), *Carousel* (38.8%) and *Bridges of love* (42.4%). These are all foreign-produced soap operas. The domestic produced serial dramas had their preference as follows: *Mali* (34%), *Moyo* (31.1%) *Tabasamu* (25.5%), *Pendo* (21%), *Prey & Pray* (19.5%) and *The Tussle* (9.4%) A study by Synovate (2011) reinforces the popularity of the serial drama fiction programming among Kenyan TV audiences'. To further deepen this understanding, a focus group discussion on programming was conducted with some of the participants. Before the commencement of each FGD, a three-minute segment of *La Gata* a Mexican soap opera (Popular foreign), *Mali* (popular local) and *The Tussle* (least popular) dramas, were played back from a laptop to the participants. The intention was to assist in the recall, elicit discussions around the shows and to enrich the survey findings. These are some of the pertinent pointers at the discussions.

A4: *Sana sana hizi ma soaps tu ni za wanawake...lakini there is a time when you can't avoid especially when you come to the house and is what they are watching. Alafu pia zina promotiwa all the time (These soaps are liked by women...and you can't avoid when you come to the house and find everyone watching. They are also given much publicity on TV)*

D3: *The programmes we have just watched the one's I know are mostly those from Mexico...some of them because all the time they are advertised so you remember to watch at times...and when they start you just know.*

G4: *I watch the Mexicans and even the Philippines'... even just what we have watched and you compare... they are real... they know how to tell a story... not like us there are those acting... we can't do. You see you can feel for an actor..like its true... and the only stories we tell are simple jokes... so you just find yourself hooked...you see like in La Gata...simple story but you feel sorry for the character...and learn that some of this this things happens around us...and you know what to do under such experiences....following the episodes.*

D2 *Mali iko sawa...but its high end in away...mambo zao siyo za kawaida (their issues are not regular) the way they fight about the property...they are things which happen to those who have...they act well but too high...*

By observation, during the viewing, more attention/interest was paid to the Mexican clip. There would be silences, murmured exchanges and concentration, unlike the local dramas segment sessions. However, some of the male participants could occasionally walk out to answer phone calls and seemed to lose track of the shows.

There is a liking for foreign-produced TV serial dramas over the local productions as indicated by the quantitative findings in the three constituencies. A survey on popular TV programmes in January 2016, further illustrates this it captured *La Gata's* popularity even above primetime news (Ipsos January 2016). However, in the FGDs some of the viewers suggest that the seemingly overwhelming publicity given to the 'Mexican' soap operas remind them to watch which is at times at the expense of the domestic productions. Further to that, the viewers suggest that they have a more profound sense of good storytelling and acting, more believable in comparison to the local productions which they consider necessary and has not changed over the years. Statements capture these as follows;

'They are real they know how to tell a story not like us. There are those acting we can't do and the only stories we tell are simple jokes...you see what the character goes through some of these things happens around us'

The preceding discussion means that there is a problem in how the local producers concoct and treat their story version. Allen (1995) brought out arguments like 'syntagmatic gaps' in good story structure where intuitively controlled gaps are maintained to create suspense and hold the audience's attention in watching a story. Further to that, the aspect of uses and gratification-personal identity is stronger in foreign serial productions than it is in the domestic productions and the audiences like it. In analysing *Dallas* (1978) serial drama fiction, Ang (1985, p.45), cites one of the many letters from the programme fans on why she watches the drama as thus; 'there is suspense in it...it can also be romantic...there is sadness in it...and fear...also, happiness...'. This kind of audience capture is what the producer would hope for in a show. However, it is a skill that is deliberately deployed both in technical and the story flow to create momentary suspense gaps for the viewing pleasure of the audience.

One of the previewed programmes- *The Tussle* has been in production at the KBC station for about ten years. In the survey findings, it was the least preferred serial drama at 9.4% and solicited various reactions.

E2: Ningumu to know KBC programmes like hiyo ume show...(giggle from others) uwa hawa promote na ikohapotu...as much as you would like to promote your own...they don't do things professionally picture zao zinaonekana old siokama zingine...hizo zawa zungu are very serious.(It is difficult to know their programmes because they don't publicize them ..like the one we have watched it has no excitement and even if you would like to promote local programming they are not as professional as the foreign programmes...their picture quality even look old in comparison to the others)

The participants' talk of lack of professionalism at KBC, and suggests it in contrast to other competing commercial stations like *Citizen TV*, *NTV* and *KTN* which have a better broadcast signal quality which translates into a more vibrant, crisp pictures at the reception, unlike the dull

KBC output quality. Moreover, this affects all manner of productions at the station, including the serial dramas. Therefore, the technical performance of the broadcast equipment is a drawback to likeable serial dramas. The respondents mention the need to promote local programming at the station, a connotation of uninspiring productions and needs something close to affirmative action or empathy to boost their intake. Further to that, publicising a programme increases its awareness, this has been lukewarm at the KBC station-*The Tussle* one of the previewed short segments suffered from this. However, in an in-depth interview, the producer of the show shared his experiences.

***H8:** We work under difficult circumstances, facilitation for the writers, artist and on top of that no one appreciates your work. People only contact you to castigate...so how do you compete with those Mexican soaps...but I think my programme was good enough...I could even get positive responses from people on the streets.*

The producer suggests that he works under challenging circumstances- poor motivation in the production processes (remuneration for scripts/actors) and lack of mentoring support from his office superiors. He acknowledges the superiority of the foreign-produced serial drama productions which he partly attributes to better financing. Therefore, under the prevailing circumstances, his production is good enough. This argument, thus, reinforces the respondents' observations when only 9.4% indicate likeability of *The Tussle* serial drama at the survey questionnaire. In further personal in-depth interviews with different producers, they expressed their opinion towards the foreign and the local serial productions.

***H6:** There is a way the soap operas are told in a beautiful way and one gets hooked to it...you know the love story...but they also have the money to create those expensive sets...the beautiful people and all that. It costs money...they also have very good scriptwriters.*

H4: *If we have the money we can do as well...though their stories are not my kind but I do admire them...and I would as well like to make the kind of money they make given a chance.*

H3: *The response to new Beginning has been good...I think it's doing well as much as we produce it under a very tight budget. We might not be able to compete like with the soaps from Mexico or other parts they are good sellers and promoters what we lack at times.*

The three constituencies have a preference for foreign-produced serial drama fictions over the local productions. There is a higher sense of realism in their stories and acting (...*You feel the character...we are only good in simple jokes...*) the audiences are not gratified with the local stories and acting when they compare them with the foreign productions. When this is extrapolated to the broader Kenyan film industry, it is not good news. The TV drama is universally critical to the television industry (Richardson & Corner, 2012). The country has to find a way to build on or sustain what it already has. There is an increase in the local productions and some of the programmes like *Mali* fairly compete with foreign dramas. However, there is a feeling among some of the audiences that they are unable to fully embrace its story world which they regard as elite, while it is common to learn from some segments of a story like *La Gata*. The government has reiterated the importance of the industry as a focal point of job creation, especially to the youth (Wokabi, 2013). The preference of foreign productions over the locals is unwelcome news to the film and television industry. The viewers have passed a verdict that the storytelling in the foreign dramas is superior in comparison to what the local industry churn. The local producers also acknowledge these grasps of the foreign creators, especially over their style of 'hooking' the audiences'.

However, this is reinforced by the perception that their productions are adequately financed and if they were to operate in a similar environment, they would produce similar good dramas.

Though one might not fully support such an argument and the solution might not always be inadequate funding. The French Minister for Culture once referred to *Dallas* (1985) the popular American soap opera as the symbol of American cultural imperialism (Ang, 1985). As a first-world economy, with the capacity to create similar productions if not better, it felt the juggernaut of the programme on its audience.

4.4.3 Viewing companion in television serial drama

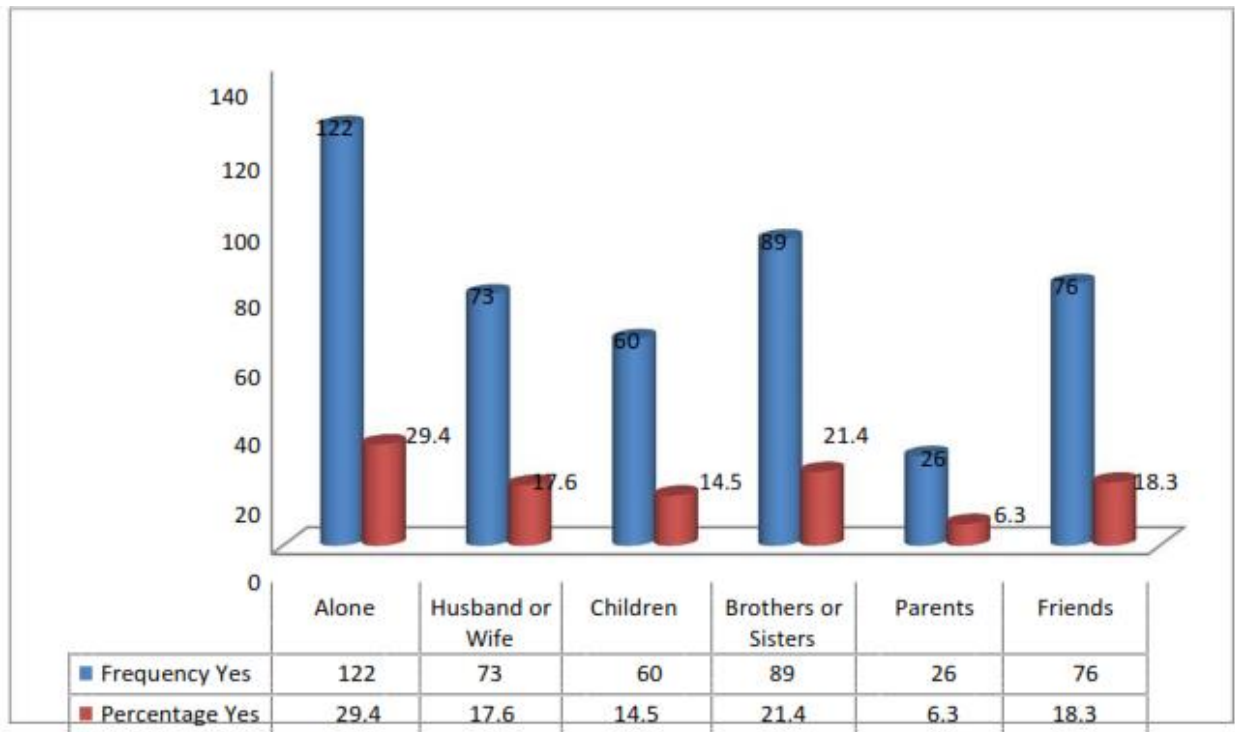


Figure 4.11: Viewing companion in serial drama fiction

Source: Research Data 2020

Studies have indicated that television serial drama viewing is a group or a family affair undertaking (Ford, 2008; Lopez, 1991). It was, therefore, important to find out how the viewers in the three constituencies engage in their viewing (see Figure 4.11 above). It should also be noted that not all the participants answered the question. Some indicated earlier that they never

watched the TV drama serials and were left out and marked as missing. The findings are that 29% of the respondents watch the dramas alone.

Additionally, 21% were likely to watch the genre with their brothers and sisters, while 18% indicated that they were more likely to watch with their friends. Nevertheless, 17% were more likely to watch television serial dramas in the company of the spouses, while 14% and 6% indicated that they were more likely watch the serial dramas with their children or parents respectively. At the focused group discussion, the question solicited varied reactions as follows:

F5: *I watch alone, when I have to since I stay alone...when friends come to spend, they might want to watch a different programme so it has to be that.*

G4: *women like these programmes so she would likely switch to it and I would go with that...I wouldn't want small quarrels over what to watch so I just go with it...she would even bring to date where the story is so far.*

G1: *sana sana kuna vipindi kamahizo uwezi watch na parents labda watoto...there are those I can watch with them...the once which come at 5 or 6 o'clock but those which are on at 8 or even 10 pm have a lot of scenes ...za love and you wouldn't want those for your children or even watching with your parents.*

The findings suggest that the viewing dynamics are changing contrary to early centrality of family viewing (Morley, 1988; Livingstone, 1998). The viewing among the participants of the three constituencies is becoming individualised. The constituencies are in Nairobi, which hosts the most abundant single households in the country (KNBS, 2009). The personalised nature of city life, as opposed to the communal countryside lifestyles, could further complicate the situation. Therefore; it might not be surprising for the respondents to indicate that they view the serial fiction alone. However, the 'group viewing' is still intact; A combination of those who suggest that they either watch with husband or wife, children, brothers/sisters and parents/friends are still sizable. Lotz (2007) further argues that the innovation and digitalisation of TV have

created what he terms as individualised and personalised TV viewing. Katz (2009) also observes that television now moves content from together to alone. Further to that, in Nairobi group viewing is epitomised by the big premier league football matches, watched at the pubs and restaurants where part of the pleasure is the ‘group experience’. However, the programme planners and producers should also be aware of the technological innovation in items like computers, cellphones, which enables quick access to TV content. Moreover, they should find out how these affect the perception and reception of programmes? Thus it should trigger interest on how to incorporate this new dispensation in programme-making and scheduling.

4.4.4 Drama serials and conversations

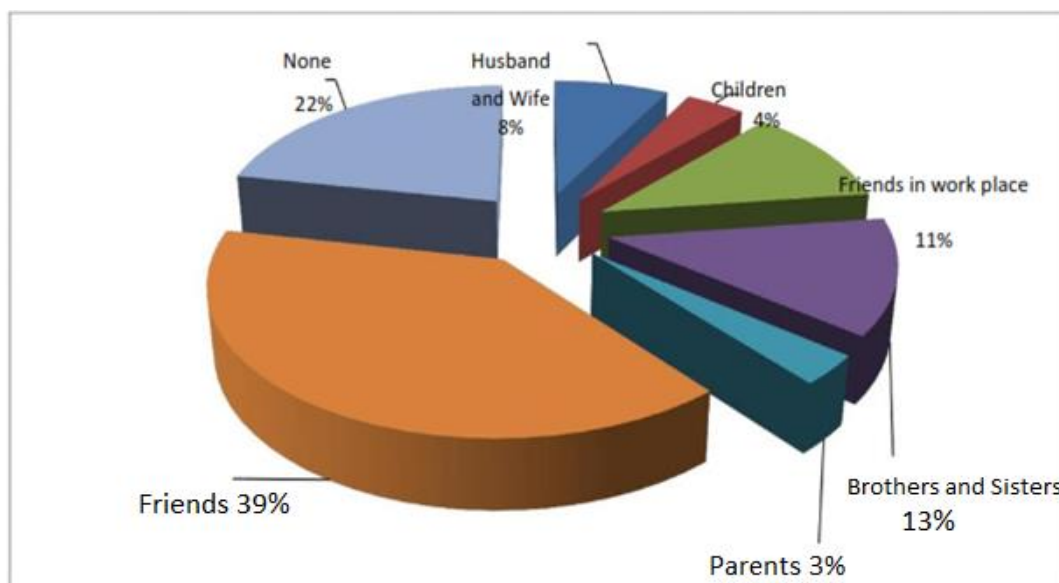


Figure 4.12: Drama serials and conversations

Source: Research Data 2020

Most of the respondents (39%) discussed the serial dramas with their friends (see figure 4.12), while 21% of them did not talk about it with anyone. Nevertheless, 12% discussed the programmes with their brothers and sisters, 11% shared conversations with friends at work.

Other participants indicated that they shared the discussions on dramas with their spouses at 7%, with their children at 4% while 3% discussed the serial shows with their parents. The focus group discussions which follows attempts to give deeper insights:

D6: *I talk to friends who I know also watch the same...the very close ones when you are on phone the topic could come up...but the one I remember much was bridges of love which we could talk about with a friend. . you try to understand something's in it...it's part of the happiness*

C5: *laugh...rarely men don't talk to each other on such...pegine tu a by the way kama kunadem Fulani muna watch na ye...kumfuraisha tu kwasababu wengi upenda hivyo (Could may be share with my girlfriend just to keep her company...they like such staff but with my other friends it's movies and sports)*

G3: *we talk about many things a topic on news can come up and programmes...when we were in high school is when we could talk about the programmes like the bold...which was on KBC I don't know if it's still on...but they were the few programmes you could watch then.*

We have seen in the previous section, that majority of the respondents watch the drama serials alone. However, despite this, it is still a forum for friendship and conversations. A discussant corroborates this by saying '*I talk to friends whom I know also watch the same...the very close ones when you are on the phone...*' The friends here also mean those who also watch and not just any other. The pleasure in television serial drama fiction viewing is in the conversation it generates which fills out the gaps (Ang, 1985; Livingstone, 1988; Brown 1994; Nussbaum, 2012; Simons, 2013; Shade *et al.*, 2015). Nussbaum (2012) illustrate the viewing experience of the *Melrose Place* serial drama with a group of friends;

when our favourite character- a red- headed home wrecker who had seemingly died in a car crash then popped up months later we jumped off the sofa in shock...then we started dancing' (Nussbaum,2012 in the New Yorker).

The suggested comradely in the consumption of the serial drama fiction among the female fans is opposed to the male participants' reception in the study. It was noticeable that some of the males

were embarrassed to admit that they watch the dramas. They only did so sometimes to sustain conversations with close female friends. One of them clarified that they mainly talk about ‘Sports and Movies’ with his male colleagues. Mittell (2012) argues that at the height of radio and television serial drama fiction (soap operas) programming in the 1940s and 1950s the term ‘soapier’ had acquired a derogatory meaning to imply the cheap commodities marketed on the radio for the unsophisticated housewife. The use of the terms like ‘women’s programming’ entrench and perpetuate the stereotype ideology of the soap opera as female programming.

4.4.5 Interest in viewing TV serial drama fiction

Table: 4.7: Interest in viewing TV serial drama fiction

		Frequency	%
I find myself attracted to local soap operas comparable to the foreign ones	Strongly Agree	64	15.4
	Agree	57	13.7
	Neutral	39	9.4
	Disagree	139	33.5
	Strongly Disagree	69	16.6
	Missing System	47	11.3
	Total	415	100
The local stories are usually better scripted than the foreign ones	Strongly Agree	36	8.7
	Agree	61	14.7
	Neutral	70	16.9
	Disagree	141	34.0
	Strongly Disagree	59	14.2
	Missing System	48	11.6
	Total	415	100
I spend more time watching local soaps than foreign ones	Strongly Agree	45	10.8
	Agree	60	14.5
	Neutral	55	13.3
	Disagree	137	33.0
	Strongly Disagree	72	17.3
	Missing System	46	11.1
	Total	415	100
The local soaps are more realistic in comparison	Strongly Agree	44	10.6

to the foreign ones	Agree	106	25.5
	Neutral	82	19.8
	Disagree	106	25.5
	Strongly Disagree	30	7.2
	Missing System	47	11.3
	Total	415	100
The foreign soap operas reflect other people's culture therefore I don't enjoy watching them	Strongly Agree	39	9.4
	Agree	77	18.6
	Neutral	87	21.0
	Disagree	133	32.0
	Strongly Disagree	31	7.5
	Missing System	48	11.6
Total	415	100	
The suspense in the foreign serial dramas keeps me at the edge of my seat	Strongly Agree	116	28
	Agree	128	30.8
	Neutral	58	14
	Disagree	55	13.3
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.4
	Missing System	48	11.6
Total	415	100	
The actors in the local serial dramas are more accomplished and believable in their acting roles than foreign ones	Strongly Agree	35	8.4
	Agree	61	14.7
	Neutral	88	21.2
	Disagree	145	34.9
	Strongly Disagree	38	9.2
	Missing System	48	11.6
Total	415	100	
I sometimes wish I was the hero/heroine in the foreign serial dramas in comparison to the domestic productions	Strongly Agree	108	26
	Agree	89	21.4
	Neutral	55	13.3
	Disagree	100	24.1
	Strongly Disagree	16	3.9
	Missing System	47	11.3
Total	415	100	
Given a choice I would spend more time watching local serial dramas than the foreign ones	Strongly Agree	52	12.5
	Agree	69	16.6
	Neutral	65	15.7
	Disagree	133	32
	Strongly Disagree	44	10.6

	Missing System	52	12.5
	Total	415	100
The set design, i.e. furniture, clothes and fashion in the local serial drama productions are attractive to watch	Strongly Agree	61	14.7
	Agree	109	26.3
	Neutral	77	18.6
	Disagree	91	21.9
	Strongly Disagree	30	7.2
	Missing System	47	11.3
	Total	415	100
The set design, i.e. furniture, clothes and fashion in the foreign serial drama productions are attractive to watch	Strongly Agree	142	34.2
	Agree	144	34.7
	Neutral	44	10.6
	Disagree	23	5.5
	Strongly Disagree	16	3.9
	Missing System	46	11.1
	Total	415	100
I watch more local serial dramas than I do foreign ones	Strongly Agree	62	14.9
	Agree	74	17.8
	Neutral	46	11.1
	Disagree	128	30.8
	Strongly Disagree	57	13.7
	Missing System	48	11.6
	Total	415	100

Source: Research Data 2020

The study further sought the experiences of viewing local versus foreign produced TV serial drama fiction (see table 4.7 above). The question used a Likert scale measurement where the respondents checked statements which best reflected their genre perception. If they marked '1' it meant that they strongly agreed with the statement, '2' agree, '3' neutral, '4' disagreed and '5' strongly disagreed. This was later analysed using SPSS software and the findings reported in percentage scores. A focused group discussion further added depth to the results.

Accumulatively, 50.1% (5/10) of the participants disagree that they are more attracted to the domestic serial drama fiction in comparison to 29.1% (3/10) who agree that they are more appealing than the foreign productions. Another 50.3 % (5/10) disagree that they spend more time watching the local serial dramas than foreign productions. However, 25.3% (2/10) agree that they watch more local serial drama fiction programming than the foreign-produced. Further to that, 48.2% (5/10) disagree that the local serial drama stories are better scripted than the foreign ones as opposed 23.4% (2/10) who agree that the domestic drama is better scripted. Besides, 36.1% (4/10) agree that the domestic serial shows were more authentic for the local communities in comparison to 29.1% (3/10) who disagree. The foreign serial dramas mainly portray other peoples' culture. Nonetheless, 39.5% (4/10) of the participants indicate that this does not negatively influence their perception towards them. However, foreign origin dissuades 28% (3/10) of the participants from enjoying watching them as much. Additionally, 58.8 % (6/10) of the participants regard the foreign serial drama fictions highly for their story suspense treatment. However, 15.7% (1/10) disagree with their suspense treatment. Further to that, 47.4% (5/10) of the participants highly regard acting roles in the foreign serial drama fictions than in the domestic productions. Majority of them, 68.9% (7/10) admire foreign set designs in comparison to 9.4% who believe the local sets are more attractive to view.

Uwah (2008) argues that the success and foundation of the Nigerian drama film industry are on the familiar story plots which the audience identify with the environment, settings and characters. The stories capture the people's daily struggles in the 'crooked cops', prostitution and trickery. There is excellent cultural proximity with their storylines and the setups. In a similar context, the Kenyan serial dramas are produced within familiar audience backgrounds just as the Nigerians or the Latin American. The survey findings indicate that the participants' share the

popular universal serial drama genre story themes. There is an insignificant difference in story relevance (realism), whether it is local or foreign. Four in ten participants prefer realism in the local stories, while three in ten favour realism in the foreign stories.

Nevertheless, it means that there is more to a strong story identity. Some other elements became explicit in the focused group discussions.

C1: *Kuna tuville hizo story huwa ziko real vile watu poor Uteseka lakini mwishoe anawin na ata huku unapata vitu kama hizo ufanyika...you can't know what will happen next..wako juu ville wana andika hizo ma soaps..ziko mingi lakini nisawa tu...hizi zahapa siombaya kitu kama comedy kama vitimbi tunaweza lakini kama soaps zinataka time Nama producers hapa nikama pegine hawana time (There is away this stories are written they are real...the poor get trodden but in the end they win.. They are advanced in the way they are written. They seem to require more time to write which our producers might not have time for. However we are good in comedies like Vitimbi)*

C2: *Umeona hiyo scene...yani jama anajiexpress ya ukweli atuwezi fanya love scene we cannot like say ...I love you on set kama hivyo(You have seen the scene...The man has expressed himself very well in that love scene we can'tsay I love you on set achieve that)..this people are experienced and they put all their feelings in the acting...atu fanyagi hivyo(we don't accomplish such)*

E6: *In Kenya it's obvious the way they act you just know one is going to throw a punch...may be we might not blame the actors alone those who direct them might have the problem they should visit Nigeria or even Mexico to learn, though dramas like Mali we are okay*

D5: *I can't remember how I spend my time on TV...but what does it mean when you switch on TV the 8 o'clock and even after news is all soaps...so sio raisi(not clear) to know the Kenyan programmes ...obviously I would spend time watching them...at least pia zikona suspense sio kamahizi local (At least they contain suspense not like the local productions)*

D2: *Used to watch Two Wives..not sure whether K24 or KTN but this are common story...you come to know there is polygamy even kwa wazungu...but what I liked the way the two ladies behaved you just see what happens in such homes...so you learn something...they make the story so real...that even if its Philippines...you are with the story.*

The respondents indicate that they are more attracted to foreign-produced serial dramas than the domestic ones. They consider the foreign stories/scripts as professionally structured and appropriately styled with elements like suspense, unexpected twists and turns to the excitement of the viewers. Nevertheless, they seem to be aware of the intellectual input and enduring personal characteristics expected of the creator of such attractive scripts. In their conversation statements like: *‘They seem to require more time to write which our producers might not have time for...’* This infers that the local serial drama producers’ lacks the adeptness and determination in comparison to the foreign producers’ in conceptualising and producing the soap operas. Serial drama fiction writing usually involves more than a single writer-it is teamwork (Kennedy, 2012). However, this does not seem to be the case in the Kenyan context; a few producers write or commission the writers. Therefore, there is a lack of ‘team creative thinking’. Several concurrent plotlines excite and rejuvenate the story.

The participants have witnessed interesting and exciting scripts in foreign productions. They would wish to experience the same in the domestic ones. Allen (1995) argues that an excellent serial drama storyline should have syntagmatic gaps-these are carefully styled breaks (suspense) in the plotlines, which should invite the viewers to participate in the construction of meaning. Therefore, when a participant comments that *‘In Kenya, it is obvious the way they act you just know one is going to throw a punch...’* creates a blatant breach in story treatment- the expectations and predictions of future events in the story hold the audience attention (Livingstone, 1988). An actor is expected to be witty, innovative and can quickly tweak a dialogue to suit the circumstances (Stott, 2013). However, when the audiences can notice glimpses in a performance, it calls to question the auditioning of the character, they further agree that the suspense in the foreign drama could be a point of attraction. The implication is that there

could be a shortage of good writers with capacity to weave suspense in stories or the local producers might be ignoring this critical element in their productions.

A sizable percentage of the respondents do not regard the local actors as accomplished performers, especially in comparison to those in the foreign TV drama serials. Their delivery is distinct; a source of pleasure to the participants. The auditioning for local roles, therefore, needs a rethink from the producers. Further to that, inferior performance perception might discourage upcoming talents. There is a need, thus, to either train or guide actors appropriately in the genre. Mittel (2012) argues that the audience perception of the actors' performance (believability) is central to enjoying the drama story- The discussant's opinions further illustrate this

F2: *We are still down in acting some of the actors need to be serious. They lack passion the way you would see Nigerians.... one can be a villager and looks like one and one time you see the person as a rich city guy.... they are good in changing characters and roles.*

G3: *In Kenya acting is not a profession as such...there are even acting schools in the developed countries so they take it seriously...here it could be a job because your uncle is the producer...we want to see people acting well and can talk about them like some of those foreign ones.*

F5: *There are good actors like in school's drama. . then when they are out of school I don't know where they go to...we see same same people in every kind of drama so they cannot give us anything different*

The discussants argue that acting has not been regarded as a profession by the actors themselves and industry leaders like the producers. Also, there is a need to learn from other countries. They can discern gaps in the actors' performance and compare it to the context of the story. For instance, in some of the domestic dramas, one notices the 'city features' of a character poorly transplanted to portray a villager. The Nigerian shows are better in the characterisation of such scenes. The viewer is smart enough to take note of what is unconvincing, real and genuine (Ang,

1985). Thus, the producers should be careful in auditioning characters for roles. Once again, there is a need to listen to the viewer, and it is a gone conclusion that Nigerian actors are considered believable, which makes their productions to be easily acceptable.

The respondents believe that the talent displayed in the school's drama festivals should translate to the broader industry. The implication is that there is a disconnect in nurturing and converting the good schools' drama festivals performance to the television screens. There is a need to worry, that the government cites the arts and performance industry as one of the pillars to drive the economy and absorb the deluge of schools and college graduates. It means that the acting job market suffers and could be one of the reasons why we cannot export many of the television dramas the way Nigeria, Mexico and even India have been able to do.

The audience can strongly identify and emulate a character - wanting to be like them. Newcomb (2004) refers to this as role verification. It means that the viewers are not convinced to strongly identify with the local stories the way they would do with the foreigners. In addition, it could also affect the full acceptance of dramas, where the locals are the heroes. Some serial dramas will employ expensive decor and create a fantasy in the viewer. Kilborn (1992) argues that, part of the success of some serial fiction depends on the fantasy world they create in the mind of the viewers. The success of Soap operas like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* is said to have rested on the deliberate fantasy world they created which other serial fiction had not tried (Kilborn, 1992). The decor is crucial to the success of serial drama fiction. There should be a deliberate effort by the Kenyan serial drama producers to work towards improving on their sets to attract the viewers or make the audience have a positive response towards the production.

In summary, this section has examined the audience insight of foreign and domestically produced TV serial drama fiction, to understand their consumption patterns. In the interviews, the respondents show an inclination towards dramas done in English and Kiswahili languages. Thus, due to the colonisation legacy where the use of English was promoted over all other dialects. However, a deeper introspection indicates that a well written vernacular version and careful treatment of critical elements like the story realism and identifiable actors could suffice. The viewers' favour the foreign-produced serials in comparison to the domestic productions. Their storylines are considered to be current, dynamic and innovatively treated with an appropriate dose of suspense and intrigue. The acting is transformative, believable, and the respondents identify with some of the characters. The audiences indicate that they can 'enter' the stories and learn- aided by their better treatment. Similarly, they are not receptive to the domestic serial dramas like 'The Tussle' where there are weaknesses in the story treatment and acting. In other words, to be successful with the local serial shows, there is a need to focus on suitable script treatment relatable storylines, appropriate auditions and enhanced set designs.

The respondents regard the actors as 'amateurs' who are better at executing pure slapstick comedies but cannot engage in demanding storylines like in the foreign serial drama fiction productions. According to them, the local performers are yet to embrace acting as a profession, and a means to earn a decent living. They hail the school's drama performances, but unfortunately, it does not translate to the screens. The domestic producers alike acknowledge the superior production quality of the foreign dramas but attribute it to their better financial funding.

The participants are looking for serial drama fiction, which would excite them; they want dynamism, innovation in the local stories. They can experience innovative story presentation and

performance at the school's drama festivals. However, according to them, this is not replicated on television.

A commonality in many of the successful, long-running serial dramas like *Neighbours*, *Coronation Street*, and *East Enders* are stories which deal with common issues within the communities. The attempt to resolve the problems becomes meaningful in their genuine presentation (Ang, 1985; Holmwood, 2009; Enzeogu, 2013). The pleasure in viewing is, therefore derived from such circumstances. The participants share in the story themes of both foreign and domestic productions but differ in the reception of each because of the producer's approach to treatment. The respondents are not technical experts in the TV serial drama requirements however when they comment on a foreign drama like '*those people know how to write...*' or '*...you have seen how the man has expressed himself very well in that love scene we cannot achieve that...*' Ang (1985) argues that the pleasure in watching a serial drama is in the 'genuineness' in the portrayal of the narrative and the actors.

4.5 Audience evaluation of domestic and foreign serial drama fiction producers'

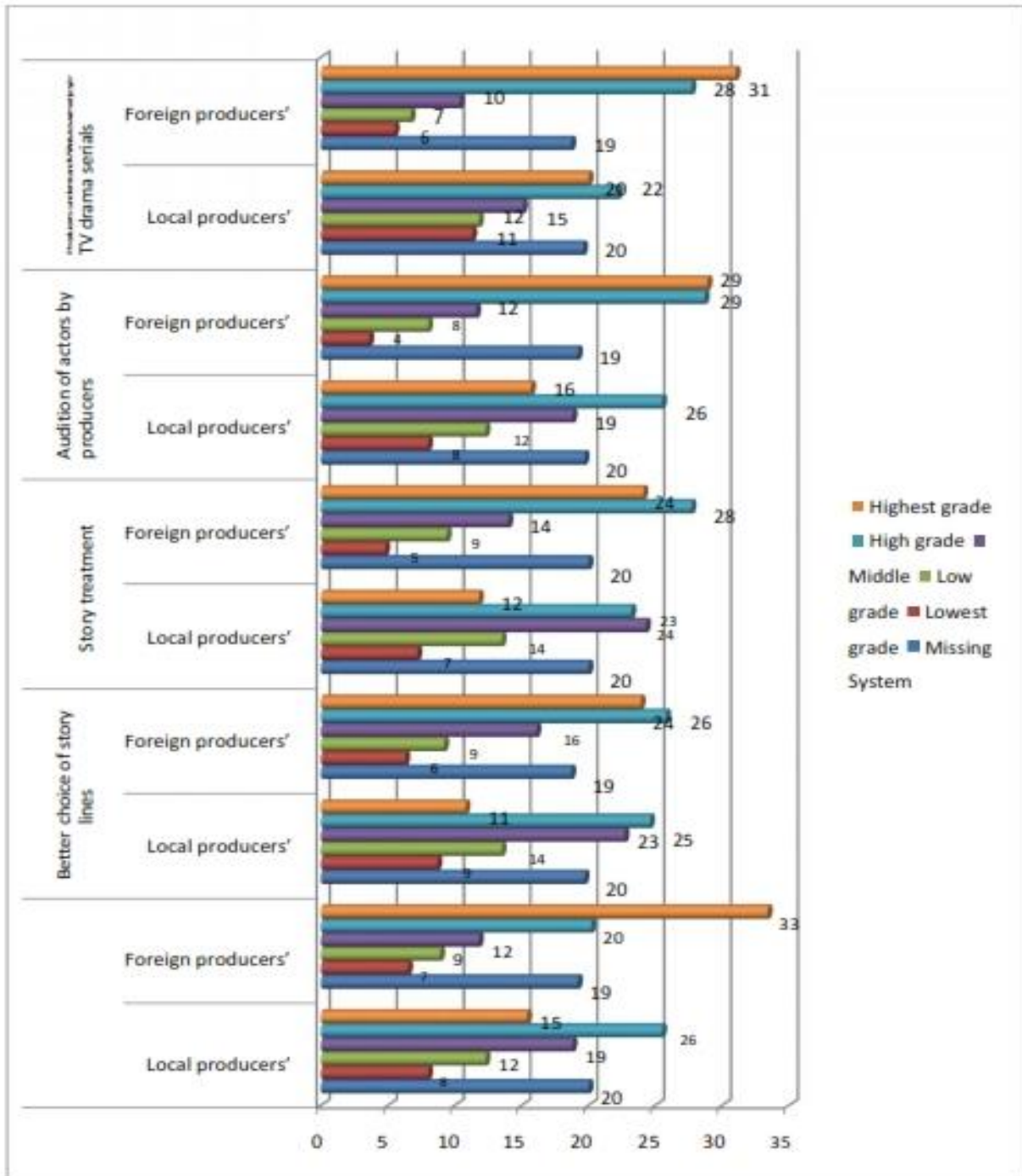


Figure 4. 13: Viewers evaluation of domestic TV serial drama producers

Source: Research Data 2020

4.5.1 Respondents evaluation of domestic TV serial drama producers

To further appreciate the context of viewership and the production of the serial dramas, it was important to discover how the audiences evaluate the domestic and foreign drama producers. A Likert scale questionnaire was administered to the respondents where they were to check against provided statements by indicating them either as ‘lowest grade’, ‘low grade’, ‘middle grade’, ‘high grade’ or ‘highest grade’. Further to that, and as noted earlier, there were respondents who are aware of the genre but were not fans and therefore skipped the question. They have consequently been captured as ‘missing system’. The anecdotes from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews of the producers were used to enrich the quantitative findings.

Most of the participants highly regard the foreign producers as having a better understanding of the audience attraction needs at 59% (6/10). In comparison, 44% (4/10) consider the domestic producers’ as better in grasping and fulfilling audience needs in a serial drama fiction (See Figure 4.14). A similar trend is witnessed in the audition of actors; 58% and 42% respectively regard the foreign producers’ highly in comparison to the local producers. Additionally, 52% say that foreign producers are better skilled in the story treatment comparable to 35% who vouch for the local producers. The audiences further highly regard the foreign producers’ as professionals in comparison to 41% to the local producers. The FGDs further deepened the evaluation of the foreign and the local producers. In the focused group discussion, the viewers expressed their perceptions about the local serial drama fiction producers’, in the following statements;

A2: *Nathani wako sawa tu....sioni shida yoyote lakini watu wainje wako mbele...unaona filamu zao (i think they are okay i don't see any issues..though the foreigners' are still ahead you can see from their dramas...)*

E4: *You know they are trained for the job (the local producers)...and you must be knowing what you are doing if you are employed in a such a position.*

F1: *what we know is that, production cost money and we are not like Nigerians or the Indians who know where they are going to sell their movies...so we should support what our people are trying to achieve as much as they are still not there yet.*

E2: *They are trying as much as I think they should also learn from others...that the government want 60% for local programme...waa so much .that can also be boring even if we want to promote our industry..we learn by seeing what others are also doing.*

G3: *we have not been able to tell stories in a Kenyan way...and we always tell our local stories in a foreign way so we can't compete with them like that..they will always be better.*

G1: *They don't make the programmes like us you can see they care about many details things look real the actors.... the story...they have the experience and the many years they have been doing it...and you see we watch many programmes from Hollywood...laughter.*

G4: *Not all the programmes comes from Hollywood...kuna ata Bollywood and nijahood...vile tuko na riverhood...(laughter) lakini zote wako mbele yetu..kunatu vile unaona watu kwa hiyo set...they act naroho yao wame jua ni job..(Not all the dramas emanate from Hollywood, there is Bollyhood Naijahood the way we have Riverhood..(laughter) but in the set the actors/actresses perform with passion and consider it as a profession)*

F3: *yenyewe wako na chapa (They have money)...so they can afford and pay the best writers and even actors so they don't deliver...sisi atupendi kutoa chapa...lakini corruption kwa kila kitu ata kwa ma actors (we don't like spending money on films but corrupt on everything else so we would not spend much on the actors so they don't deliver to us-(laughter)*

The above findings and the discussion suggest that the respondents' accept the prevailing lackluster quality of the local serial drama genre in other words they are not enthusiastic about it or in the 'negotiated reading mode' (Hall, 1980). From the active audience theory and the encoding and decoding model (Hall, 1980) the producer initiates a TV drama serial production from the knowledge perspective of the subject and the targeted audiences (encoded). The story is pitched in congruence to their understanding. However, the audience reception could be contrary

to the producers' expectations. For instance, in the ongoing discussion the respondents regard the local drama serials in a bland manner (decode).

The audiences' are resigned to the lackluster performance of the local producers against the foreign ones like Nigeria, India, and Mexico. They lack the financial capacity, passion to deliver authentic story and therefore have to observe and learn from these destinations. Some of the respondents are aware of the delimiting production costs, however when the idea of 60% local content requirement is implied, there is a feeling of discontent towards such approach in programming. A further insight on the viewers' perspective of the producers' are as follows:

E1: *The producers need to have their own style not trying to do like Mexico or the Philippines they have found those love stories are the kind of their soaps what can our style be they need to findout...infact I don't think we can do such kind of stories we are good in this comedies like Auntie boss,papa..we are just comedians.*

D2: *I think in writing we are improving if that's the role of the producer, but they should avoid incorporating a lot of sheng we need to sell our dramas out.... also like Ugandans do not understand sheng to me I feel its limiting to only Kenyans.*

C4: *I think our productions are low budget we are always indoors. They don't have money...if you look at the Nigerians there seems to have a lot of money the huge bungalows we are shown...Here you see the dirty background or the story is always in the slums.*

G5: *I am told those Mexicans soaps are aggressive in marketing, that they know where they are going to sell their programmes even before the end of the production. Probably we luck the good marketers...you see like Nairobi half-life and Mali can be marketed abroad.*

There seem to be thoughtful responses among the participants on the role of the drama producer. Despite the financial challenges they have not been creative enough and defined their niche, not necessarily imitating what the rest are doing; for instance, statements like ' *The producers need to have their own style not trying to do like Mexico or the Philippines...*

However, more in-depth analyses on the role of the producer in a TV serial drama fiction negate the understanding of the participants and even some of the domestic producers. Picado (2018, p.55) argues that the serial drama genre production is a conglomerate of elements like ‘the use of narrative, visual, technological and audio resources, as well as by the identification of teams and agents that performed in it’. The producer’s role is, therefore, central to the enjoyment of serial drama fiction. When the participants respond that ‘...*I think that our productions are low budget...we are always indoors...*’ And ‘...*they don’t make programmes like us...things look real...the actors....*’ These illustrate the producer’s shortcoming in a production, which is also influenced by the set design, style and the general appearance of the characters and items on the screen. As discussed in the finding, seven out of ten participants highly regard the set designs in the foreign TV serial drama productions. These designs could encompass what the filming camera sees; the wall colours, the props (the furniture, wall hangings, the drapes, pottery) which can eventually be manipulated to achieve believability. It does not necessarily require substantial finance, but the producer’s creativity, skill and deep understanding of their roles are critical.

Additionally, the stories need to be universal and not confined to the Kenyan audience context. Use of colloquial like *sheng* should be minimized-which has an implication to export. Working towards the inclusion of appealing sets in some of the dramas could be well received by the audiences. Nigerian dramas are perceived to be attractive partly because of their opulent set designs. Having media-literate viewers in the genre could improve the production output as they would be confident to express themselves in production matters.

Further to that, respondents cite a high level of producers' professionalism in auditioning actors' in the foreign serial dramas in comparison to the domestic productions. As argued in the literature review; auditioning the right characters for roles has more influence over the audience than even the storyline (Cohen, 1999; Hoffner, & Buchanan, 2005). The producer, on the other hand, is expected to juggle his/her taste and that of the audience (Newcomb & Alley, 1983).

A further participant's reflection captures the drama as follows:

A1: Tuko down hatuweziku compare naata drama zanijaama south Africa nikama wakona ma writers na directors wazuri...zetu tu nikuact hizikama vitimbi (We are lower we cannot compare with even dramas from Nigeria and South Africa it's like they have better writers and directors...for us we are only good at doing sketches) so our producers cannot compare with those...they are higher if I may say so.

The preceding section infers that the foreign drama serial producers are regarded as more accomplished in all aspects of production, writing to auditioning of actors. Their actors perform with passion on the set, a note on their professionalism in auditions. The participants' perception of the domestic producers is that they lack diligence in their production approach in comparison to their foreign counterparts. They are bedeviled by insidious issues (corruption, poor remuneration of the actors/actresses), which further affect screen performance. The local producers might be better off pursuing lower forms/niche of drama genre like the slapstick comedies.

Besides, and as suggested in the literature review, a receptive serial drama fiction marches the intention of the producer and the audience (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1993). Further to that, the producer is considered a 'bricoleur' (Thompson, 1990) someone who tries to find a winning formula by mixing ideas and other successful programmes. The findings indicate so far that the

audiences' have a more positive perception towards the foreign producers in fulfilling their drama attraction needs as opposed to the domestic genre creators. The local producers should, therefore, work towards changing this narrative by investing more in innovative storylines and keenness in selecting and directing the actors/actresses. They should further try to correct the notion by the local viewers' that the foreigners are better in creating, have the finance and that they should resign themselves to cheaper productions. The film and art productions are critical to the government and the Kenyan film industry at large. In this regard, the government announced the setting up of a 300 million film fund to enable the youth to access finances for their film projects (Menya & Njagi, 2013). Such efforts could be null and void if the intended audiences' have little confidence in the producers of these TV drama genres.

4.5.2 Producers' experiences' in fulfilling audience entertainment needs

The study has so far assessed the viewers' perspective of the serial drama production and programming cutting across domestic and foreign shows. Further insights are exposed by the producers themselves who create the content independently or work within established TV stations (in-house producers). Through key informant interviews, they revealed their experiential relations with the viewers and production experiences. The primary television production processes set off with an idea and the targeted audience in mind (Hilliard, 2011). The producer is a central player, and Thompson (1990) argues that they are persons who can mix different cultural elements to come up with a new combination. Newcomb and Alley (1983) reinforce the argument by elevating the role of the producer, by stating that television is a 'producer's medium' meaning a programme's final output is his/her direct reflection. The following verbatim statements are extracts from the interviews illustrating the producers' perspectives of their audiences'.

H3: *The Kenyan audiences are very honest and you can know their response on the social media...you can know what they think about you and the programme*

H6: *All the time I am clear about my audience though at times you might not be 100% sure of the drama reception. Audiences look for emotional connection with the characters in the story.*

H1: *Talking by example, soap like 'Pendo' drama I wanted to talk to women who are in a figurative prison. However, my house-help is a good indicator especially on those dramas targeted at the lower class.*

H8: *I usually follow-up on the negative comments even if it's one person and there are times we would take in their concerns.*

H11: *I think it's an instinct if you watch TV....you have an idea what people would like to watch my house girl... we are friends I can pick her mind what they would want to watch...some of us middle class ... do not know where we belong the lower class are real....*

H10: *The Kenyan audiences are complicated and know what they want. .so, you have to give them the right thing.*

H4: *What happens is that the soaps are very aspirational...the viewers are the house girls, house wife and children and the storyline are very simple **love rich poor, jealousy** done. If house-girl is watching this she is aspiring one time she will be like that she will follow that story to the end and what happens at the end good always wins...'*

In the preceding conversation, it is clear that the producers' start from a clear understanding of the centrality of their audiences'. They are aware of attractive elements in a TV drama serial fiction and their motivational nature as stated by one of the interviewees - '*the audiences look for an emotional connection to a character in a story*'. Logan (2015) supports this assertion that individual performances of the actor/actresses' draw the audiences closer to them, and according to Abu-Lughod (1995), they eventually develop an attachment to these characters. If this is the case and the producer create from the knowledge of their audience', there should be warm reception of their programmes.

Nonetheless, there is a strong indication that some of the producers create for the ‘the other’ in this case, the lower class. The ‘house-help’ has been cited as a yardstick to determine the ‘audiences’ reception to some of the dramas. However, this could be a simplistic approach where the presumed ‘middle-class producer’ is loading it over the ‘lower class consumer’ where single persons are assumed to represent a larger group of viewers’. First, it is unscientific and piloting the dramas serials to selected groupings could assist in discovering some of the audiences’ nuances. In earlier findings and arguments, we realised that the participants grade the foreign-produced drama serials highly in almost all aspects of the production-from the storyline to the acting; the local producer, therefore, needs to examine these elements in relations to their target audiences. Here are their experiences in their endeavour to engage with the audience.

H7: The audiences look for a story... very important...they look for entertainment and good acting.

H1 : I am a storyteller I like writing and if someone can take care of the business side I would be glad....doing so many things at the same time saps your energy and you cannot fully focus to deliver the exact story you want.

H2: we are also in a place where we are trying to discover ourselves who are weso how else do we discover ourselves if we can't tell our stories....we must stop making films for ourselves and make it for the audience...for instance if I have a story about witch craft... so I fear people are going to judge me

H8: Producers’ are not allowed to write their script you commission someone to do the work and you engage in other aspects of the production.

H7: I do write my stories but because I am very busy I have to get someone to write. Its never stable there are those after doing the work for some time they want to control the programme and become very difficult so you take the writing back.

H4: I think we need to adapt that and do a soap in our own way the way we live...what we have done we decide to do an action movie because Americans did ...I went to a film workshop and sat within this renowned American film maker and he said I have a problem with you East African film makers you are fake you are very fake in terms of how you tell your stories you want to be in New York and yet you are in Nairobi you want to tell the story and your main character is in

jeans....why can't you go back to Nairobi....where the guy has a headscarf...and whatever clothes you tie around.

H2: *I am a fan of soaps because of the twist and turns and storyline...some dramas are trying a lot and some seem to be spending bit of money...one of the crucial things about the foreign soap operas is that it is written by even 30 people...means it needs a lot of money and need top notch...actors*

There are shortcomings in the storyline development and acknowledgement of the quality and superiority of the foreign-produced TV serial drama fictions. For example, the interview comments like. '*I am a fan of soaps because of the twist and turns and storyline*'. The local producer regards him/herself as overworked in comparison to the foreign producers and therefore lacks time to reflect and be creative. These are assumptions that others work in a less challenging environment and is yet to be verified. However, other interviewees' introduces the conflicted producer who lucks a cultural base for their stories in comparison to other film destinations like Nigeria and India'....*so how else do we discover ourselves if we can't tell our stories....we must stop making films for ourselves and make it for the audience...'*

A further implication is that the domestic creators have not mastered the intricacies of a professional producer, of overcoming the obstacles to deliver to the audiences' needs (Newcomb & Alley, 1983). However, there are other bedevilling issues as the participants attest:

H4: *One thing is finance we have this mentality if its not land no one wants to put money...after that we are in debt is a process you have to go through before we get there....i have to get real with my crew... guys we are doing this and we could be paid 6months down the line.... So financing is our biggest challenge no one understands film...no one wants to work with film it's the riskiest business for any bank when they do their assessment...film is the riskiest.*

A further inference is that the producers work under the illusion that significant financial support would solve their problems. However, it is essential to recall that; the serial drama fiction

programming is founded on a commercial model (Lavin, 1995; Tunstall, 2008). Therefore, this should be critical to any startup of such productions. The domestic producer should understand and creatively work towards sustainable serial fiction programming. They have an excellent textbook grasp on the role of the producer but lack a clear path to its practicality. There is a need to reinforce, careful script supervision and technical deployment of the cameras, sounds and lighting to boost the production output. However, the reality is that it's only those who have a passion for the profession, and one should not quickly hope to be a multi-millionaire from the proceeds of the industry.

4.5.3.1 The Producers' perspective on TV serial drama actors

Acting is central in delivering a story; producers or directors go through the paces of auditioning to select appropriate characters for roles. In the previous discussions of this study, participants rated the local TV performers (actors/actresses') lowly in comparison to their foreign counterparts in the serial drama productions. They work under the purview of the producers, but what are the producers' insights on their talents? Here are illustrations of some of their responses:

H4: *Look at genevieve (Nigerian actress) she would do makeup to look horrible ...if you meet her in real person she is not the same person but would give anything in a film she would be dirty would scream... I have had issues here someone comes from the theatre you tell them those nails needs to be removed they remove the polish...and they are **supposed to be a villager**... there is a show I did I saw it at the editing she has blue contacts and she is mama mboga do you therefore go for reshoot... The accent is so fake we have this thing that we have to have a tweng in our English I don't know where we are going to...actors have to know they have to **be believable** lennyJuma (Kenyan casting director) once said if you can't act like your mother then you cant act.*

H3: *We actually have brilliant actors for some people... it's a joke...yes we have made those mistakes in the past there are those we have casted and impressed as at the audition....you know they have the look.. There was a time when my director had to call off a whole movie...day 2 of the shoot we casted again...when*

they came to the audition they were good. We re-casted...we had to stop the whole movie I don't know what happened like in auditions you have to show your show reel....and there are people who will surprise they are not so strong then they get there and take over....its usually also like a 50/50% chance.

H5: *There are good actors in Kenya. If you look hard enough you will find them.*

H1: *I think we need performance schools...oh actually they are there Kenyatta University has been training performing arts for years...but have not come across them in my set so where do they go I think there is a disconnect.*

H6: *There was a time we found a very good character...I think she came after we recorded about 100 episodes...the girl became very good she became big headed(know it all) and demanded a lot of money which the show could not afford we had to take some very painful decision and remove the character from the scene*

The producers understand the critical nature of functional characterisation in a story. However, there is a challenge in casting and finding competent actors. Here they seem to support the viewers' observations who rate foreign actors highly in comparison to the local actors. There is an admission that the Nigerian screen television performers are superior in their acting-incomparable to their Kenyan counterparts. The producers are financially constrained and therefore uncertain of retaining talented actors, thus has repercussion in the industry. Cohen (1999), Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) further support this assertion that the characters have more influence over the audience than the storyline. However, the inadequacy of the performing arts courses at the universities and colleges, thus do not translate into the renewal of the industry. Additional interviews revealed the following

H11: *The quality of foreign shows is up, and they evolve all the time their sets are very real...They have this characterization firms ...so the casts get it right. The casting companies are here but they work for these advertising firms....again the issue of money... then actors avoid casting agencies they demand 10% of their pay...with time they start complaining.*

H10: *Many Kenyan actors come from the theatre background and for some it's not easy to mold them into TV drama actors...again we have to be believable...if you can watch the many roles Genevieve can play from a rural woman to a modern city lady in the Nigerian movies then you would understand what I mean...I had one time a cast who was playing a village woman but you could see she had contact lenses..its not real.*

H2: *The characters have to be believable...if you don't get it right the story will not fly there are moments when people root for a character.*

H3: *If people meet you on the street and say I hate...so and so then you know you have done a good job in auditioning the actor.*

H6: *Character switch might hurt your story...When we replaced JB in Tabasamu however colourful we made him look the audience comments were not very good...though he was trying his best.*

There is inadequate support among the Kenyan producers' over the acting industry. The foreign markets have professional acting agencies while here there is minimal trust in such agencies either by the actors or the producers' while they offer essential support service. Further to that, what could be more disheartening is the contradictions in some of the producers'; who should be better experts - when they castigate the unprofessionalism among some of the actors and compare them to the foreigners, while their position enables them to mould and build them. Nonetheless, to some of the independent producers,' the Kenyan film/television industry is a culmination of many factors and one of them is the training and preparing the burgeoning producers for the industry.

H9: *unfortunately at the university there are no skills which are being transferred at that level. many lecturers at the university teach the wrong thing....i am not interested in the papers I want someone who can sit at the machine deliver a high quality work not that you are a professor or Doctor so an so....our biggest problem is the disconnect between the academia...they think they know and we don't know but what you know you can't practice. The practice at the end of the day is very important....if you are a film maker you need to understand what making films entails...at the end of the day if theory cannot be applied then you*

are not helping....when you sit down with them and make a movie in terms of practicality, acceptability that's when you count.

H1: *...there is talent but in Kenya we don't have a performance school where do those who get degrees go to... you call auditioning they don't come where are KU graduates.. go to we put up a call for auditions...because acting doesn't pay...is there a disconnect ...how many have reached out to like Dorothy and said I majored in performance and I would like to try out...infact you are the first person in academia to reach out....that's why we also have industry papers but don't translate...like if I want to know how much...was spent in top 5 soaps I wouldn't. What was their trade secret in 2014.... is not the same in 2016 so we need those kind of information to grow.*

The strong sentiments are held by veteran film/TV drama producers, who fault the training of film and television personnel as a problem in the industry. Academia is not offering them solutions, and their graduates are not in touch with the industry reality. The training institutions do not produce technically oriented personnel and therefore starves the industry. With such arguments, there is a need to worry about human resource investment and the 'wasted' period studying film and television production. It is also contradictory that many of them are a product of the same film school system. The divide between the two systems-the school and the industry practitioners could further corroborate why the foreign drama serials are favourite with the viewers over their local productions.

The central question and objective in this section were to explore the producers' understanding of the audiences' reception needs. As has been discussed earlier in the chapter, the producers conceive and implement the drama serial production idea in a structured manner. However, on the flip side, it was also to investigate the respondent's perception of the local versus the foreign serial drama producers, which gave better insights on the state of the TV drama production. The respondents rate the foreign producers highly in the core production areas of writing, auditioning and directing actors' in comparison to the local creators. And that foreign productions fulfil their

attraction needs better. They grade their Kenyan counterparts lower in story development and suggest that they should possibly determine a niche in a production area.

To understand the longevity and the resilience of some of the long-running serial dramas like *The Archers*, *Coronation Street*, *Emmerdale*, *Neighbours* and *East Enders*; Holmwood (2009), observes in the Guardian online article that the producers, and the executive producers of the shows, find it extremely difficult to keep them fresh because of the high audience expectations. There is a constant adrenalin rush, trying to remain relevant and adapt to the ever-changing high technical requirement of the production. Bower, the executive producer of *Neighbours*, equate it to ‘riding a tsunami every day to keep people buoyed and enthusiastic’ (Bower executive producer of *Neighbours* cited in Holmwood, 2009).

The article draws the high expectations required of a producer. There is no comfort zone, and you never get to your destination. The domestic serial drama genre producer seems to lack such rigorous production demand. It is not the money or the quality of the actors but how they take control of the situation.

The producers’ regard the local audiences as core and critical to their production’s successes. They are also in support of the respondents in acknowledging the superiority of the foreign soap operas in storytelling. Nevertheless, they are quick to clarify that their challenging work environment is a disadvantage to compete with foreign producers’. In-depth analysis reveals a conflicted producer, who alludes that the cultural underpinnings’ in destinations like Nigeria and India gives them a head start in story development-that Kenya lacks such grounding. Just as the respondents, they decry unprofessionalism in the local acting industry a drawback to their productions. Some of them further criticise the film/media training institutions as the problem to

the film/TV making. They offer inadequate training in writing and technical skills. The industry thus starves of professional film crews. It's a blame game in the broader film production industry, but no one takes the blame.

4.6 Contextualising audience entertainment expectations

The final objective of the study was to investigate how the station executives or programmers contextualise their audience entertainment needs and schedule appropriate programmes for them. The station executives or their nominees are the gatekeepers between the programme producers' and the viewers. They have a good grasp of the two entities. The executives are in constant check of their audience evolving needs through continuous surveys; they might, therefore, be better informed about the audience than the producers'. But first, it was necessary to gauge the participants understanding of them. A closed-ended questionnaire was administered to them; they were to check provided statements which best reflected their perception. If they marked '1' it meant that they strongly agreed with the statement, '2' agree, '3' neutral, '4' disagree and '5' strongly disagree. It was later analysed using SPSS software and the findings reported in percentage scores. The interviews were also carried out among the producers and the station executives. The data was to enrich the survey findings.

4.6.1 Respondents perception towards the TV station executives

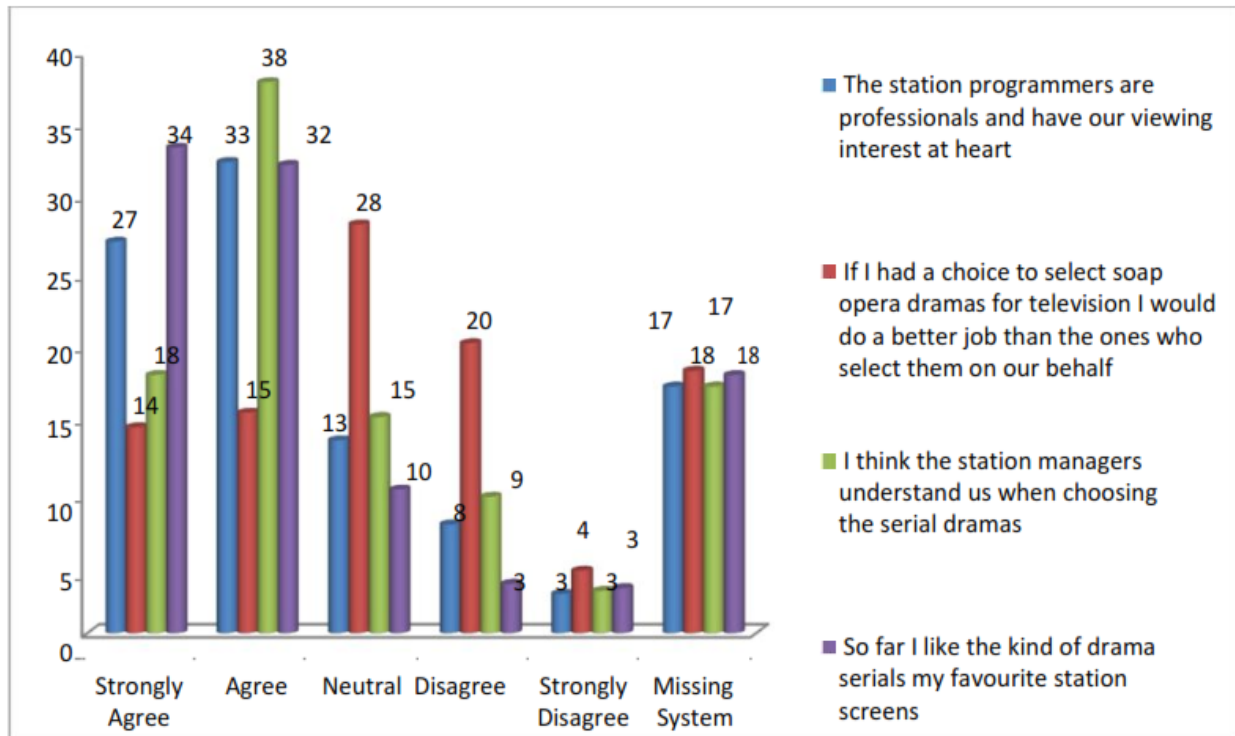


Figure 4. 14: Respondents perception towards the TV station executives
Source: Research Data 2020

Figure 4.14 above indicate that 59.5% (6/10) of the respondents agree that the station executives are professionals and considerate to their viewing interest. However, it is in contrast to 20% (2/10) who disagree that given an opportunity to act as a station executive they could do a better job at the station. Further to that, 55.8% (6/10) is specific that the managers understand them in TV drama serial programming and another 65.8% (7/10) also agree that they like the kind of drama serials their favourite station screens. In the focused group discussions, various arguments were raised in connection to the station executives.

E4: *I think the people who plan for us the programmes are experts...I can't say I can do a better job there is something they know that people like us do not.*

B5: *What they programme for us is just okay.*

*C2: I am not an expert...I don't see the problems with KTN or even Citizen pengine to KBC ndio wagejaribu. the station inkaa old (laugh)
Programme zaozikonashida hapo wagejaribu kurekebisha (I don't have a problem with the programming of other stations like KTN or Citizen, the problem is at KBC if they could correct some of their programmes)*

The above discussion suggests confidence towards the station programmers among the participants. However, they might not have an idea of how the station executives contextualise their tastes and feed it into programming. They consider themselves inadequate to interrogate them regarding them as 'experts. The problem is that such kind of unchallenging attitude could lead to poor programming. However, they are fully aware of the need to improve KBC programming and organisation. The station is a national public station with a mandate to serve the populations irrespective of its commercial interest. The tardiness debate of public broadcast stations in view of the private commercial broadcasters has been debunked by the consistence best rating of BBC 1 overall the channels in the UK (Statista, 2018) therefore the participants have a right to interrogate the performance of KBC programming.

Further to that, the social media platforms feedbacks like face-book, Twitter and Instagram continuously influence programming. Some are quickly readjusted in mid-season to be consistent with the audience needs. The participants' have a positive evaluation of the station executives, which is further reinforced by them.

H12: *I think generally there is an appreciation. Across the board... we even crossed that bridge of having to discuss you know, do Kenyans watch local content? Absolutely. Do they appreciate it? Absolutely. Do they like it? Absolutely. Do they know what they want? Absolutely not. Because even if you ask somebody right now... stop five people in the streets and ask them, what shows would you like us to start local? It will always be, um you know a show like... You know a show like... Churchill Show.*

Many of the studied TV stations operate as commercial institutions. Therefore, they strive to create a balance between excellent programming and economic interest. Nevertheless, they appreciate local programming, but it's a dicey affair even for the station managers to determine successful shows. The participants statements like *'I think the people who plan for us the programmes are experts...I can't say I can do a better...job'* or *'What they programme for us is just okay'*. This corroborates the station executives' argument that one might not be absolute with the audiences' and programming.

4.6.2 The station executives and viewers'

The station executives or their appointees' work within a structured environment to design and schedule appropriate programmes to their viewers. But what are their perspectives on them:

H14: *Our viewers are skewed towards women and children...and we are an aspirational channel so there are dramas we reject...we rely on ratings and therefore producers need to listen to us because we also pay them.*

H12: *Everything here is a bit young. Yeah okay? So that is primarily who we talk to, and we obviously have to also keep in mind a national audience. So even if you go up country you will find us perhaps you know, deep mashinani. But we are also a very peri-urban station.*

H15: *As National public station KBC our mandate is to entertain and meet various audience needs...we might differ with commercial stations that not every programme has to make commercial sense.*

H13: *We are sensitive to audience feedback...we know them and there are instances when programmes have been rested because of audience feedback.*

H16: *The programme producers need to listen to the executives. I am in touch with the viewers by virtue of the office...When their programme is launched they are usually keen on the SMS audience feedback platform.*

H12: *So, when we select content, we keep the audience in mind. And then what sort of stories are national stories? But told well, produced well, strong story lines. But anybody, you know, anybody across the country would be able to watch it and relate. Because it's a story about family, it's a story about love; it's a story about betrayal they are like, yeah something like that happened to me. You know, story about overcoming diversity.*

The above arguments suggest that the studied TV stations predominantly target a young population and more precisely women and children. The commercial interests at the station outweigh everything else apart from KBC. And because of this, the producers work at the behest of the TV station executives. Ang (1991) and Brinker (2015) argue that television series balances the need to turn a profit and also meets the audience's recreational needs. Therefore, the serial drama producers' might not even have a freewheel in implementing their programmes or ideas at the stations, contrary to the widespread industry belief; that the film/TV producers are authoritative, command respect and at times are untouchable. Lallo (2014) reinforces that, the executive producers' influences have led to alteration of storylines and change of characters in the dramas.

4.6.3 The Conundrum of TV station's executives

The TV station executives strive to create a balance between excellent programming, audience satisfaction, and dealing with the content creators -in this case, the producers' and writers. The executives or their representatives share their pertinent concerns through in-depth interviews, more so in TV drama production.

H14: *You know a lot of the challenges we face here even with the local shows is scripting. You know, it's not the filming and the packaging itself. Its sometimes the story line is so weak I think its training. I don't think we've had strong enough institutions that train script writers in television writing and for different genres. Whether you're doing it for reality, you're doing it for drama you're doing it for comedy...because that's different ways of writing. So what you do have is people who did stage, and now I wanna write for TV. It doesn't work. You know it just doesn't work.*

H13: *We don't have very good storywriters either there needs to be a school for scriptwriters for television.*

H12: *Another challenge we have had with our story telling here it's been too Kenyanised. You know. We don't tell a universal story. The only reason Nigerians*

broke out into the market so fast, is that they realized immediately, they can't do movies in vernacular and mother tongue. They had to do them in English. And the minute they started telling African stories in English, the world started to consume them. So I could be in my traditional gear but I'm talking to you in English. We are acting in English. And you see I can relate I can understand. And we sit there and think yeah.

The station executives are concerned that the market is bereft of good TV writers, and this ultimately affects the quality of the drama productions, a result of inadequate training of writers at the universities and colleges. As business entities operating in an open competitive environment, they have the leeway to pick suitable productions from anywhere-including the Telenovelas, which are cheaper. It thus suggests that the local producers could be discriminated in programme selection over the foreign productions. All the locally incorporated TV stations are expected to programme at least 60% of the local content. This government policy was meant to bolster the uptake of local productions by the TV stations; nonetheless, this might not be the case or have the expected impact. There is also concern by some of the station managers that a free market TV industry would eventually improve the quality of local productions to compete universally.

4.6.3.1 TV station executives versus the producers

The producers are trained to think and use their intuition for the success of a television drama. There are moments they are commissioned by a television station to produce a drama serial, and there are times they have to work their way to have their dramas accepted at a station with a signed deal to boast. The station executives heard earlier stated that there is a need for the producers to listen to them. Extracts from in-depth interviews conducted with the producers' reveal some of the insights.

H2: *Does the market produce enough writers to sustain TV drama fiction stories I don't think so? - Does the market have enough work to sustain the writers? maybe not...there is a need for government intervention? Always. Policy, implementation, incentives and compliance*

The producers' have different positions on issues that concern them. To some, without active government intervention, the growth might continue to be sluggish and with little hope for faster growth.

H9: *The wars which cost the independent producers a lot of money...I call them platform wars between the government and them. People lost jobs nothing was happening...the grandstanding has resorted in people going back to their roots to try and see what can work. The war actually has not been the platform but the content when you control that you control the advertising money and everything...and the dynamics has been shifting.... the traditional TV is going to be dead in the next few years...people are moving into phone...the owners of this stations do not want to move they are still on the analogue they think they can still control the audience who has shifted..... there is still suspicion on the side of the big 5...we finally understood we used to be slaves of this TV stations ...I can produce my content and sell it to any one...NTV made the biggest mistake it closed QTV which was supposed to revolutionize...and devolve content...they made elite decisions.*

H4: *I have not done many productions with the local stations but the few I did you would agree with someone thinking you have a deal the next day he is not picking your call. After that is when we went back to pay TV...we just send a link to someone seating in China ...if somebody in Beijing picks up your Swahili show and someone in Nairobi here does not..*

H1: *I think each channel is unique...as a producer you cannot sit and say I cannot be commissioned ...persistent persistent....who say you can only work for NTV, KTN....why not find a model for the small stations. i think in this digital internet the easy way of relying on the big station is a lame excuse.. as producers we need to be creative and ...need a business model.*

H 11: *Purchasing foreign drama is cheaper for the station... they are syndicated selling to so many countries...local productions from my experience local productions had no sponsor....so the cost was quiet high...to produce a local show was more expensive ...that was one of the secrets people could not understand and even the management.... They could not understand to the extent a manager could leave a producer stranded when they went with vehicle to go eat meat in Burma.*

The discussions suggest a frosty working relationship between the producers and the executive producers mainly from the five leading broadcast stations, i.e. Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC. They are concerned over the issues of discrimination and favouritism in awarding and commissioning of productions. However, the opening up of more channels, courtesy of the digital platform has brought relief to some of them, -there are now alternatives. The producers should also take the same route and model their operations to suit the circumstances. The five stations attract the most massive TV audiences', and the deep mistrust does not augur well for the industry. Further engagement with the producers' opened up other avenues of concerns;

H1: *We have a culture crisis in telling stories even for the stations...there is something to learn even from those Nigerians...Indian culture have a way of telling their stories...sheng is a morphing language...I realize sheng is part of our urban culture...Mali was so English could not have connected with some audience... 'Pendo' the house girls will sit and watch. or at times when you use Mombasa Kiswahili can be very alienating.... the politics of language... 'Mali' was high end it resonated well with South Africa when someone may be do something in Kiswahili for the audience and not in English.*

H4: *The changes we have seen is that the local TV stations are talking to us now at least now I have 3 shows if it was not for that...I would be told you continue with your high quality shows while we have our friends produce for us....i think it's a good thing the broadcasters will have to come to us...instead of giving something or going to their friends....yes they do give jobs to their friends ...that's why shows don't go past season 2 ...please tell me a show that has gone beyond season 2...they die... the story is not strong...how much story can you tell about 'mshamba' in house...they die. You can only do up to 5 seasons and that's it. The development process of any story is the most crucial...there was a story we were working for a station distributor platform and at a point me and the director said wait a minute we had to do away with the writers....and even we had issues with some of the characters....we were not feeling the story what of the audience....i am sure it's not going to go beyond season 2.*

But they are also aware that creating a winning story in the Kenyan context is still a daunting task. Nigeria and India are their contemporary in many aspects of development. However, their television drama stories emanate from a rich cultural and traditional underpinning, which is

lacking in Kenya, where even the language choice in a story is still problematic. The study can further suggest that there is a need to bridge the gap between the creators and the station executives. TV stations are the quickest outlets for many of the dramas at the same time a station would be more successful if it sources or commission its programming from a variety of sources and not confine itself to few known entities.

4.6.4 The executive decisions

The station executives or their representative have reasons for the choices they make in managing television programming. They are critical determinants of what finds its way on air.

Through KII, they explain what informs some of their decisions

H13: *We have to balance between our shareholders...good programming and the audience...at times it's not easy to know what's going to work.*

H12: *It's just business and this is what I keep saying ultimately you know. You can cry all you want. KTN, NTV, K24, CITIZEN we are commercial stations. When we make decisions, it is going to be first in the interest of business and it will be second in everybody else's interest.*

H15: *For KBC finance is not much of our problem this is part of KBC functions...that budget is already approved by the management...what is expected the programme is good and can entertain and attract some sponsor but even if that is not achieved-the moment it is approved you don't source any money...the sponsor is not a condition for you to produce one of the KBC mandate is to entertain.*

H13: *we also work on a budget foreign soaps are very cheap affordable. because they will license me for 2 years and then take to another station... for the local producers they want you to buy it...for us we have to have sponsorship to sustain... quality production is expensive the. and the very good show which can give us audience is expensive...cost 300-500 thousand shillings. You cannot spend that daily...foreign I can do 5 days equivalent for 5 shows Mali was the very first local soap well produced. KTN did a similar... it was quite big but very expensive we could not sustain it ...having it on air was not very possible and at some point, the producer demanded more when she realized it was big.... so, we had to let it go.*

H15: *You have never seen any Nigerian movie here ...KBC is the national broadcaster and one of our co value is patriotism...Nigerians are giving you Nigerian culturewhat am I telling Kenyans I should be running Kenyan content... ...we have Kenyan movies....sometime I wanted to have Kenyan movies...after previewing the content was low....such movies you find there are*

very few movies....they cannot run for 13 weeks....the challenge we are lacking quality they are few....and I can tell you quality is a problem ...KISS did not last and they were buying those things cheaply...the actors are there...There are people who purport to be journalist and they are not...then you come to KBC internship you are not even ready....then your father gives you money to buy camera....talent is there at the theatre ...so you want to cut cost like nduti....where will the movie go...so the talent is there.

H14: For instance, when we are paying 200,000 per episode you can afford to pay your actors about 20,000...but the actors are not privy to the contract and some of them tell the artiste they have not been paid by the station. There is a programme we signed with a producer...and were paid 3 months in advance. They signed a different contract with their artist and fired most of them...saying they are stubborn....We rely on ratings from Ipsos synovate and when we tell them to improve on the programme its going down...we gave them a grace period and they never improved so we fired them....they should listen to as....because we give them the money, the problem is even if we give them the money they tell us like we pay about 10,000 per episode when we meet the actors they tell us we are paid 5000 per month ...what I found out most of the producers are bad people they can talk to their actors that one season they will pay them 100,000 about 26 episodes then you find that they have already done 52 episodes and the actors only paid for one season.

H16: Those are some of the things I tell you we don't make very good decisions at times...we took a local serial drama...an outsourced programme somehow when someone comes to pitch the idea and all that they do it so well but at times its not what comes back to us and the viewership suffersso for this programme it wasn't what we expected.... you realize we had put on primetime then we moved it to a lesser time on Saturday....You know by then you have already made the contract...blah..blah..blah with the many talks you have had with the producer...you even have to intervene at some point you feel the programme should move this direction...move this character or the storyline.

H12: To the owners if you make money you make money. If you don't make money you get a chance show us how to turn it around. You still don't turn it around, and we gotta cut costs. It's as simple as that. This entire year has been bad, and if we are not careful again by the way even before we come to the next quarter we'll have to go through another phase of cost cutting. And you know the first thing that happens after that. First we look at content. From content we move to people. And it's sad. This is what it means in this market. If advertising, if the advertising cycle and the advertising environment does not start to keep pace with how television works. You know if you still want to buy a sponsorship for two hundred and fifty thousand or for half a million, it's not going to be sustainable long term it's just not a sustainable model. That entire model must be relooked at. And I don't think anyone is willing to critically re-look at the model. It has to start from the media owners.

The five television stations, i.e. Citizen TV, NTV, KTN, K24 and KBC, are commercial stations apart from KBC which operates a hybrid system as public and also aggressively seek advertising revenue. Therefore, the station managers' actions can be judged from those positions. They have to balance the interest of the shareholders, the audience and the producers. What is clear is that the commercial interest overrides everything else - does their business make sense? There have been retrenchment and reorganisation at Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, and K24, and they all cite financial challenges. It should, therefore, be clear to the producers' that their serial drama ideas or proposal have to demonstrate financial agility, that it can attract sponsors. In other words, there is nothing like 'pure entertainment'. The situation is made difficult by the marketers or the advertisers, the underwriters of the stations; they also influence programming. They exert pressure on the stations by offering minimum advertising rates, which do not make economic sense. The financial burden is further aggravated by the individual producers' who fail to deliver on contracts, forcing cancellation on episodes before completion, which translates to loss. And although, KBC operates from a different platform of 'patriotism' as a public station and disregarding 'foreign content' like Nigerian movies they contradict themselves when they cannot locate quality movies in the Kenyan market. The study can further infer that to succeed in a serial drama production; there is a need to understand the broadcast operations, the audience attraction and the station manager's position.

The market is also skewed towards women and children. But programmes require money to produce, and advertising is a good source of this revenue. However, many television advertisers core target are women and children. The stations, therefore, have developed skewed demography in favour of women and children to tap their market. Though for the National broadcaster like

KBC, this is not an automatic case. Part of their mandate is to serve a broad spectrum of the public. The advertisers, therefore, have a say in what the audience can watch.

4.6.5 Summary

This chapter has analysed and presented findings on the context of viewership and the production of Television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya. The research was interested in four study areas, i.e. to find out the context under which serial drama fiction audiences watch the programmes in an urban setting; secondly, it examined the audiences' entertainment value of local and foreign-produced serial drama fiction. Besides, it explored the producers' understanding of the audiences' entertainment needs; and finally, it was to determine how the TV station executives contextualise the audience and producers' expectations in serial drama programming.

The data was collected through a mixed-method approach technique, where instruments like structured survey questionnaires, FGDs, in-depth interviews and KII were used. The field data collection was conducted in three constituencies of Nairobi, i.e. Kibra, Makadara and Embakasi West, followed by FGDs and in-depth interviews.

First, the context of viewership and production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi Kenya is that, the audiences perceive a transformation in the way they receive and watch the TV programmes. This is as a result of the introduction of digitalization in broadcast transmission. The viewers perceive their access to the once free service as a 'gain reversal'. In the findings, 66% of the urban viewers indicate that they pay a monthly fee to access the multiple TV signals, against 34% who claim to have free access. Nevertheless, this is happening under economic difficulties, with some of the viewers' feeling financially constrained for 'entertainment'. The

uses and gratification theory argues that audiences have a choice in the selection of the media to use (Blumler & Katz, 1974). However, the Nairobi viewers are sometimes constrained due to the economic and the changing digital environment. The following anecdotes, captures some of their concerns; *‘The TV has become expensive in this country you pay for everything they say that there should be free stations like KTN, NTV Citizen but those are the first station they take and leave for you KBC... (Chuckle...)*

The technological advancement and innovation in digital broadcast transmission necessitated the changes in broadcast systems in many parts of the world (Oxford Business Group, 2014). In chapter one, the thesis argues about the establishment of two competing broadcast ideologies in different regions of the world (The public broadcast and the commercial broadcast system). After independence, Kenya adopted the public broadcasting system, under the then VOK. The station was free to access after one purchased a TV set. The station has evolved and is now known as KBC. It appears that the commercial model (capitalism) is thriving over the public broadcasting system. The audience disquiet over the introduction of a new technology within the FTA stations is a common phenomenon. Becker, Gambaro, Crisnir and Cuotinho (2015) observes that the multiple media outlets (pay-tv, and internet capability) in Brazil resulted in drastic audience drop for the FTA stations. The industry had to adapt by reforming the programming schedules and transmedia productions.

Second, the context of viewership is that the majority of the serial drama fiction audiences are of low social-economic status, and engage in activities like retail, trade and sales; 37% of them earn between 5000-20,000 Kenya shillings. It compares to the low Nairobi monthly family expenditure of 7200 shillings (KNBS-SID, 2013). However, they are highly literate, with a combined 90.6% either possessing a secondary to tertiary education. This is a departure from the

low education status associated with the genre viewers. The audiences do not consider their modest economic engagement as 'employment' and thus coincide with Livingstone (1988) observation that the genre is popular with the unemployed.

Another context of viewership is that many the audiences prefer to watch factual programming (49%) and Movies (50%). On serial drama programming, 36% of the females consider it their favourite programme in comparison to 15% of the male audiences. Citizen Television is the favourite channel to many of the Nairobi urban audiences (43%) in comparison to the four other free to air stations (NTV, KTN, KBC and A24) which also programme serial drama fictions. A viewer cites the reason for preferring to watch Citizen television as follows;

I just like the way they are organized the news and the kind of programmes they give us...you know it feels local....it employs young people and some of them like in Machachari are...our own.... (Familiar faces from the neighborhood)

The audience like the station as they perceive it as 'local', trusted and reflecting their 'lived experiences'. The irony is, it programmes the highest and most comprehensive range of the foreign serial drama fictions which other competitors have started to emulate. The station popularity is further reinforced by regular market surveys by KARF which rank it as the most popular free to air TV station in Kenya. It could also suggest that the imported serial drama fictions propel the station popularity. However, the extended aspects of cultural proximity theory (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005) fits in with the audience description of the station as 'more local'. There is a 'homely' perception towards their programmes, in comparison to the competitive stations, thus gives it an edge in popularity.

The study also sought to gain an understanding of the extent of entertainment value in the domestic TV serial drama productions and the causes of their dissatisfaction in comparison to foreign productions. The majority of the audiences are dissatisfied with the domestic productions in comparison to foreign productions. They cite the poor quality of the story (script) and acting as drawbacks. 29% (3/10) of the participants regard the domestic productions as appealing against 50% (5/10) who would rather watch the foreign serials. Some of the comments like *'these things happen in real life and there is something to learn.'* in regard to the foreign productions against statements like *'we don't know how to tell stories...you know what's going to happen...'*. The scripts could be lacking interesting idea concepts, proper dialogue development flow and suspense one of the producers expressed this concerns *'..i cannot get good consistent scriptwriters, I get people who write very shallow scripts...which cannot excite...local writers lack realism...we are fake...'* Scholars emphasise proper dialogue development considering nuances like syntagmatic gaps (Allen, 1985; Fiske, 2013). The gaps create suspense, and for the viewer to contemplate what happens next? The conversation is further cascaded with friends and colleagues. The dialogue is closely aligned to screen performance (acting).

Majority of the viewers (44%) find the foreign actors more believable in their roles while 23% are satisfied with the acting performance of the local actors. The discussions on the question elicited comments such as; *'.. these people are experienced and they put all their feelings in the acting...atufanyagi hivyo (we don't accomplish such...'* Additional in regards to the domestic acting, *'In Kenya it's obvious the way they act on TV you just know one is going to throw a punch...it is predictable...it's not unexpected'* .The audiences look for 'genuineness' and 'believability' in the story and the acting (Ang, 1985; Livingstone, 1988) Some of the producers argue in the chapter that the country lacks TV/Film acting schools, to hone the talents of

prospective actors for the benefit of the industry. They have been struggling to convert and perfect theater performers to TV drama actors. Thus, there are not many actors, who can be referred to as professional actors. The casting directors, as was discussed in chapter two support these observations. They have been facing challenges, to find ready actors/talents for various film/drama roles.

The other objective was to explore the producers' understanding of the TV serial drama audience entertainment needs. The audience lack confidence in the domestic serial drama producers to entertain them in a similar manner as the foreign producers. Focusing on storyline and acting, two critical aspects of the production; 52% prefer the foreign producers' approach to the story treatment, while 35% are satisfied with the local producers' approach. Parallel to that, 58% of the audiences and 42% respectively regard the foreign producers' as better in auditioning actors, in comparison to the local producers. Some of the audiences' concerns are captured in the following statements; *'...we have not been able to tell stories in a Kenyan way...and we always tell our local stories in a foreign way so we can't compete with them like that.. they will always be better...'* The argument is that, a story can be universal but it will be more attractive to the audience if they can detect aspects of their lifestyles (Silverstone, 1988, Straubhaar, 1991). The participants are yearning for local unique and creative productions. The domestic producers are unable to provide them with such as they have raised in the comments. *'...The producers need to have their own style not trying to do like Mexico or the Philippines they have found those love stories ...in fact I don't think we can do such kind of stories we are good in these comedies like Auntie boss, papa.... we are just comedians'*. In chapter two some of the film/TV drama critics were critical of the producers' predictable and repetitive nature of their story developments.

The participants are raising the same issues as part of their dissatisfaction with the local productions. Successful foreign serial dramas like *East Enders* and *Coronation Street* rely on a string of writers, who are knowledgeable about the genre formula and can make a quick turnaround on a story (Kennedy, 2012; Stott, 2013). However, it is not in line with the domestic serial drama production findings. Many rely on single writers, some with no experience of serial fiction writing, and double up as writers in other kinds of TV programmes. As discussed, the serial dramas are well served by a string of writers, to keep up with the creative demands of multiple plotlines.

Further to that, there is no strong writing tradition among some local serial drama producers, they simply commission the work. Some of the successful American television dramas are hinged on a robust producer-writer psyche (Newcomb & Alley, 1983). Many of the domestic producers believe that they have a good understanding of their viewers' entertainment needs in a serial drama production as much as they regard them as complex. This further means that, they are not in a clear picture of their role, power and expectations in a production. As producers', they are expected to work through the 'maze' to find meaning and solutions to a production problem. They should not quickly dismiss the level of writing, acting or even technical standards of the team they work with as a draw backs, but should strive to find a solution to it. The inference is that the local drama producers do not want to take the blame for the production shortcoming in the industry.

Majority of the audiences, 59.5% (6/10) highly regard the station executives' as professionals and considerate to their viewing interests. Specifically, 65.8% (7/10) also approve of the kind of serial dramas their favourite station screens. Some of their discussion comments were as follow: *'...I think the people who plan for us the programmes are experts...I can't say I can do a better*

job there is something they know that people like us do not...so far I like the programmes'. These findings also suggested that the station executives they refer to, are also in charge of the five popular stations (*Citizen TV, NTV, KTN, K24, KBC*) as indicated by regular KARF audience surveys (discussed in the previous chapters). Though the audiences relationships with the station executives' appear to be stable, the executives disconnect with the producers' (the core creators of serial dramas) indirectly influence what they watch.

The station executive has two competing roles; to entertain the audiences and meet the station commercial interests (a public station and non-profit, could be supported by the government and other well-wishers). The executive, buys, selects commission programmes based on knowledge and skills, some gleaned from the regular market surveys. They hold sway on what the viewers can watch. In the Kenyan context, the foreign serial dramas are popular with them because of their affordability, attractiveness and fairly good advertising returns. There is a stiff competition among the FTA stations for audiences, and to turn in profits for the shareholders. However, there is a perception among some of the producers' and viewers alike, that the foreign serials receive more publicity than the domestic productions giving them an edge in visibility and viewership. In chapter two, the study observed a disconnect between a drama production team and the marketers (Wamuyu, 2018), which could support such an assertion.

The context of viewership and the production of serial drama fiction, therefore, occur under a conundrum of challenges and inadequacies. The local audiences are yet to appropriate many of the domestic serial drama productions to entertain and solve their problems the way they turn to foreign programmes. In addition, there is a frosty relationship between the producers and the station executives/ programmers. The producers perceive the station executives as a hindrance to the development of the domestic serial drama genre; by awarding contracts to undeserving

acquaintances and meddling in their production processes. However, in return, the station executives cite multiple issues they have to deal with- there is a shortage of competent TV writers which emanates from inadequate training offered in colleges and universities. Further to that, there is a need to satisfy the shareholder's profit motive, deal with the producers' negative perception towards them, and at the same time appeal to their advertisers and audiences' needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter reviews and presents the summary of the study, the implications derived from the problem statement, the objectives, the study methodology, findings, conclusion, recommendations as well as the author's contribution to knowledge.

The study, 'The context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya' was hooked on the following objectives; first, it was to determine the context of the viewership of television serial drama fiction among Nairobi audience in Kenya. Second, it was to gain an understanding of the extent of entertainment value in the domestic TV serial drama productions and the causes of their dissatisfaction in comparison to foreign productions. Third, the study was to explore the producers' understanding of the TV serial drama audiences' entertainment needs and fourth; it was to determine how the TV station executives contextualise the audience and producers' entertainment value expectations in serial drama programming. The study collected data through the mixed method approach and respondents reached via sampling processes. This chapter outlines the key summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the findings

Chapter one of the study establishes the wide acceptance of the entertainment value of the TV serial drama genre. Thus, it was essential to gain an understanding of the context of viewership and the production of serial drama fiction in the Nairobi urban setting.

First, among its key findings is that the Nairobi urban audience finds a better context of viewership within the foreign serial drama productions. The audiences choose media according to their needs and the gratification they seek (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Thus the Nairobi viewers are driven by programmes with well-choreographed storyline development and acting which is perceived as more meaningful, believable and reflective of lifestyles in comparison to the local productions (see section 5.2.1). The domestic production dissatisfaction is marked by perceived weak storyline development and poor screen performance of actors.

Second, the viewing/signal reception environment is changing for the Nairobi urban viewers. It's now costly for them to access FTA TV services. The majority of the audiences (66%) currently pay a subscription fee to watch their favourite TV stations as opposed to 34% who still rely on free to air television (FTAs). As argued in chapter one, television was once considered free thus the term FTAs (free to air). However, paradoxically the uses and gratification theory only apply to where the viewers can make choices from multiple media channels. In the findings, some of the audiences were unable to be selective and could access only one free KBC channel due to their financial constraint.

Third, in connection to the second finding, the financial implication of television programming access is as a result of the technological developments in the broadcast industry in Kenya. The digital transmission arrangements are replacing the analogue broadcast systems. Kenya, as a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), was obligated to migrate to the digital transmission platform (Oxford Business Group, 2014). Digitalisation, enables multiple channels, thus expanding programming outputs. The irony is that the Nairobi urban viewer is inundated with 'excess programme choices' but with the limited financial ability to access them.

This is in contrast to Elis (2000) argument of the era of ‘scarcity,’ when in the earlier broadcasting period, there were few stations and programmes but free to air.

Fourth, the Nairobi urban audiences are attracted to familiar narrative themes touching on social-economic issues affecting their community. The study indicates that 80% of the respondents agree that the serial dramas they watch reflect a broader societal truth. This finding is in line with Silverstone (1988), Modleski (1994) argument on the universality of serial dramas story themes. The difference is in the perception of depth of the story treatment as pointed out by one of the respondents; thus; ‘...*We have not been able to tell stories in a Kenyan way...and we always tell our local stories in a foreign way.*’

Livingstone (1988) points out that the success and popularity of the British serial dramas like *The East Enders*, *Coronation Street* and *Brookside* among the domestic audiences is anchored on their unique local context, identified and recognised by the viewers as reflecting their culture and problems. Therefore, foreign productions like the American serials do not similarly appeal to them. Enzeogu (2013) adds that some of the British viewers of *Coronation Street* are thrilled to ‘hear local’. The particularity of these serials is their appeal. However, these observations deviate from the experiences of viewing the Kenyan domestic productions as expressed by one of the viewers’ thus; ‘*We have not been able to tell stories in a Kenyan way.... always tell our local stories in a foreign way..*’

The implication is that the origin of the story does not matter provided it answers to the audiences’ recognised social appeal. For instance, the majority of the urban respondents (52%) prefer to watch *Citizen television*; in comparison to *KTN* 27%, *NTV* 14.2%, *K24* 5.8% and *KBC* 5.5%. The station has a sizable array of foreign serial drama fictions scheduled together with

local programmes. One of the respondents captures the experience of watching Citizen television as follows; ‘.. *they are organised in what they give us...it feels local*’. Here once more, the word ‘local’ is reiterated as an aspect of attraction. This is in line with a more profound sense of cultural proximity theory which states that, apart from the preference of a story locality and identity, other nuances like the perception frame of the narrative could make a difference (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

Fifth, the Nairobi urban audiences find more entertainment value in the foreign serial drama fiction in comparison to domestic productions. 50% of the respondents perceive the foreign serials as more real, genuine and full of suspense. They attribute this to the quality of the dialogue script and believable screen performance (acting). In contrast, only 29% of the respondents find the local stories concept and writing style engaging. The audience engagement and the producers’ response was underpinned by the active audience framework (Halls, 1980). Hall’s encoding and decoding captures the audiences’ reading in either of the three modes; dominant, negotiated and oppositional, the producers’ target a dominant reading position with their productions. The finding is that, the local producers have not achieved the audiences’ dominant reading mode in their story reception and thus a need for them to revise their strategy. This reinforces the discussions on the poor perceptions of the domestic film/TV content (KFC, 2013 & CA, 2016) Local drama producers’ like Langiri (2017) further point out the challenges of finding talented actors. The foreign stories development approach is in line with Ang (1985) and Fiske (2013) argument that an appealing serial drama story should contain segments of suspense to keep the audience guessing and anxious of the next thread of action in what they refer to as creating syntagmatic gaps in the story.

Sixth, there is a gender difference in the selection and watching of TV programmes. The males prefer to watch factual programmes like news and documentaries, while urban female audiences prefer to watch non-violent/ family-based stories. For instance, 36% of the female respondents prefer to watch drama programmes in comparison to 15% of males. The Nairobi urban audiences programme selectivity is in line with the uses and gratification theory, which takes an active audience perspective (Blumler & Katz, 1974); Abelman & Atkin, 2011). It is a versatile theory with resurgent use in the new digital dispensation (Sandars, & Limprose, 2013; Shade et al., 2015). Other findings are that the urban audiences select to watch more of the foreign serial drama fictions because they offer better entertainment than their domestic equivalence. Besides, the audiences quickly build a more personal identity with some of the story characters. The digital revolution is transforming the reception, distribution and consequently the production of drama programmes. The next section summarises the position of the urban viewers in connection to the production, producers and the station executives.

As has been highlighted in the preceding chapters of this study, the television serial drama fiction is popular programming to many stations around the world. However, in the Kenyan context, the foreign productions have, on many occasions, taken the lead in terms of audience share, in comparison to the domestic productions. Interestingly, what is fictional has survived and evolved through newspaper pullouts, magazine sequels, radio soaps, and to television (Nussbaum, 2012). Although the genre is a multibillion-dollar industry, Kenya is yet to fully benefit economically from serial productions (as discussed in chapter two). In this regard, government intervention has been in licensing and regulation. The FTA stations are now mandated to programme 60% of the domestic content. The expectation is that the 60% policy will spur the growth of local content production, and safeguard the art and culture of the country. This policy aims to increase the

quantity in domestic content production and consumption. However, the findings indicate that the low quality within these productions is a source of dissatisfaction. There is need for a revised policy to capture quality elements like scripting and acting. These are critical elements to hook the audiences. Interview excerpts from the participants capture their reflections of the foreign serial drama fiction scripting as follows;

There is a way they lead you to the stories ...and way they are written; they are real...the poor get trodden but, in the end, they win... They are advanced in the way they are written. They seem to require more time to write, which our producers might not have time for. However, we are good in comedies like....

TV serial drama scholar Wilson (2008, p.75), argues that the 'TV serial is deliberately structured, with well-arranged sequences of story delays to maximise the viewing pleasure. She references a quote from nineteenth-century British serialist Willkie Collins, in saying; '*make them laugh...make them cry....and make them wait*. Another scholar, Naussbaum (2012), argues that the success of serial drama production is built around the centrality of the 'Cliffhanger' which she describes as climax cracked in half. She further says that, over time, the writer and audience develop a bond where the latter accept to be 'lied' to by the writer, and thus curiosity and anxiety create pleasure.

From the two arguments, it is clear that an excellent serial drama producer needs to possess some natural intuition. For instance, at what point does one break from a scene or what dialogue delay will create the most impact. These should be the concerns of the producers. Indeed, one of the executive producer captured the above arguments as follows:

'You know a lot of the challenges we face here even with the local shows is scripting. You know, it is not the filming and the packaging itself. Its sometimes the storyline is so weak...predictable...and obvious...they should keep us guessing! I think its training. I don't think we have had strong enough institutions that train scriptwriters in television writing and for different genres'

From the study findings, two things are evident; First, the problem of weak writing is cyclical and seems to emanate from a mediocre foundation at the training level and also poor or limited linkage with the practitioners in the field.

Second, within the local production circuit, the writers are usually single contracted persons. Many successful serial dramas, like *Neighbours* and *The East Enders*, rely on a string of writers who brainstorm on episodes, a practised norm of maintaining refreshed serial ideas (Kennedy, 2012).

To entirely experience the pleasure of watching a TV serial drama, the script should have a strong link to the screen performance or the characterisation. The participants describe the acting in many of the foreign serial shows they watch as genuine, real and encompassing, especially in comparison with the performance in the local dramas. For instance, a comment in a scene from *La Gata*, A Mexican telenovela was as follows;

You have seen that...The man has expressed himself very well in that love scene we can't....say I love you on set and achieve that... these people are experienced, and they put all their feelings in the acting...atu fanyagi hivyo(we don't accomplish such)

Ang (1985) argues that acting in a serial drama fiction should mimic reality as close as possible to connect with the audience. She further illustrates this by a statement from her book *Watching Dallas* (1985) where a participant describes, one of the characters in the following manner;

'Sue Ellen is definitely my favourite; she has a psychologically, believable character.

In the Kenyan case, the following excerpt captures the participants' perception of the local actors in relations to their foreign counterparts:

They lack passion the way you would see Nigerians.... one can be a villager and looks like one and one time you see the person as a rich city guy...in Kenya, you will know the person is going to throw a punch...we can't say some of the things well...movements could be exaggerated.

In Kenya, acting is not a profession as such...there are even acting schools in the developed countries, so they take it seriously...here it could be a job because your uncle is the producer...we want to see people acting well and can talk about them like some of those foreign ones.

The suggestion is that, though the audiences can differentiate fiction from reality programming. They want to 'lose themselves' in the serial world to enjoy the viewing, but they can only achieve this if the actors, totally involve themselves in the performance and understand the implication of each inch of action on set. Turner (1979, p. 488) refers to this kind of performance as 'willing suspension of disbelief', totally engrossing oneself in the act. The participants further mean that a good actor is one who inures oneself in the performance, which should include making the right gestures and moves. The local actors have not perfected these acts of performing for television as their foreign counterparts. The producers further corroborate these as discussed in chapter four, where they cite the challenges of reorienting their theatre performer artists into television actors. For instance, countries like Mexico, Nigeria, and Turkey have thriving TV/Film acting schools. Calvo (2001) observes that Centro de Educacion Artistica, in Mexico, has a rigorous recruitment process of TV/Film trainee drama actors. For example, 5000 applicants' from around the country could be whittled down to 45. He further clarifies that; the

majority of the graduates make the core actors of the many Telenovelas watched around the world.

The following section will highlight summary of the findings based on the study objectives.

5.2.1 Context of audience viewership

The first objective was to determine the context of viewership of television serial drama fiction among urban audiences in Nairobi. The findings indicate that there are different experiences and context of television viewership for the Nairobi urban audiences' in Kenya.

First, the Nairobi serial drama audiences are unable to fully situate themselves in the contexts of the locally produced stories. For instance, a viewer makes the following comments about *Mali* a domestic production:

Mali iko sawa (Mali is Okay) ...but its high end in away...mambo zao siyo za kawaida (their issues are not regular) the way they fight about the property...they are things which happen to those who have...they act well but too high...

The finding infers that the viewer cannot position herself in the story. The serial drama fiction is enjoyable and meaningful to many audience around the world because they can learn and find meaning in the story (see chapter one). Ang (1985) observes that the Dallas serial drama was popular because of how it drew out familiar aspects of the audience life, for example, the deficiencies of the husband behaviour. The finding is in line with Halls (1980) active audience theory and the viewers interpretation mode. As was discussed in chapter two, the viewers engagement with the serials is also a source of empowerment, the female audiences find pleasure and support the villain soap characters that take 'fictional revenge' on social systems that diminishes women power. (Modleski, 1984; Allen, 1985 & Hobson, 1982).

Second, the context of viewership is that Nairobi urban audiences engage with the serial drama in an environment mired with weak TV drama content development. In Kenya the problem with the serial drama fiction performances emanates from an industry which lacks proper avenues for skills development, and professional management of the talents as enumerated by one of the producers;

‘...we don’t have a performance school where do those who get degrees go to...you call auditions they don’t come..’

Thus, it reinforces Turner’s (1979) argument in chapter two that the audience expects the actors to immerse themselves in the performance in what he refers to as ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ and that failure to be believable breaks the ‘flow’. Eder (2010) further supports the point that the text triggers acting and is best-understood as a construct of real people. The Nairobi urban audiences are, therefore, able to identify enjoyable nuances and reject performances which do not meet their needs. The producers should accordingly conduct preproduction studies on the targeted serial drama audiences to gauge their perception and expectations of the story before embarking on the production.

Third, the context of viewership is that the domestic TV audiences have been shaped by competing broadcast interest over time. Two competing broadcast ideologies were established in different regions of the world (The public broadcast and the commercial broadcast system) as was discussed in chapter one. For Kenya the media environment has been fluid oscillating from public, to commercial and currently practices both. Similarly, various historical space indicates a different approach. For instance, in the colonial period, the industry was discriminative and racial (Faringer, 1991). After independence, the broadcast station was more of a government

mouthpiece, and the programme content and creativity were closely monitored and controlled (Kareithi, 2003; Kingara, 2014). The study can infer that the weak programming foundation at the pioneer broadcast station in Kenya (KBC) has had a long-term impact on programmes production and consumption. This may explain why the KBC station continues to create uncompetitive productions and is the least preferred by the viewers at 5.5%. A respondent intimate that; *' I watch it...when I have not renewed my Go TV ...laughter...its just there, and the staff looks old.'*

The other context of viewership in Nairobi, is the emerging digital divide, due to the changing broadcast technological advancement. The study indicates that 66% of the urban audiences' pay a monthly fee to access the multiple TV signals including what is referred to as FTAs (Free to air stations) Nyabuga & Booker (2013) observe that the Kenyan media industry was liberalised in 1989, followed by the digital migration. As argued in chapter two, television access has social economic impact. In an empirical study in a Brazilian rural community, Ferrara et al (2012) found that, the increase and continued access to television serial drama viewing contributed to population reduction within the community. The audiences admired and modeled their lives towards their screen characters and stories, which regularly portrayed, smaller families, better educated characters and the women working outside the home. Therefore, a lack of television access as pointed out by some of the Nairobi viewers might negatively impact their lives as enumerated by one of the participants;

There is no free to air TV because even the top box they say is not free even the stations which are not supposed to be paid for every month ...it's not easy to pay always so when you are broke it is the first thing you let go

The contradiction is that there is a gain reversal to the urban viewer, who now pays for what was once a free entertainment. Also, the commercial model seems to be upstaging the public broadcast services under a challenging economic environment, where free access would be a boon to the viewer. The average income for the majority of the urban viewers' (37%) is between 5000-20,000 Kenya shillings, which is within the Nairobi monthly family expenditure of 7200 shillings (KNBS-SID, 2013). However, one of the audiences' found it a challenge to sustain a payment system under economic difficulties;

The TV has become expensive in this country, they say there should be free stations like KTN, NTV...when you have not paid they leave you with KBC.....so do you eat or pay for TV.

This implies that television is consumed under a family financial constraint; where the regular subscription competes with other household expenditure and thus defeat the essence of mitigating 'hardship' through entertainment. The digital impact on the consumers is in line with Marshal Mc Luhan (1964) argument that new technological innovations is critical in the reception of a communication message.

The findings further indicate that the audiences are attracted by factual (News 49%) and fictional (Movies, 50%) programming almost on an equal basis. Besides, 43% of them nominate Citizen Television as their favourite channel, once more reinforcing regular market surveys which rank it as the most popular free to air TV station in Kenya. They cite various reasons for preferring the station.

I just like the way they have organised the news and the kind of programmes they give us...you know it feels local...it employs young people, and some of them like in Machachari are...our own.... (Familiar faces from the neighbourhood)

Nevertheless, audiences have multiple channels and programmes to watch. They are active, and settle on one which promises them the greatest pleasure as illustrated in excerpts like '*... I just like the way they are organised, the news and the kind of programmes they give us...*' This approach is hinged on the uses and gratification argument (Blumler, & Katz, 1974; Abelman, & Atkin, 2011) as discussed in chapter two. The above context was brought about by digital migration. However, this selectivity and choice is only possible to those who can afford the monthly payment demanded by the digital platform consortia, thus the uses and gratification (Blumler & Katz, 1974) is impractical to those who are constrained by access.

Fifth, the context of the audience viewership in the Nairobi urban area is the choice of the station they watch. Majority of the urban audiences prefer to watch Citizen TV (52%). The other popular stations are as follows: *KTN* (27%), *NTV*(14.2%), *K24* 5.8%, and *KBC* (5.5%). One of the audiences of the station describes the relationship and viewing experience as follows: '*...it feels local...*' and that some of the actors... '*are our own*'. The preference for Citizen television in contrast to other local stations offering almost similar programmes can be understood from a different level of cultural proximity argument. Scholars like La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005) talks of a multi layered cultural proximity approach. They observe that even within a homogeneous cultural community there could be further differences of identities which could range from dress, language, gestures and even perceptions. Thus, the Citizen television circumstances could be billed as a case of more profound levels of cultural proximity to differentiate it with other television stations programming. There is a strong emotional attachment reinforced by statements like they also *recognise our actors*. This anecdote is in reference to the acting talents the audience is familiar with in a neighbourhood.

Sixth, the context of the audience viewership in the Nairobi urban setting is specific to the serial drama genre programming; the majority of the audiences are female at 36% in comparison to male at 15%. The feminine viewers indicate that they partly like the programmes because they contain less violent scenes as intimated by one of the viewers;

You learn about how others live... you can watch them with the family and are not violent...

The males, on the other hand, are dismissive of the serials and refer to them as *Vipindi za wanawake (Female programmes)*. There is a hint of patriarchy ideologies, so gender politics and discourse is also present in viewership of the programmes. This further reinforces gender differences in television use (Nathanson, Perse & Ferguson, 1997). However, the audience further engage with the programme for various reasons,

When I don't have a job...at times I do this when with friends...some of these things teach us how to live with others and highlight other people's problems.

The audiences of serial drama fiction, do not just seek pure entertainment from the programmes. They find them informative, and the narratives assist them in solving some of their daily problems. The programmes are thus an excellent avenue to promote female issues. The findings suggest that the Nairobi urban female viewers reflect similar trends from earlier studies. Scholars like Modleski (1994), Ang, (1985) and Puertas (2005) regard the genre as a female programme. They argue that from their studies, the respondents are mostly female, and they also form the most extensive fan base of the audience sizes.

The final context is that a majority, 29% of the audiences' watch the programmes alone against 18% who indicate that they watch with friends. This finding is in contradiction to Morley (1999) observation that watching television mostly took place in a group or at a family level. Ellis

(2000) reinforces this line of thought in adding that in the earlier years of broadcast, many homes had a single TV set with limited channels and programmes. There is a possibility that the urban viewer is shifting to a new paradigm away from 'family viewing'.

5.2.2 Understanding the entertainment value of the domestic TV serial drama in comparison to the foreign productions

The second objective of the study was to gain an understanding of the extent of the audience entertainment value in the domestic TV serial drama productions and the causes of their dissatisfaction in comparison to foreign productions.

First, the findings are that the domestic audiences highly regard foreign creators as better producers than the locals. For instance, 52% of the viewers highly perceive the foreign producers in their approach to story treatment in comparison to 35% who vouch for the domestic producers'. Similarly, 58% and 42% respectively regard the foreign producers' as better in auditioning actors in comparison to the local producers. Thus generally, the audiences perceive the domestic producers' as less skilled to entertain them in contrast to the foreign producers. To them they lack in fundamental production areas such as writing, auditioning and directing actors. Also, respondents even suggest that the domestic serial drama fiction producers should concentrate on other drama genres instead of the serial fictions. The implication is that the local producers have to work harder to gain confidence in the domestic viewers.

Second, the audiences are selective and find more value in specific programmes. This finding suggests that audiences choose media according to their needs and gratification they seek (Blumler & Katz, 1974) For instance, the viewers' preferences for selected programmes were as

follows: *La Gata* (50.4%), *Muchacha Italiana* (50.6%) *Mali* (34%) and *The Tussle* (9.4 %). A viewer expressed his viewing experience as follows:

'We are lower, we cannot compare our dramas with Mexicans...Nigerians and even South Africa...It is like they have better writers and directors....I can see where the story is heading...and here there's little excitement.....we are only good at doing sketches...they know how to tell a story, it feels real...we can only be good in simple comedy...'

The audiences' regard the local stories as predictable, good storytelling is systematic, in scene by scene a story should intrigue and surprise in what Allen (1994) refers to as syntagmatic gaps- these are carefully styled breaks (suspense) in the plotlines, which should invite the viewers to participate in the construction of meaning. A viewer further said that;

I watch the Mexicans and even the Philippines',... even just what we have watched ...you see like in La Gata...simple story but you feel sorry for the character...and learn that some of these things happen around us...and you know what to do under such experiences....

For instance, what could be referred to as 'foreign stories' in some of the serials is not regarded as such by the participants since they create similar local connections and effects like any other familiar domestic story; statements like '*... and learn that some of these things happen around us...*' Thus, it also reinforces the arguments of narrative universality (Silverstone, 1981; Newcomb, & Alley, 1983). The uses and gratification theory is thus still relevant in trying to understand broadcast audiences.

The Nairobi urban viewers, regard foreign actors as more accomplished in their screen performance, and attractive to watch than the local creations. Their screen performance is considered real, believable, and the respondents identify with some of the actors' situations. In

this case, they lose themselves in the world of character without noticing it as a performance, as expressed below

umeone hiyo scene..yani jama anajiexpress ya ukweli atuwezi fanya love scene we cannot like say...I love you on the set kama hivyo (You have seen how the man has expressed himself very well in that love scene we can't... I love you onset) ... these people are experienced, and they put all their feelings in the acting...atufanyangi hivyo (we don't accomplish such)

In contrast, *Mali* is regarded as one of the most successful local serial drama productions in recent times in Kenya. However, the audiences are lukewarm especially when they make statements like '*...it's okay...*' In general, the findings indicate that only 29% regard the local productions as more appealing in comparison to 50% who vouch for foreign productions.

Third, the entertainment value of the Nairobi urban viewer can be anchored on the uses and gratification theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) The audiences predispose themselves not only to be entertained but to gain some information and knowledge in a show. A statement from one of the viewers like '*...you learn something...these things happen in life...*' The comment intimates the centrality of the story where some of the audiences seek to 'enter a storyline' which reflects a simple lifestyle. This is in line with Sabido (1980) argument that the viewer inures in a story he/she enjoys and become part of it. Thus, the origin of a story might not be significant, but learning and finding meaning is critical to the attraction. To the domestic viewers,' the foreign productions fulfil these needs better in comparison to the local creations.

Fourth, the Nairobi urban viewer detests serial drama fictions produced in indigenous languages. Only 8% would consider watching the programme in their vernacular language, in contrast to 74% who indicate that they would prefer dramas in English. Mustapha (2014) argues that the

English language hegemony has complicated the indigenous languages use. After years of programming imported English serial dramas, courtesy of the local FTA stations, false perception and impression have been created in the minds of the viewers that individual storylines can better be contrived in English rather than the vernacular languages as expressed by some of the participants.

I think all my life I speak English or Kiswahili or let me say sheng... actually, in our house, people don't speak luhya. It's funny, and none of my brothers can speak it well...so I don't see how I would understand and enjoy a drama in mother tongue...it could sound funny (laugh)

The above comment infers that although English and Kiswahili languages are widely used and perceived as the preferred medium to watch the serial drama fictions, an opportunity exists for an innovative producer to try out vernacular serial drama productions. The 'anecdotal humour' spiced with local dialects attract the viewers to other TV shows. Further to that, the digitalization (2016) is a recent phenomenon which has enabled plurality in the broadcast industry. Increasingly, vernacular television dramas are finding their voices within the multiple channels though their impact is yet to be quantified. In chapter one, the study argued of how the colonial governments constrained the growth of indigenous media (Natesh, 1964 and Faringer,1991) and by implication promoted the use of English as the preferred medium of television programming. Thus, the viewers 'tastes' have over the years been shaped by these phenomena. However, the future could be different.

Fifth, another entertainment value is that as much as the audiences are attracted to the foreign serial dramas, they are longing for local genres with well-treated meaningful narratives with appropriate dialogue, plot and suspense. An excellent characterisation should accompany the storylines with believable screen performances by actors. The actors should even establish

themselves into the Kenyan celebrity culture to spur the industry publicity as expounded by one of the producers as a norm in the established production destinations.

'...we need to create stars in the industry....and that's what KONA was trying to do...they even had rooms well decorated for the actors... to their taste the internet.... they were even picked by limousines, and we had a big launch... '.

The characterisation is an intrinsic value in TV serial drama attraction and production- this is the appropriate assigning of roles in a story. In this respect, the foreign actors are regarded more highly than their domestic counterparts in their performances. In relations to this, Majority of the participants, 47.4% agree that given a chance they would prefer to star in a foreign serial drama, against 28% who would choose to act in local production. Anecdotal statements by two of the viewers further support this line of thought;

'.... the man has expressed himself very well in that proposal scene...they put all their feelings in the acting...we don't accomplish such.

The other comment is;

'...in Kenya, it's obvious the way they act on TV you just know one is going to throw a punch...'

Scholars have reinforced the centrality of the actor in a serial drama fiction, arguing that, the viewers' identification and attachment to a drama character is a strong impetus to audience attraction to a show (Abu-Lughod, 1995; Cohen, 2001; Mato, 2003). However, in response, the producers feel that there is a shortage of talented natural actors in the country. Besides that, many in Kenya regard acting as a side job and not a profession. Thus, many do not invest as much in improving their performance. Also, the majority of the interested parties to audition calls have training in theatre performance art, which is different from acting for television.

One of the producers expressed this line of thought thus;

‘Many Kenyan actors come from the theatre background...it’s not easy to mold them into TV drama actors’

A producer/director, therefore, has to spend time reorienting them for a television performance.

Thus, the local Kenyan serial drama productions lacks entertainment value because of the inadequate treatment in storytelling nuances like in structuring and development of the dialogue script marked with suspense, pace, unpredictability and intrigue. In addition, there is poor characterisation; where many of the viewers lack emotional connection and identity with the actors.

5.2.3 The producers’ understanding of the TV serial drama audiences’ entertainment needs

The third objective was to explore the producers’ understanding of the TV serial drama audiences’ entertainment needs. The main points are summarised as follows;

First, the local TV serial drama producer proclaims their knowledge of the domestic audiences they create for as enumerated by two of them;

H3: *The Kenyan audiences are very honest and you can know their response on the social media...you can know what they think about you and the programme*

H6: *All the time I am clear about my audience though at times you might not be 100% sure of the drama reception. Audiences look for emotional connection with the characters in the story.*

However, despite the knowledge of their audiences and their needs, the findings indicate that the local producers consider themselves lowly in comparison to the foreign creators as observed in the previous section (5.2.2) where the viewers also highly regard the foreign producers as better serial drama fiction entertainers. The findings infer that the producers lack a deeper

understanding of their audience entertainment needs, or feign ignorance. They acknowledge the creativity and superiority of foreign productions in line with domestic viewers. Halls (1980) model of encoding and decoding clearly states the different modes of reception as dominant, negotiated and oppositional. The audiences' and producers' are at par when the programme is received within the dominant mode as argued in chapter two. The model provides a cyclical production process with segments where any weakness in the programme can be flagged and corrected. For instance, the producer starts from a dominant story concept informed by the serial drama production framework. The story could be interpreted differently (decoding meaning 1) though the producer hopes for a dominant reading by the viewers which means likability. This has not been the case with the local productions. He/she can note and correct weak elements of the drama (in the decoding meaning 2) through various audience feedback platforms (SMS, facebook, Instagram and others). Though the model captures multiple elements and the processes to a programme likability, this study proposes a more encompassing precise model (see section 5.4.1) to a serial drama fiction attraction.

Second, in connection with the above argument the local TV serial drama producer perceive themselves as working in a challenging environment, thus implying difficulty in meeting the audiences' entertainment requirements as expressed by the following producers;

One of the crucial things about foreign soap operas is that it is written by even 30 people...means it needs a lot of money and need top notch...actors

I am a storyteller I like writing and if someone can take care of the business side I would be glad....doing so many things at the same time usurps your energy.

The environment is not conducive here,...the support is not as it is elsewhere you are everything... and in the long run your bosses don't appreciate

Newcomb & Alley (1983) observes that a successful producer 'totally 'owns' the outcome and rarely entertain excuses. For instance, as we discussed in chapter two, veteran TV serial drama producer, David Victor (In an interview with Newcomb & Alley, 1983) of the *Dr Kildare* fame states that, if the main character is not believable and the audiences do not have an emotional connection with the show, then it fails and that any intentional lessons and information will be of no use because there will be no audiences. Thus, this is a producer's intuitive knowledge and understanding of the characterisation elements to the success of the show. Therefore, a producer cannot delegate 'ownership' and so when a local drama producer argues that *they are not allowed to write their scripts* is a misnomer, and undermines their depth of understanding their roles.

Third, the local serial drama producers believe that they operate in a conflicted cultural environment with limited story options and thus a drawback to fulfilling their audiences' entertainment needs. There is a suggestion that the country lacks a strong domestic cultural foundation to support TV drama stories. One of the producers intimate this as follows;

We have a cultural crisis in telling stories. ..Nigerian, Indian cultures have a way of telling their stories...

The implication is that countries like Nigeria and India work under unassailable rich cultural base sustaining them with content as opposed to the Kenyan situation, and this gives them a head start in story development.

Fourth, some of the producers complain of lack of well-established film/TV training schools and criticise what is in existence as enumerated by one of the producers'

Unfortunately, at the university there are no skills which are being transferred at that level. many lecturers at the university teach the wrong thing....I am not interested in the

papers I want someone who can sit at the machine deliver a high quality work not that you are a professor or Doctor so an so....our biggest problem is the disconnect between the academia and practice...

The above anecdote suggests that the film/media training institutions are part of the cause for the unfulfilled audience's entertainment needs. They argue that inadequate training of actors and actresses starves the sector. They also point out the deficiencies of the professional film crews. It is a blame game in the broader film production industry, but few are ready to accept the blame.

Fifth, the finding indicates that some of the producers fail to adhere to the serial drama production processes, affecting the final output of the programme and thus, poor reception. The regular procedure would take into consideration the story concept, pre-production, piloting and the final production. The suggestion is that there is a need to follow these protocols to avoid creating disharmony in reception. For example, there has sometimes been the arbitrary formation of 'pilot groups', in this case, the '*house-help*' as suggested by one of the producers

When my household does not connect with a story...which I know should be at her level then I know it will not work.

In addition to that, its ironical when some of the producers castigate the domestic actors for lack of professionalism and compare them to the foreign actors, while they should be the ones guiding them.

Finally, the viewers and the station executives believe that the local producers do not fully understand their entertainment role in converse to the foreign creators, one of the viewers intimate about the local producers as follows: '*they do not care about many details to make things look real like the actors.... the story...the foreigners have the experience and the many years they have been doing it...*'. Further to that, a station executive cites the unethical conduct

by some of the producers in dealing with the artist as a drawback to quality productions for instance; *'There is a programme we signed with a producer...they signed a different contract with their artist and fired most of them...saying they are stubborn.... We rely on ratings...and when we tell them to improve on the programme...the story...the actors... its going down...they never improved so we fired them....they should listen to us....'* The role of the producers is extensively discussed in chapter two and pivotal to a programmes' success. Thus, the concerns raised over them by the viewers and the station executives points to the producers lack of understanding their roles. According to Newcomb & Alley (1983), the producers' role is to intuitively respond to the audience needs and 'own' the production processes and the outcome.

5.2.4 The audiences' and producers' relationship with TV stations executives'

The final objective in the study was to determine how the TV station executives contextualise the audience and producers' entertainment value expectations in serial drama programming

First, from the five key stations that were analysed (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC), the station executive takes center stage to fulfill the Nairobi urban audiences and the serial drama producers' needs respectively. However, the economic interests override everything else as indicated by one of them in the excerpt.

We are commercial stations. When we make decisions, it is going to be first in the interest of business, and it will be second in everybody else's interest.

Second, the station executives' contextualise the viewers and the serial drama producers as 'profit vessels' and any decision made towards them should culminate in economic benefit to the station as noted by two of the executives as follows;

H2-Does the market produce enough writers to sustain TV drama fiction stories I don't think so..

H16- we took a local serial drama ...somehow when someone comes to pitch the idea and all that they do it so well but at times it's not what comes back to us... wasn't what we expected....

The inference is that, the economics of television viewership and programming is closely linked. As indicated in the study, 66% of the audience had already migrated to the digital payment platforms, suggesting their preparedness not to miss out on their TV programme seeking, Blumler & Katz, (1974) states in uses and gratification that audiences will seek and select the media which fulfills their needs, in this case settling to the paying platforms. Further to that, the station executives confidently states their audience interests as 'markets'. The findings indicate that, majority of the audience highly regard them in programming despite these associated costs of viewership. However, the station producers view the executives differently:

H9- 'The war actually has not been the platform but the content when you control that you control the advertising money and everything...and the dynamics has been shifting.... the traditional TV is going to be dead in the next few years...'

Though the serial drama has served as a commercial vehicle within the TV station programming (Allen, 1985) which is also evident within the Kenyan TV programming context. The individual programme market potential determines its production and schedule. The Telenovelas, for instance, are partly popular because of their affordability to the station bottom-line and their commercial prospects. Therefore, there is nothing like 'pure entertainment'; many a programme are selected for their potential to attract sponsorship (Brinker, 2015). As was argued earlier on in the preceding section, that the commercial approach (capitalism) seems to be besetting the public broadcast model. Further to that, and as observed by Wamuyu (2018) in chapter two; the failure by the station executives to align the economies of serial drama productions with the creators is partly a source of poor likeability of the domestic productions.

Third, the Kenya government suggestion and regulatory requirement for domestic stations to carry 60% of local content (CA, 2016), could be the only way to grow the local production industry and promote art and culture in the country. However, as the study suggests, this policy emphasises on the production quantity, while the findings indicates that the quality of the domestic productions is a major drawback. There is need for a revised policy to capture the quality elements like scripting and acting.

However, these would not be possible if left to the market forces and the individual stations to decide which could lead to content deficiency. Therefore, there is a need to improve the entertainment tenets in serial drama productions and extend it to other programme genres. These tenets, as has been mentioned in the study, include the creative selection of narrative themes, appropriately styled dialogues script and audition of good actors (performers).

5.3 Recommendations

From the preceding analysis and discussions, the study makes 14 recommendations: The research considers them valuable in understanding the context of viewership and production of TV serial drama fiction among Nairobi urban audiences and to an extent even at the national level. The recommendations are based and categorised into four major groups: that is, the TV serial drama audiences'; the TV serial drama producers; the TV station executives and government policies/regulations.

5.3.1 The TV serial drama audience-based recommendations

1) There is an emerging digital divide in the context of television viewership due to the impact of digital technology. Many of the audiences now pay to access the television signals which they perceive as a gain reversal. Thus, the 'free' television signal connection has acquired a different

meaning where private institutions, as opposed to the public (a government body), are now in charge of signal distribution and charge a monthly fee for access. To the urban viewer, this is a paradigm shift. The findings indicate that 37% of the audiences earn between 5000-20000 shillings and constrain to support themselves as well as pay for monthly television access. The study recommends that the government should make digital TV accessible by zero rating taxes to the distributors. In addition to that, they should come up with a policy change that the first four most popular FTA TV stations should be accessible to the audiences at all times even when other channels are switched off.

2) The Nairobi urban audiences are dissatisfied with the local TV serial drama productions and highly regard foreign genres as attractive. This displeasure stems from the perception of weak story development and poor talent performance. The audiences have indicated that they like storylines where they can '*learn something*'. The study, therefore, recommends that systematic retraining of serial drama producers, be undertaken. The training should be led by selected and distinguished local and foreign serial drama production experts. Government film promotion institutions like the Kenya film commission should sponsor some of the producers' to international exposure visits in well-known serial drama production destinations like Mexico and Brazil.

3) The study recommends the need to promote vernacular languages drama productions. Indigenous languages are critical for the survival of a people. In the study, it is clear that many of the audiences prefer to watch the serial drama in English. However, it is vital to encourage the use of vernacular languages in serial drama programming to check the English language programming hegemony, promote confidence in local storytelling and promote the use of mother tongue among families, which is essential for cultural preservation; Already slapstick comedies

like *vitimbi* are popular with the audiences’; they thrive on vernacular tinged story-lines. The study recommends that the government should enforce a policy akin to the 60% local content requirement, in this case, the FTA stations should be required to schedule at least a single vernacular drama programme in their stations. In South Africa, local dialects’ drama programming is conventional in the mainstream broadcast stations. Besides that, the programmes should be granted similar status to English and Kiswahili productions.

4) The study recommends that the producers refocus on their production set designs. This should be achieved by hiring professional set designers or encouraging more training in the field. Majority of the viewers enjoy the look of a beautiful appropriate and well-designed sets. The audiences highly regard foreign serial drama set designs at 68.9 (7 in 10) in comparison to 9.4% (1 in10) who believe the domestic sets are more attractive to view.

5) Television production and programming are generally liberal and competitive in many regions of the world. However, there are some countries where the governments go out of their way to financially subsidise some of the domestic productions. The programmes are thus promoted and sold cheaply in the international arena. In Kenya, it’s a daunting task for the government to finance productions. The study recommends that the government should create a funding system, similar to the hotel and catering levy which subsidise training at the Kenya Utalii College. A film trust fund should be setup with governing laws and regulations. A small tax should be charged with every film ticket/equipment sold in the domestic market. The collection should later be channelled to the fund and finance promising exciting stories on a need basis.

5.3.2 The TV producer-based recommendations

6) There are weaknesses in character performances (acting) in the domestic serial drama productions as established in the findings in chapter four. The study recommends the setting and launching of TV drama acting classes, within the existing infrastructure. Some of the universities and colleges have established art and performance courses, and this should be the right level to start the TV drama acting classes. Experts drawn from within and international should train practical screen performances. In addition to that, emphasis should be placed on how to audition for roles in a production, gestures like facial and eye movement on the screen. These are concerns raised by the audiences in chapter four. Similarly, local serial drama producers have agreed in the same chapter (four), for instance, the drawbacks of reorienting theatre performer artists into television actors. The initiative can be learnt from other thriving TV/Film acting schools in countries like Mexico, Nigeria, and Turkey. Calvo (2001) observes that Centro de Educacion Artistica, in Mexico, has a rigorous recruitment process of TV/Film trainee drama actors. He further clarifies that; the majority of the graduates make the core actors of the many Telenovelas watched around the world. The essence of this is that better acting skills should be acquired at a well-established centre rather than learning on set.

7) The study has noted the changing television broadcast environment visa vis the audiences' tastes and preferences, courtesy of the digital technology. It has implications on production turnaround time, the audiences' and their consumption patterns. The study recommends for creative, adaptive and innovative producers'. For instance, one should map out a segment of the audience like teenagers aged between 15-25 and create a programme to meet their individual changing consumption needs and distribute it through various platforms like smart-phones, internet, YouTube and the local start-up *Viusasa*. As has been discussed, what is referred to as

the 'Family viewing time' is taking a new meaning; more persons stay alone within the urban settings thus need innovative programming approach to satisfy them.

Thus, the producers of serial fiction in Kenya should leverage on experienced producers of the genre to orient them on selection of themes, development of story-lines to improve dramatic quality, interpretation of acting roles and creative set designs within manageable budgets.

8) The study recommends that the serial drama fiction producers should seek other sources of funding through sponsorship and promote their programmes through cheaper social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook among others instead of relying on the TV station executives as their main outlet for their programmes. Besides, there is need to de-emphasise finance as the single major drawback for unattractive local productions and instead ask the producers to work within their low budgets. The station executives have been accused by the serial drama producers as impediments to the growth of the domestic productions by denying them funding in favour of foreign productions. Adequate financing to a drama project might not be the solution to better audience enjoyment. There are arguments where even the developed destinations are overwhelmed by imported productions. A case in point was *Dallas (1978)*; the French government castigated it as cultural imperialism when it became overwhelmingly popular among the citizens. The country had the muscle to support the film industry, and here was a case where a foreign production was overriding local cultural productions.

5.3.3 The station executive based recommendations

9) The station executives should play a leading role in the promotion and production of serial drama fictions. The findings indicate that, the audiences highly regard them in meeting their entertainment needs. This means that, they have a better insight of their audience demand for

attraction. Their access to regular audience survey by advertising consortia like KARF (which they subscribe to) provides them with appropriate information about their audiences', in addition, they make critical distributive decisions within their FTA TV stations.

10) The study also recommends bridging the relationship between the station executives' and the serial drama producers', making the former play an advisory and consulting role in the productions. This can be achieved by organizing regular forums and workshops for the two entities. There exist mistrust and disconnect between them as established in the study findings. However, the audiences highly regard the station executives' expertise in programme scheduling. The executives have better insights of their audiences from data provided by marketing survey agencies. Thus the producers need to appreciate the executives' role.

11) Another recommendation is that the government should develop an incentive and reward system to the television stations which promote domestic content beyond the 60% local content requirement. It should be offered in the form of licensing rebates and certificate of recognition. The regularity of such support should enhance the quantity and quality of the productions. More so, it should be a win situation to the executive producers; the opportunity to build the local production capacity and the predictability of purchasing the programmes from within rather than foreign buys which could fluctuate with the currency exchange rate.

5.3.4 The government policy/regulation recommendations

12) Although the 60% local content requirement is appropriate, it is yet to spur phenomenal growth in the country to compete with foreign productions. As has been discussed in chapter four, there are weaknesses in the quality of the locally produced content (script-writing and screen performance). Although, the government has in place a 60% local content policy, which

mainly touches on the quantity of productions, the domestic FTA stations are expected to carry. The study recommends the revamping of the 60% local content policy to include provision on quality development, touching on how to upscale the technical skills like writing and screen performance.

13) In the Kenyan case, the study recommends for lessons in fund sourcing techniques. There is the constant assertion by many producers of 'financial constraint' directed at every unmet production tenet. Here a government agency should organise for training on their behalf and seek out experts and professionals in the field. *'Riverhood'* is already developing models whereby groups invest in small productions and try to recover their investment through DVD sales. They can also propose for funding through USF (Universal Service Fund) Further to that, there is a need for domestic producers' to be more exposed and also learn production skills from other regions.

14) To improve well researched and quality production in the country, there is a need to set up TV/Film audience research centres, similar to the once-famous Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies at The University of Birmingham in the 1970s. Its directors, which included Stuart Hall, gave us ground breaking studies like the active audience theory and encoding and decoding models which continue to be applicable in communication studies. Further to that, the research centres should monitor the changing environment in broadcast technology and programming. Such an institution should have prepared and guided the viewers' during the digital transition period and possibly mitigated the stress accompanied by the introduction of the subscription fee.

5.4 Summary of Author's Contribution to Scholarship and Knowledge

The context of viewership and the production of TV serial drama fiction in Nairobi, explores the audiences' entertainment value in the television serial drama fiction. It investigates this from the perspective of the audiences, producers and station executives.

First, the study has identified production weaknesses in scripting and screen performance (acting). Any TV station or burgeoning producer with interest in serial drama fiction genre should put emphasis on the two elements of the programme. It is the only way the domestic producers can practically improve on the audience likability of their productions. They can do this by developing creative story themes, with well-built suspense, tension and relief in what Allen (1994) refers to as syntagmatic gaps. The audience would like to experience the unpredictability of story flow and flawless screen performance. Comments like; *'In Kenya, it's obvious the way they act you just know one is going to throw a punch...'* exposes the missing nuances to an exciting story. In addition to that, one of the local producers describe some of her production colleagues and writers as follows: *I get people who write very shallow scripts...which cannot excite...local writers lack realism...we are fake...* This observation by the producer underlines the arguments as discussed in studies by KFC (2013) and CA (2016) who found that the local audiences regarded domestic productions as 'low quality' and 'boring' and they prefer to watch foreign productions. The foreign narratives are perceived by the Nairobi urban audience to contain appropriate story development and structures with well-built suspense and believable acting. The domestic productions do not similarly fulfil these nuances.

The second contribution is that, there is a digital divide which emanated during the transition from analogue to digital transmission of television programmes. The low-income groups were financially constrained and could not purchase the necessary gadgets and the accompanying

monthly charges to receive their favourite programmes. There is a need to sensitize and prepare viewers to minimise the negative impact of such changes. As has been discussed in chapter two and four, the international telecommunication union (ITU) had mandated all the broadcasters across the world to migrate to digital transmission (Oxford Business Group, 2014). This study took place during the digital transition period and thus captures the audience perception of the new dispensation. One of the viewers comments that; *'The TV has become expensive in this country you pay for everything yet they say that there should be free stations like KTN, NTV ...but those are the first station they take and leave for you KBC...'* This is a reaction to the unexpected monthly charges by the signal distributors a new phenomenon as opposed to the FTAs where one only spent on the purchase of the TV set.

The third contribution is that, the study has identified an evolving taste and viewing patterns among the urban audiences which a producer should take into considerations when conceptualising a story. For years, television viewing has been described as 'communal'; where either friends or family gather in a house to enjoy their favourite programme (Morley, 1999). Nonetheless, what is emerging within the Kenyan urban context is the evolving demographic dynamics, with smaller households, and increased individual living within Nairobi (KNBS, 2009). This finding suggests that 'group viewing' should shift when targeting urban audiences in serial drama programming.

Fourth, the study further contributes to the scholarship by suggesting that a streamlined conducive working relationship between the station executives and the serial drama fiction producers should improve the quality of the domestic productions. There is a disconnect between the TV drama production teams and the station executives even within the commercial television enterprise (Citizen TV, NTV, KTN and K24). Although the commercial stations are fixated on

the profit margins as observed by one of the executive producers thus: *'It's just business and this is what I keep saying ultimately you know.... KTN, NTV, K24, CITIZEN, we are commercial stations.... first in the interest of business and it will be second in everybody else' interest.* In chapter two, Wamuyu (2018) points out the opposed working relationships between the TV drama production team and the marketing department within a commercial TV station. The irony is that while the stations' executives' pride themselves in their commercial pursuit for the benefit of the station; they fail to strengthen the working relationships within the systems they control (the producers and marketers) missing out on opportunities to improve their financial base to support better and more local productions.

The fifth contribution is that, the study has identified policy and regulation gaps which need to be reviewed for the benefit of the TV/Film industry. The current licensing policy mandates every FTA station to air at least 60% of locally produced content. However, it does not capture the quality concerns yet, this is the level where many of the viewers are dissatisfied. There is need to revamp the policy by having an all-encompassing framework touching on training and skills development in the content output.

The other contribution is that this research adds its empirical data on the demands of the fast-evolving TV programming market in Kenya and Africa at large. Any researcher of the genre, thereafter, will have critical literature to build from. Further to that, it is an answer to other communication scholars like Ugangu (2012), Willems and Mano (2016) who advocate for an increased academic and empirical approach to African audience studies, more so, to balance the predominant market-driven surveys which have narrow agendas. Besides, Gray and Lotz (2012) describe television as a 'young institution'. According to them, television broadcasting is a young fledgling industry (in existence for less than 100 years) and is yet to accumulate a wealth of

research material comparable to other fields like philosophy or even medicine. The study thus offers additional academic knowledge to the industry.

This study, further reinforces the television drama theoretical approach as discussed in chapter two. For instance, Silverstone (1981) and Turner (1979) outlines the centrality of myths and its universal application in television drama productions. Turner (1982), advances this through the concept of liminal space and gives the example of a stage drama performer who should act with total involvement to the extent that the audience should not notice any flaw to disregard it as weak. Though these suggestions are western in perspective, their relevance in the Kenyan context is captured in the findings in chapter four as commented by a viewer making a comparison between a preferred foreign serial drama and a local production; *'these people are experienced and they put all their feelings in the acting...we don't accomplish such...in local stories...'*. Thus, the Kenyan producers should emulate these approaches and apply them in their production processes to minimise lukewarm reception in domestic productions.

The final contribution is that, the study has proposed a production and programming model (see 5.4.1) for the producers and for the benefit of the TV/Film industry. The model captures and links aspects of training, writing, acting, production consistency, station executive and viewers feedback mechanism. This model has a back and forth linkage from the inception on a programme idea to distribution, through the station executives' (see details in figure 5.1).

5.4.1 Proposed production and programming model for a successful domestic TV serial drama fiction

The TV serial drama viewers' framework in chapter two proposes that a viewer is attracted to the programme by the storyline and the characters (actors). The uses and gratification (Blumler & Katz, 1974) take a centre stage, where the audience is selective on what serial drama to watch from the five free to air TV stations. However, in light of the study findings, the research proposes a different model where the audiences are still at the centre of the action (see figure 5.1). The producer sets off by understanding the audience's tastes and treats the storyline accordingly within the production processes taking into consideration the economics of the story. However, what is emerging is that there is a poor reception/perception of the locally produced serial drama fictions as opposed to foreign productions. The problem emanates within the quality of the script (lack of appropriate writing elements of a TV serial drama fiction), unavailable professional actors (poor screen performance, unbelievable acting), producers lack of understanding of the depth of their audiences' requirements and a disconnect between the serial drama producers and the station executives. Thus, the study proposes an encompassing domestic TV serial drama fiction production and programming model, as indicated in figure 5.1 below. **TV**

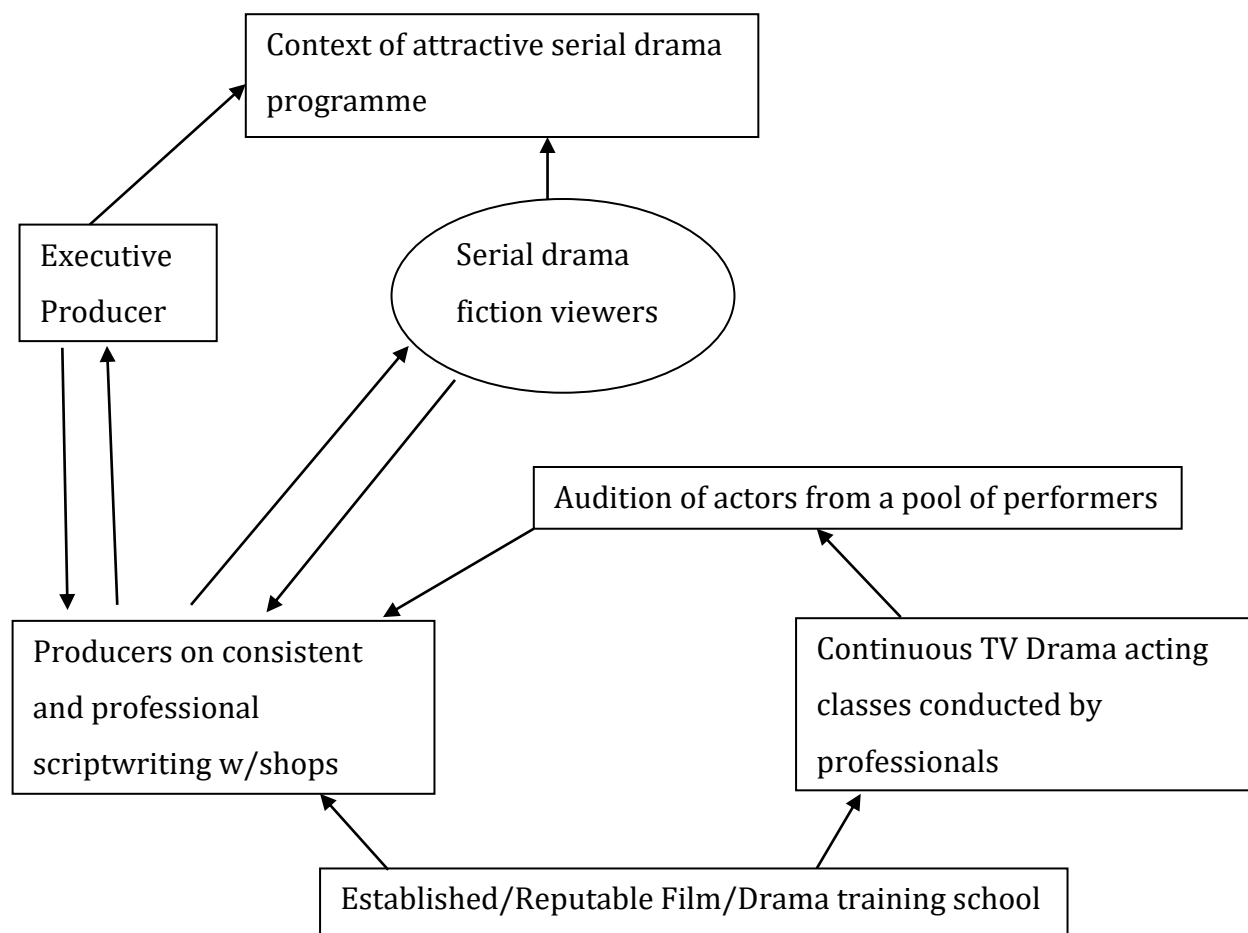


Figure 5.1: Proposed production and programming model for successful domestic TV serial drama fiction

Source: Research Data 2020

5.4.1.1 TV Serial drama fiction production and programming model

The model proposes that to produce a continuous flow of likeable serial drama productions, for the free to air TV stations and compete favourably with the foreign productions, there has to be a regeneration structure which sustains the productions and quality. The study has pointed out weak elements in the story development, acting, disconnect between the producers, audiences and the executive producers. A starting point should be to establish a reputable film/drama training school. Though they exist, they lack specificity and focused training in film/drama genres. Two departments within the setup should guide the exercise. The department of

production should mount and conduct consistent scriptwriting workshops to burgeoning producers guided by professional serial drama fiction writers. The second department of performance and acting once more guided by renowned professionals should recruit and polish skills in acting and performance for television drama, taking into consideration nuanced elements like gestures and body movements on set. After the producers acquire excellent writing skills in the serial drama genre and develop story ideas; they should further create a pre-test mechanism with the targeted audiences. The cyclical feedback and adjustment of each production should improve the likeability before its released to the executive producers. Similarly, the producers are at a better position of auditioning good screen performers from the pool of trained actors. The producers also monitor the feedback of the actors within the relationships he/she has developed with the viewers. A strong link has to be created between the producers and the station executives who have access to the transmission of the serials.

5.5 Implication for future research

The current study ‘the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya’ offers its unique methodological approach in understanding the domestic serial drama fiction viewers. The uses and gratification theory, active audience theory, the cultural proximity theory and appropriate models correctly anchor the study. Other researchers may use different approaches, methodologies and assumptions. They may compare this study with the popularity of other programme genres like a TV series a close link to the serial. It would also be interesting to research vernacular serial dramas in comparison to the English or the Kiswahili ones. There is an increase in vernacular drama productions in *Inooro*, *Baite TV* and other recently licensed vernacular TV stations.

It is hoped that the study has contributed its share of knowledge and presented a new perspective on television serial drama fiction in Kenya and Africa in general. Other study avenues could involve measuring the audience reception level of character performances in a local serial drama fiction compared to foreign production. Additionally, a study on male soap opera fans could be an eye-opener.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW GUIDE

I would appreciate if you would take a brief time to answer the questions on this form. I am conducting a survey to determine the context of viewership and the production of television serial drama fiction in Nairobi, Kenya. This survey will only be used for academic purposes. Any information you give will be held in confidence. I appreciate your co-operation very much.

Collins Wagumba, 2016, University of Nairobi

The interview should only continue if the respondent is aware of serial dramas and could be prompted by examples

Section I

Respondents' Background to Television Drama

1) How do you receive TV signals (Tick appropriately)

Via free to air ()

Pay TV ()

Any other.....

2) Rank order from favourite to least favourite (where 1 indicate most favorite to 8 least favourite)

a) News ()

b) Drama ()

c) Music Shows ()

d) Documentaries ()

e) Talk Shows ()

f) Reality Programmes ()

g) Movies ()

h) Sports ()

3) Rank order from favourite to least favourite (where 1 indicate most favorite to 5 least favourite)

KBC

NTV

K24

KTN

CITIZEN TV

a) Give reasons for ranking the station 1.....

b) Give reasons for ranking the station 5.....

4) When do you mainly watch television? (Tick appropriately)

a) Morning Hours 6am-10am

b) Mid-Morning hours 10am-1.00 pm

c) Afternoon Hours 1.00pm-4pm

d) Evening Hours 4.00pm-8pm

e) Night Hours 8 pm-midnight

5) About how many hours do you watch Television

a) Weekdays.....total hours

b) Saturdays.....total hours

c) Sunday.....total hours

6) The following are concerned with your perception and feelings about television serial drama

If you strongly agree with the question, circle a 1.

If you agree with it, circle a 2.

If you agree with some & disagree with others, circle a 3.

If you disagree with it, circle a 4.

If you strongly disagree with it, circle a 5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Television programmes reflect society we live in	1	2	3	4	5
b) Serial drama portrays the full range of social truth	1	2	3	4	5
c)Serial drama is not truthful but exaggerated story	1	2	3	4	5
d)I sometimes i wish to be a hero or heroine in a serial drama	1	2	3	4	5
e)Serial drama reflects ordinary peoples way of life	1	2	3	4	5
f)Characters are far from my reality	1	2	3	4	5
g)I am touched with pity for tragic characters	1	2	3	4	5
h)Characters accomplish what I would like to do	1	2	3	4	5
i)Watching drama tends to make me forget the daily problems	1	2	3	4	5
j)Serial drama represents delicate emotional events & situations	1	2	3	4	5

k) I am often moved to tears while watching drama	1	2	3	4	5
l) Serial drama is a romantic story	1	2	3	4	5
m) Dramatic events may occur in my life	1	2	3	4	5
n) Drama represents the conflicts or contradictions in our society	1	2	3	4	5
o) Drama depicts an ideal life	1	2	3	4	5

Section II

Respondents' understanding of local and foreign TV serial drama fiction

7) What language do you prefer to watch your serial drama fiction?

- a) English
- b) Kiswahili
- c) Vernacular
- d) Any Other.....

8) Which of the programmes do you regularly/occasionally /never watch (Please place a tick in one box on each line across)

If you entirely stopped watching the serial fictions skip to questions 10-11 and 14-24

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
a) The Promise			
b) Avida			
c) La Gata			
d) La Sombre Del Passado			
e) Carousel			

f)New Beginings			
g)Skandals Kibao			
h)Dear Mother			
i)Moyo			
j)Santalal			
k)Two Wives			
l)I don't trust men any more			
m)Pray and Prey			
n)Pendo			
p)The Hostel			
q)Mali			
r)Beats of Love			
s)The Tussle			
t)Tabasamu			
u)Bridges of love			
v)La Malquarida			
w)Corazon Indomable(wild at Heart)			

9) The statements below capture different interest in TV serial fiction viewing. (*Indicate the extent of your agreement by ticking the number that best describe your response to the statements*)

If you strongly agree with the question, circle a 1.

If you agree with it, circle a 2.

If you agree with some & disagree with others, circle a 3.

If you disagree with it, circle a 4.

If you strongly disagree with it, circle a 5

If you entirely stopped watching the serial fiction skip to questions 8, 9,10,14,15,16 if you continue to watch skip question 8,9 and 10 and continue to answer the rest

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I find myself attracted to local serials comparable to the foreign ones	1	2	3	4	5
b) The local stories are usually better scripted in comparison to the foreign ones	1	2	3	4	5
c) I spend more time watching local soaps than foreign ones	1	2	3	4	5
d) The local serial drama stories are more realistic comparable to the foreign ones	1	2	3	4	5
e) The foreign serial dramas reflect other peoples culture therefore I don't enjoy watching them	1	2	3	4	5
f) The suspense in the foreign serial dramas keeps me at the edge of my seat comparable to the local dramas	1	2	3	4	5
g) The actors in local dramas are more accomplished and believable in their roles than	1	2	3	4	5

those in the foreign serials					
h) I sometimes wish I was the hero or heroine in the foreign drama comparable to the local ones	1	2	3	4	5
i) Given a choice, I would watch local serials than a foreign produced ones	1	2	3	4	5
j) The decor, i.e. the furniture, clothes and fashion on the set are attractive to watch on local productions	1	2	3	4	5
k) The decor, i.e. the furniture, clothes and fashion on the set are attractive to watch on foreign productions	1	2	3	4	5
l) I watch more local serial fiction than I do foreign ones	1	2	3	4	5
m) I watch more foreign serials than I do locally produced	1	2	3	4	5

10) Why did you stop watching? (tick once on the closest reason why you stopped)

(if you have answered question 9 skip to 12-25)

I Lost interest ()

The stories became predictable ()

I discovered other interesting TV programmes to watch ()

Lack of time ()

Any other.....

11) What can make you start watching again?(Tick at least TWO)

If I find an interesting story

if the actors are interesting

If I have time

Any other.....

12) With whom do you watch television serial drama ?(tick if appropriate)

Alone

Husband or Wife

Children

Brothers or Sisters

Parents

Friends

Any other.....

13) With whom do you usually discuss serial drama if you talk about it ?

(select at least two answers)

Husband and Wife

Children

Friends in work place

Brothers or Sisters

Parents

Friends

None

14) What kinds of things do you talk about regarding television serial dramas?

(tick if appropriate)

Characters' personality

Characters' sexual attraction

The continuous story lines

The drama episode

Some real events similar to drama narratives

The composition or quality of drama

Furniture, clothes and fashion shown in drama

Actors' or actresses' private lives

Others (please specify.....)

Section III

Audience understanding of the serial fiction drama producers'

16) How do you evaluate the Kenyan serial drama producers (*Indicate by numbering 1-5 in order where 5 is the highest grade*)

- a) The local producers are professionals in serial drama productions ()
- b) I believe the local producers are doing a good job in the choice of the storylines ()
- c) I believe the local producers are doing a good job in the serial drama story treatment ()
- d) The audition of characters reflects professionalism of the producers ()
- e) The local producers understand what their audiences enjoy ()

17) How do you evaluate the foreign serial drama producers whose programmes are regularly shown on Kenyan television stations (*Indicate by numbering 1-5 in order where 5 is the highest grade*)

- a) The foreign producers are professionals in serial drama productions ()
- b) I believe the foreign serial producers are doing a good job in the choice of the storylines ()
- c) I believe the foreign serial producers are doing a good job in the serial drama story treatment
- d) The audition of characters in foreign productions reflect professionalism of the producers ()
- e) The foreign producers understand what their audiences enjoy ()

Section IV

The audience response to the TV station managers

18) The audience perception towards the station managers

(Indicate the extent of your agreement by circling the number that best describe your response to the statements).

If you strongly agree with the statement, circle a 1.

If you agree with it, circle a 2.

If you agree with some & disagree with others, circle a 3.

If you disagree with it, circle a 4.

If you strongly disagree with it, circle a 5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) The station managers are professionals and know what is best for as	1	2	3	4	5
b) If I had a choice to select a serial drama for television I think I would do a better job than the ones who do that on our behalf.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I think the station managers understands as when choosing the serial dramas	1	2	3	4	5
d) So far I like the kind of dramas at my favourite station screens	1	2	3	4	5

Section V

Respondents' Background

19) What is your gender?

Male ()

Female ()

20) Are you

Married ()

Single ()

Widowed ()

Divorced ()

21) In what age group are you?

16- 20

21-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

over 60

22) What is your highest level of education?

a) No Education

b) Primary

c) Secondary

d) College

e) University

23) What is your occupation?

Wholesale& retail trade, restaurants

Sales or service worker

Production & related workers, labourers

Clerical & related workers

Adm. & managerial workers

Professional

Housewife

Others.....

24) What is your monthly income? Tick your range?

5,000-20,000

21,000-50,000

51,000-99,000

100,000 and over

Any other.....

APPENDIX II: FGD GUIDE FOR AUDIENCE RESPONDENTS

- 1) How would you describe what you have watched?
- 2) What stories can you remember from what you have watched?
 - b) Probe-Could there have been different plotlines in each drama?
- 3) Which one did you feel involved or engrossed in the most?
 - b) Probe-Why do you think so?
 - c) What do you remember about it?
- 4) Which was the least involving?
 - b) Probe-Why do you think so?
- 5) Could television be a reflection of what happens in our society?
 - b) Probe why?
- 6) Out of what you have watched have you experienced them or heard them happening to someone else.
 - b) probe- or they are not real conjured up stories?
- 7) What else would make you want to watch such a drama on television?
 - b) Probe – or discourage you from watching?
- 8) If you met the producers, what would you tell him/her
- 9) In relations to what you have watched can you relate it to the several local and foreign soap operas on our TV STATIONS like NTV, Citizen KTN.

Guide on Serial fiction Characters

- 8 Are there characters you can remember?
 - b) What do you remember about them?
 - c) What do you like/don't like about them?

9) If you had a choice to be one of the characters which would you be and why?

b) If the character is replaced would you still watch it?

10) Is there a character you wished should be replaced, give reasons.

b) What did your favourite character do that you found particularly interesting

c) If your favourite character is in 'trouble' what do feel for him/her.

11) If you met the producer/director what would you tell him/her about the characters?

Guide on their understanding the producer (Focus Group,)

12) Do you think you have idea/storyline you would like to be incorporated in the production?

b) How important to you as an audience if the producer reaches out to you

13) If you would speak to the producer what would you tell him or her?

14) Do you think the producer know what you seek for in the soap opera?

15) If you had an opportunity which storyline could you rewrite?

APPENDIX III: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRODUCERS

- 1) Tell us about your educational background and training
- 2) Describe to us what your job entails as a producer
- 3) How do you construct your serial fiction?
- 4) Describe to us your audiences in your storyline
- 5) What do you think would attract them to watch a particular storyline?
- 6) What is your input on the storyline before it's produced?
 - b) What do you think the audiences look out for in a storyline?
 - c) Describe to us a typical good storyline for a serial fiction
 - d) Have you ever created such a storyline (described in b)
 - e) Describe to us a bad storyline.
- 7) Have you ever worked on a storyline you felt is unsatisfactory?
- 8) What could make a serial fiction to be unattractive to the audience?
 - b) As a producer is there a way you can turn it around.
- 9) What are some of the challenges working as a serial fiction producer in Kenya?
- 10) Do you watch any foreign soap opera?
 - b) What do you make of telenovelas productions? How do you compare with them with local productions?
- 11) What do you look out for in character auditions?
- 12) How do you think the audience relate with characters in your soap operas?
- 13) How easy is it to find/replace characters?
- 14) Describe to us a good character for a role
 - b) Describe to us unsatisfactory characterization for roles

15) What is your relationship with TV stations executives?

b) Are there moments when your storyline, characters had to be tweaked from there prompting?

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STATION EXECUTIVES

Where do you source your serial fiction dramas?

Describe to us what you look out for in such programmes.

How would you gauge the quality of what the market churns out, in meeting your audience needs?

b) How can you compare, these (above) with telenovelas or Nollywood productions?

4) Why do you think Mali/The Tussle is successful or unsuccessful?

5) How does the soap compare with others in different channels?

6) How does Mali/Tussle/Wild at Heart speak to the station mandate?

7) What is the cost of advertising space during Mali/ The Tussle/Wild at Heart?

8) How long would you want to continue the screening?

9) What would make you stop screening it?

10) Is it important for producers to listen to station “executives”.

b) Are there moments when you intervene on storyline or characters in a production meant for your station?

c) Are such interventions necessary (if so why?)

d) Give us the dynamics of commissioning a programme vis-a vis the station commercial interest.

Serial Fiction Producer Understanding of the audience (In-depth Interview)

What role do the audience play in character/ story development?

How does character identity happen with the audience?

What do you understand by believability/realism in a character?

Do they write to you about the programme either by letter, sms or social media

b) What is your response when this happens?

What do you think makes them happy while watching your soap?

Would you classify Mali/Tussle as successful?

What would you say about the foreign soaps broadcast on local stations(especially Latin American)

Have you ever watched any?

What would you say about their style and storylines?

Why do you think they continue to have an audience although their storylines and setting are from a different culture?

What do you make of the audience who are glued to foreign soaps?

Do the audience play a role in character selection?

What is your general observation of the Kenyan serial fiction audience?

Who has the final say when it comes to storylines?

Do the actors have a say in character and story development?

How do you respond to audience feedback?

How would you respond to criticism that Latin American soaps are better produced than local?

b) How do you relate with TV station executives who broadcast your soap.

APPENDIX V: CODE FOR QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

	Research questions and concept themes	Meaning/Definition	Examples
1	The Attraction/Entertainment in TV serial drama programming	<p>The story is realistic</p> <p>The story entertains/escapism</p> <p>The viewer cares about character/actor</p>	<p>-The story is believable/reflects familiar issues in the community, like drug abuse, good neighborliness</p> <p>-suspense, life like, enjoying oneself, watch as a habit, make me forget my problems</p> <p>-Identity with actor, empathy, emotional attachment, real life between fictional and reality</p>
2	Dissatisfaction/dislike of TV serial drama programming	<p>The stories are perceived as unrealistic</p> <p>Predictable storylines and slow paced</p>	<p>-They are fantasy stories a small neighborhood could experience, murder, rape drugs, unrealistic with timeframes, poor acting</p> <p>-Uncreative,there is always the love,hate,poor/rich</p>

			storylines
3	Producers & Audience reception needs	<p>Knowledge of their target audience</p> <p>The selection of stories and actors who suite the viewers</p>	<p>-To know their age, gender likes/dislikes what makes them happy/angry/excited</p> <p>-Familiar, connecting stories identify with actors</p>
4	TV station executives conceptualizing of their audiences and producers	<p>Knowledge of their viewers</p> <p>'likes/dislikes in serial drama programming.</p> <p>Producers' understanding of the serial drama requirements and the balancing act of TV station executives</p>	<p>-Empathy, suspense, identification with characters, emotions, good familiar storylines, timely schedules</p> <p>-intuitive producers, understanding the commercial interest of TV stations i.e. finances, audience shares, programme ratings</p>

Researcher Data 2020

APPENDIX VI: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS & KII

The following persons provided invaluable information for the study, however to ensure confidentiality and anonymity their real identity have been replaced by pseudo names whenever a quote or an excerpt has been used in the findings and analysis.

- 1 Catherine Wamuyu- (**Producer -Citizen TV**) Mother in Law, Reflections, Machachari
- 2 Timothy Ondere – (**Producer- KBC TV**) The Tussle, Plot 10,Grapevine,Stringed
- 3 Mwaita Kiseu- (**Independent Producer- Ken TV**) Tabasamu, Wingu La Moto, Mashtaka, Trap House
- 4 Alison Ngiubuini- (**Independent Producer -al is on productions**) –Mali, Shuga, Siri and TV commercials
- 5 Martin Munyua (**Independent Producer-Dream Catcher**) The Team, Dads can cook, Ms President and TV commercials
- 6 Appie Matere- (**Independent Producer-Zamaradi Productions**) Kona, Keru, Nyumba ,Mwalimu,Fihi
- 7 Faith Koli-Pendo- (**Independent Producer**) Pray and Prey, Pendo,Tujaribu
- 8 Wambugu Mugwe- (**Retired KBC producer-Media trainer**) Kijiba cha moyo, Ndoano, Fedheha, Zuberi, Vioja Mhakamani, Baba Lola
- 9 John Karanja (**Independent Producer**) Waridi, Rosa, Poesha Among many vernacular drama productions
- 10 Gayleen Akinyi-(**Independent Producer- Insignia Productions**) New Beginning, Junior From 2018 produces under Lakewood films
- 11 Nancy Muriugi- (**Independent Producer -Mbuki Films**) Vernacular Productions

- 12 Ann Sato NTV-(**Programmes Coordinator**)
- 13 Pamela Amwai- **Programmes Manager KTN**
- 14 Alice Wangari- **Programmes coordinator Citizen TV**
- 15 Chris Mutungi (**Programmes Manager-KBC**)
- 16 Matu Nguri-KTS (**Station Manager**)
- 17 Sharleen Samat K24 (**Head of TV**)

APPENDIX VII: TV PROGRAMMES SCHEDULE

TV PROGRAMME	STATION	LOCAL	FOREIGN
1) Avida da Gente (2011)	Citizen TV		✓
2) La Gata (2014)	Citizen TV		✓
3) La Sombre Del Passado (2014)	Citizen TV		✓
4) Carrousel (2012)	Citizen TV		✓
5) New Beginings (2015)	(KTN)	✓	
6) Skandals Kibao (2015)	(KTN)	✓	
7) Dear Mother (2013)	Citizen TV	✓	
8) Moyo (2016)	Citizen TV	✓	
9) Santalal (2015)	Citizen TV	✓	
10) Two Wives (2014)	KTN		✓
11) I don't trust men any more	Citizen TV		✓
12) Pray and Prey (2014)	NTV	✓	
13) Pendo (2014)	NTV	✓	
14) The Hostel (2011)	NTV		✓
15) Mali (2011)	NTV	✓	
16) Beats of Love (2014)	KBC		
17) The Tussle (2010)	KBC	✓	✓
18) Tabasamu (2009)	Citizen TV	✓	
19) Bridges of love (2014)	Citizen TV		✓
20) La Malquarida (2014)	Citizen TV		✓
21) Corazon Indomable (wild at Heart) 2013	NTV		✓

22) Dallas (1978)	KBC		✓
23) Tushauriane (1987)	KBC	✓	
24) The Team (2012)	Citizen TV	✓	
25) Makutano Junction (2006)	KBC	✓	
26) Fedheha	KBC	✓	
27) Vitimbi	KBC	✓	
28) Vioja Mahakamani (1975)	KBC	✓	
29) The Promise (2015)	KTN		✓
30) Mother in Law	Citizen TV	✓	

APPENDIX VIII: NACOSTI CLEARANCE PERMIT

CONDITIONS

- 1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.**
- 2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.**
- 3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.**
- 4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.**
- 5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.**
- 6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice**



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation
RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT**

10558

Serial No.A

CONDITIONS: see back page

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. COLLINS AUTA WAGUMBA
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 0-200
Nairobi, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/73872/12913
Date Of Issue : 10th August, 2016
Fee Received :Ksh 2000**

**on the topic: VIEWERSHIP AND
AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION OF
TELEVISION SERIAL FICTION IN NAIROBI,
KENYA.**

**for the period ending:
9th August, 2017**



Collins Auta Wagumba
**Applicant's
Signature**

[Signature]
**Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation**

APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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when replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
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P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/16/73872/12913**

Date:
10th August, 2016

**Collins Auta Wagumba
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.**

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on **“Viewership and audience interpretation of Television Serial Fiction in Nairobi, Kenya,”** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **9th August, 2017.**

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

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


**DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAIROBI COUNTY
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI
TEL: 341666**

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.



National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001: 2008 Certified