



**ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPER (E-NEWSPAPER) CONSUMPTION AMONG
KENYANS – A CASE STUDY OF THE *DAILY NATION***

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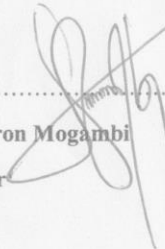
DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

Signature..........Date.....24/11/2022.....

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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I would like to acknowledge the input of all the individuals that have contributed towards the completion of this project.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

NTV – Nation Television

CA – Communication Authority (of Kenya)

NMG – Nation Media Group

UGT – Uses and Gratifications Theory

ABSTRACT

Newspapers have played an important role in many societies keeping people informed and up to date with the latest news and developments. For long, newspapers have often been in the print format. Today, however, there is a shift towards online newspapers because of the impact of technology and the internet. The main objective of this study was to find out if the e-newspaper readership among Kenyans is fast replacing the print newspapers. The research utilized the qualitative approach and the case study as the research design to answer the research questions. The target population included journalists and readers of both ends that work for the *Daily Nation* sampled using purposeful sampling technique. They were interviewed using open-ended questions and the subsequent data analyzed using thematic analysis. The objectives included: (1) To find out the patterns of e-newspaper readership in Kenya; (2) To compare the trends in readership of e-newspaper and print newspapers; and (3) To analyze whether e-newspaper is a threat to print newspaper. On the first objective, the study found out that the majority of Kenyans that read the e-newspapers are of the younger generation. They are predominantly male. They are tech-savvy and work in the blue-collar job group thereby most likely living in towns. On the second objective, there seems to be no much difference between the e-newspaper and the print newspaper. The style, as well as the look and feel of both newspapers appear to be largely the same. The only difference is the medium through which the stories are being delivered – the traditional newspaper is delivered on print paper while the e-newspaper is delivered online on the digital platform. E-newspapers offer breaking news, offer more ways to pay, and offer better appearance, personalization, immediate update of news, ease of use, as well as functions such as chats. On the third objective, the finding was that although the e-newspaper is a threat, it still has some catching up to do. However, news media need to accept that print media is slowly fading away and their day may come. This is why innovation is important.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

This chapter of the project delves into the background of the study before giving a statement of the problem. The research's objectives and questions are outlined, as well as the justification of the study and its scope.

1.1. Background of the Study

1.1.1. The Advent of Newspapers

Without a doubt, newspapers have played an important role in many societies keeping people informed and up to date with the latest news and developments. Therefore, it can be regarded as one of the most powerful and significant tools of mass communication. Before the advent of print, news was mainly spread through the word of mouth. Travelers, sailors, and merchants would bring news from other continents and far-flung places to their hometowns (Buciuman, 2020). As well, there were messengers whose task was to specifically carry reports and breaking news to different destinations. However, the impact of such modes of spreading news was limited because only a few could get the messages. It is the invention of newspapers that changed the concept of mass communication for good. Although it is hard to pinpoint the exact beginning of news readership, it is the printing press of an inventor called Johannes Gutenberg in 1440 that forever changed the history of publishing and newspapers (Buciuman, 2020). He is credited for inventing a movable press that enables the reproduction of high quality printed materials at approximately 4,000 pages a day (Buciuman, 2020). It was an innovative machine that made printed materials accessible to the mass market for the very first time. Before this, one would have had to pay people to scribe text by hand, which was definitely slow and

costly. Therefore, it is Gutenberg with his printing press that opened the way for modern-day journalism and newspaper readership. By the 1500s, his invention had spread throughout the European continent with publishers finally being able to distribute news sheets to the masses.

When it comes to newspapers, its history could be traced to what is referred to as the *gazette*, which first appeared in Venice, Italy (Fang, 1997). By then, it was a handwritten piece of news that mainly focused on the topics of politics and military conquest. They were issued as single sheets but folded to four pages. They were also released on a weekly basis. The idea of regularly releasing news at certain intervals and printing them on a piece of paper in a certain format came from these Italian *gazettes*. The idea quickly spread to Germany and it is here that Johann Carolus published the first weekly newspaper in 1609 referred to as *Relation aller Furnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien* (Buciuman, 2020). It was termed as a newspaper because it met the four principles of what a newspaper ought to look like: First, it was accessible to the public; Second, it was published at a certain regular level (in this case weekly); Third, it provided the latest information; and Fourth, it covered a wide variety of topics including politics, sports, and entertainment. From here, the idea of newspaper spread to other parts. The first newspaper to be published in the English language – *The Oxford Gazette* - was in 1665 (Goff, 2007). It was moved to London and renamed to *The London Gazette* in 1666, and it is still operational till recent times. In America, it is Benjamin Harris that published the *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick* as the first newspaper in 1690 (Buciuman, 2020). Another milestone in the history of newspapers is the Industrial Revolution, which commenced in Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Industrial Revolution led to the generation of huge presses that could print over 10,000 papers in just one hour (Fang, 1997). Before the Industrial Revolution, it was commonplace to circulate about 2,500 newspapers. By the 1900s,

some printing press could circulate over a million copies. Apart from numbers, the Industrial Revolution also led to the addition of features such as pictorial weeklies, reporters' sketches, and other detailed illustrations including photographs (Fang, 1997). By the 20th century, journalists would include several other advancements such as banner headlines, colored photographs and comics, most of which remain present to date.

Africa was not left behind in the build up to the printing of modern newspapers. According to the BBC, the first newspapers in the English language in Africa can be traced to Cape Town, South Africa in 1800. In 1801, the *Sierra Leone Advertiser* and *The Royal Gazette* were printed in Freetown, Sierra Leone. However, they were masterminded by Europeans. The first to be opened by an African was called the *Liberia Herald* in 1826 by an American freed slave called Charles Force, although he died shortly thereafter (BBC). Years later, newspapers began to emerge in other African countries. In Kenya, the first newspaper was started by businessman Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee and it was called *The African Standard* based in Mombasa in 1902 (The Standard, 2017). It was on a weekly basis. Englishman W. H. Tiller helped do a lot of work as a reporter, editor, advertiser, and circulation manager. Tiller ensured that this magazine circulated through not only British East Africa (Kenya and Uganda) but also Tanzania (then referred to as German East Africa) and parts of Eastern Congo. It was years later as from the 1940s that African-controlled press (in vernacular) grew by a lot in the Kenyan scene (Gadsden, 1980). Back then, it was common for the governments of the day and missionary societies to publish vernacular newspapers across the African continent. Africans, however, ensured they published theirs in English, Portuguese, or French. There were as many as 40 newspapers owned by Kenyans by the time the Second World War came to an end (Gadsden, 1980). The leading English newspaper that was circulating on a daily basis by then was the *East*

African Standard for the consumption by Africans (Gadsden, 1980). In the post-war years, the government also set up 21 district news-sheets (Gadsden, 1980). Indians living in Kenya did also establish two other newspapers for Africans. However, not many existed for a long time.

1.1.2. The Move from Print to Electronic

In many ways, the newspaper industry has endured many revolutions and transformations. The latest has been the onslaught of technology and digital media. It has not only changed the way consumers access news but also devastated the print publishing industry. Much of the changes have happened within these last two decades. In the United States, for instance (as of 2020), newspaper publishers have witnessed a drop in revenue by almost a half as people no longer buy print newspapers (Warner, 2022). Circulation has been cut by half. This onslaught may continue in the coming years as consumer trends change. Today, digital content is king. It can connect people, build brands, and engaged readers. Therefore, the negative impact on the print industry aside, digital publishing has revolutionized mass communication. Printing newspapers and magazines was a resource-intensive affair. It also took a lot of lead time because the printed materials had to be produced fast before being circulated to the masses (Warner, 2022). More so, any slight mistake in the printing of a newspaper's original content was deadly because it required one to reprint everything. Publishing companies were also not sure of their investment. Conversely, digital publishing costs less and offers a lot more flexibility compared to the printing press (Brock, 2013). Consumers do not have to buy printed materials anymore. All they need is to pay a monthly fee or access news for free from their Internet-enabled gadgets. Editing digital content is easy with no additional cost. As such, many have welcomed digital publishing and digital content except the printing press.

Another huge advantage of digital publishing is that the consumers no longer have to be within the same geographical area as the printing press. Readers can come from all over the world. This is a revolution that has affected all newspapers worldwide, including in Kenya. According to Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) 2018 report, around 25% of all internet visits are related to reading news online. Now the digital media has become the inherent part of modern society and become a challenge to the print media. Many people nowadays are accessing the Internet for updated news in any place and at any time. Newspaper companies are facing an innovation, e-newspaper technology. An e-paper is simply a replica of ordinary hard copy newspaper, but with advanced user experience. The e-newspaper combines the readability and overview from the printed newspaper with the possibilities of online media interactivity such as download option, social media share buttons, readily available archived content and much more

1.1.3. The *Daily Nation*

The *Daily Nation* is regarded as Kenya's and East Africa's largest newspaper and one of the most influential. On a daily basis, its readership could be an upwards of 200,000 given that copies can be read by several people at ago (Kenya-Advicor.com, 2021). It boasts a market share of over 75% at least in Kenya (Kenya-Advicor.com, 2021). The nearest competitor is the Standard Group's *The Standard* newspaper. The *Daily Nation* is published every morning, seven days a week. On Sundays, its circulation is referred to as the *Sunday Daily*. Apart from the printed newspapers, *Daily Nation* also runs a website that publishes news articles (Kenya-Advicor.com, 2021). It is accessible to many and boasts of millions of page views. The life of the *Daily Nation* began in 1959 with the founding of *Taifa* newspaper, a Swahili newspaper. The name taifa is Swahili for nation. *Taifa* was founded by two newspaper men Charles Hayes and Michael Curtis in Nairobi and London respectively (Loughran, 2010). A year later, however, the newspaper was

bought by Karim Aga Khan IV and renamed it to *Taifa Leo*. With humanitarian goals, Aga Khan wanted to use the newspaper to achieve humanitarian goals including ending colonialism in the continent and voicing African public opinion. It is in 1960 that he finally launched the English version of *Taifa Leo* to be the *Daily Nation* (as well as the *Sunday Nation*) (Loughran, 2010). After Kenya's independence, Aga Khan founded the Nation Media Group, which came to own the two newspapers alongside Nation TV (NTV), Nation FM, the *Business Daily*, *The East African*, *What's On*, and the *Weekly Advertiser*.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Lumi & Selimi (2018), Hassan, Latiff & Atek (2015) and Kalombe & Phiri (2019) have conducted studies that look into the impact of digital newspapers on the dwindling print newspapers in Kosovo, Nigeria, and developing countries respectively. Kenya boasts a growing tech savvy population and a vibrant online information landscape. However, little is known about the impact this has on newspaper readership. The *Daily Nation* is arguably Kenya's and East Africa's largest newspaper and one of the most influential with a daily readership of about 200,000 (Kenya-Advicor.com, 2021). Given a newspaper with such a huge market share but with no studies on the impact of e-newspapers, this study sought to fill this gap by looking into how e-newspapers are replacing the print newspaper.

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1. Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to find out trends in e-newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The following were the objectives of this study:

1. To understand the demographics of Kenyans reading the *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper.
2. To establish the readership of *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper compared to that of the print version.
3. To establish whether or not the e-newspaper is threatening to replace print newspapers in terms of clientele.

1.4. Research Questions

1.4.1. Main Research Question:

The main research question was: What are the trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area?

1.4.2. Specific Research Questions:

The following were the research questions:

1. What are the demographics of Kenyans reading the *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper?
2. How does the readership of *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper compare to that of the print version?
3. Is the e-newspaper is threatening to replace print newspapers in terms of clientele?

1.5. Justification of the Study

The newspaper is integral tool for media houses as it has ability to offer detailed coverage of news unlike the television and radio. The ability to capture detailed information on where, what, how, when and who said or do that affected the lives of people in the community makes it a useful media tool. The advent of e-newspapers offered opportunity for many people to access

news on their mobile devices such as phones, tablets, and laptops or computers whenever they have access to internet. The development has helped media companies to increase readership of their news as e-newspapers increases traffic and access to information. However, there are issues affecting readership on e-newspaper such as access to internet and content from service providers. While both e-newspapers and print newspapers offer satisfaction for customers' need for information, the issue of access is a concern. The study, therefore, sought to understand the trends of readership for e-newspaper and print newspaper to help companies develop incentives for customers to both utilize both mediums to access information.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focused on newspapers and not any other form of news media. More so, it focused on Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation* and not any other newspaper within the NMG staple, for instance, weekend editions and *Business Daily* or for any other company for that matter. The reason for this was to have a case study of only the *Daily Nation*.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The most prevalent limitation to this study was the fact that only journalists were considered for the interviews. Therefore, this had to do with the methodology used. There was a need for more data especially from the consumers of newspapers themselves so that they can reveal more data about the reasons as to why they preferred e-newspapers compared to print newspapers.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis outlines and discusses previous studies that have been done on this topic, with a focus on how technology and the internet have impacted the newspaper industry. This section also posits the theoretical framework and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study.

2.1. Review of Literature

2.1.1. The Global Context

Lumi & Selimi (2018) point out that the internet and technology have altered the global media by reducing the power of printed newspapers while increasing those of online news media. This has happened within the last two decades. At the very least, internet technology has ensured that newspaper readers can now have easier and faster access to news, as well as receive and disperse information in an active manner unlike the past. According to Lumi & Selimi (2018), this is what has happened in Kosovo despite being a young state. As of 2018, statistics from the country showed that approximately 88.8% of the households in the country could access the internet. As such, they can easily access newspapers from their internet-enabled gadgets, including smartphones. More so, thanks to internet technology, media companies can publish news within a shorter time frame and at a lower cost. However, this has reduced the circulation of printed newspapers as well as the number of readers. Out of the nine daily newspapers that were publishing news in the country as of 2010, only five have remained eight years later. With this in view, Lumi & Selimi (2018) sought to bring to light the impact of

internet technology on both printed and online newspapers. They also outline the factors that have led to the reduced number of printed newspapers while boosting online newspapers. In the end, they arrived at the following findings. First, this has been the impact of technology and the internet, which has been growing in the last two decades in the country. Unlike printed materials, members of the audience find it easy to read and afford online newspapers. Unfortunately, many print newspapers have had to close down shop. A second finding is that printed newspapers have dropped in Kosovo due to poor distribution. Instead of using something like supply and demand, the newspaper companies distribute their papers using quotas. In some places, people can borrow the newspapers, peruse through them, and then return without making a purchase. The third finding is that the readability of online newspapers has been enhanced because content keeps on being updated every other time. This is tied to the next reasons, which is that online news is often released speedily. News are published as they happen, instead of having to wait for the next day like in the print newspapers.

Filistrucchi (2005) conducted a study on this topic in the context of Italy. According to him, Italy had witnessed an increase in the number of online news platforms offering not only news but any other information for free. Consequently, daily newspaper publishers started to put their print articles online exactly the way they were. In view of this, Filistrucchi (2005) embarked on a quest to look for evidence for the impact that online newspapers are having on the print newspapers, cutting down their shares. One of the expected findings was that the internet had negatively impacted the sales of the major national daily newspapers in the country. They reduced the number of circulation but not being put out of business totally. In reaction to this, the media companies opened websites and started to post their news, albeit for free unlike print newspapers that the audience had to pay for. Going online was some sort of compensation for

losing print newspaper readership. Although the online content was free, the companies would make up for the loss by embracing online advertising.

Schoenbach, de Waal & Lauf (2005), however, argues that the impact of technology on the newspaper industry is complicated. On the one hand, printed newspapers are still instrumental to their audience because it widens the range of topics, issues, and events they can consume. This has to do with the structure of the print newspapers; they have been structured to lure the audience into reading even stories they might not have had initial interest in. On the other hand, online newspapers promise more control and activity to their audience. As such, readers may be having access to a reduced range of topics. Yet, evidence shows that each channel has ways of expanding their audiences' agendas. Online newspapers are embraced mostly by the educated while print newspapers are embraced by the older generation with lower levels of education perhaps.

2.1.2. The Local Context

Hassan et al. (2015) also acknowledges that the print media industry has undergone significant changes thanks to technology advancements. Now that newspapers are online, people can easily access news. Nigeria is one of the leading internet country in the African continent with over 67 million internet users. As such, Hassan et al. (2015) conducted their study to measure the impact of online newspaper readership on the circulation of print newspapers. They sought to cover two aspects: The effects of online newspapers readership on the print versions' circulation; and the extent online newspaper readership has impacted how the print version is circulated. In the end, Hassan et al. (2015) found out that a majority of newspaper readers nowadays prefer the online version over the print version. They are embracing the online version more because it is easily accessible to them from their internet-enabled gadgets. However, there

is a section of the audience that mentioned they will continue to read the print version even with the availability of the online version. Therefore, traditional media may continue to co-exist with new media today. Going into the future, many of the respondents still believed in the existence of the newspaper. However, the print version will often be supplementary to the online version.

According to Kalombe & Phiri (2019), online media has altered communication immensely to the point of disrupting Zambia's newspaper industry, which has struggled to maintain its traditional ways of doing business. However, the country's newspaper industry has to shape up and embrace technology to avoid being left out. People now want information quickly in order to make important decisions in their lives. Taking this into consideration, Kalombe & Phiri (2019) conducted their study to identify challenges that print newspapers are facing in the face of growing online media and how they can improve their revenues. A study of seven newspapers in the country of Zambia brought out the following results. First, online media is indeed threatening printed newspapers. The younger generation (31-40) to be specific are the ones embracing online media platforms. Second, online media has led to a reduction in the sales from printed newspapers. However, the impact was not yet apparent because people were still purchasing print newspapers. However, there was the feeling that newspaper companies have to take note of the new technological advancements and make the necessary adjustments. Third, online media has made it possible for people to access news conveniently. More people now read newspapers, both online and print thanks to this.

In Kenya, Ngoge (2014) sought to study the development of online newspapers compared to print newspapers, using the Daily Nation as a case study. He focused on the content, layout, as well as prominence of news in both print and online newspapers. In the end, he established that online newspapers are distinct from the print versions in the sense that they lack certain notices

and advertisements, especially from governments and specific organizations, yet they were present in the print versions. Print newspapers also carried many tenders and job advertisements compared to the online newspapers. As well, print newspapers had obituaries and county news. The way news was arranged in the online version were distinct, for instance, stories were on a single page with links to the stories. Readers could also comment on these stories. When it comes to prominent news, online newspapers made these stories a priority at the top of the webpages.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study was shaped by the following theories and frameworks/models: Functionalism and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

2.2.1. Functionalism

Functionalism is the theoretical view that society is a system with many parts that work together to ensure the society runs smoothly (Hooper, 2013). One of these parts is mass media. In view of this, functionalists will posit that media and technology contribute to the smooth functioning of the society in many ways. This theory will be instrumental towards explaining the role that technology, the internet, and online newspapers play in society. For instance, online newspapers make news easily accessible to the readers. The internet also plays many other life-changing functions including giving members of society a platform to interact with one another, which was not present in traditional media. Of course, technology can bring both positive and negative changes. Examples of the negative changes is that it is phasing out print newspapers with traditional media houses facing a drop in readership and circulation. According to Hooper (2013), other functions of media and technology can be categorized under commercial functions, entertainment functions, and social norm functions.

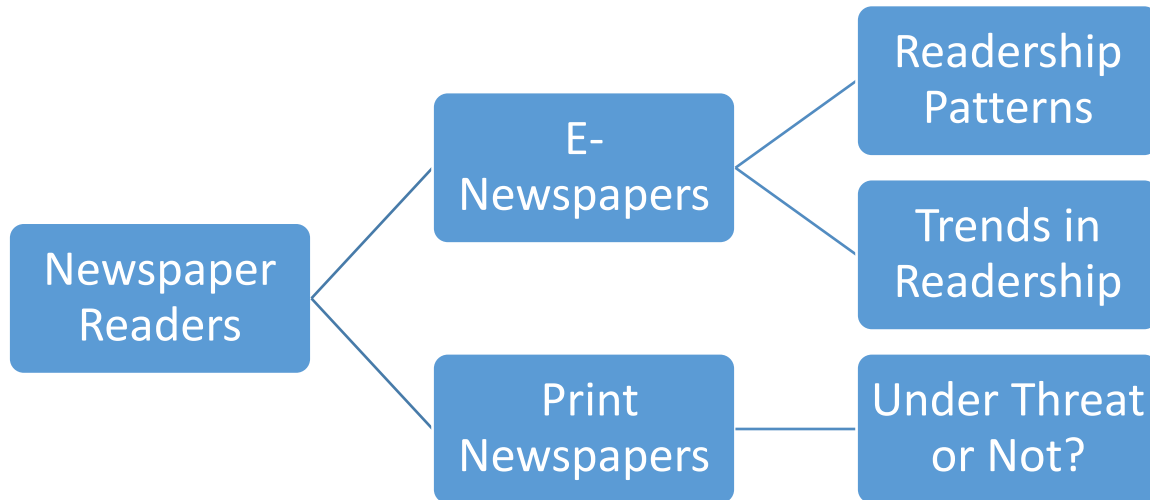
2.2.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

UGT proposes the following about the audiences that consume media (Peirce, 2007).

First, they are actively selecting the types of media they want and the content to consume.

Second, they are mindful about the reasons as to why they have chosen a specific medium. These reasons are inherent in them as they look for news messages that they can consume to fit their needs and gratification. There are five tenets that underpin UGT (Peirce, 2007): First, communication behavior is not only purposive but also goal directed and motivated; Second, people make the choice of communication medium and how they will use them; Third, there are social and psychological factors that mediate communication behavior; Fourth, the media has to contend with other communication forms to gratify the individual's needs; and Fifth, individuals are therefore considered powerful that the media. In view of the above, UGT will help explain the reasons and the decisions that readers make when they choose between print newspapers and online newspapers.

2.3. Conceptual Framework



Source: Author

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter of the study outlines the methodology that the researcher utilized to find data to answer the research questions. The research approach, the research methods, the sampling procedure, data collection steps, as well as ethical issues to consider are discussed.

3.1. Research Approach

This research utilized the qualitative approach. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2009) the qualitative approach to research utilizes interpretive techniques that seek to decode, translate, and describe a natural phenomenon taking place in the social world. The advantage of using the qualitative methodology is that the techniques used to mine data are focused to the extent that they bring forth rich data about the research phenomenon. The nature of this research topic warrants the use of the qualitative approach given that there was a need to understand in-depth views and experiences of individuals connected to the study topic.

3.2. Research Design

The researcher utilized the case study as the research design to answer the research questions. Researchers have used case studies to examine individuals, groups, and institutions. In this study, the case will be the *Daily Nation* newspaper owned by NMG. Given the focus of a case study, one of its advantages is that it is capable of unearthing in-depth information about the study phenomenon (Widner, Woolcock & Nieto, 2022). Secondly, the case study is flexible in the way it can employ different techniques to collect data. For instance, the researcher can use interview, observations, or scrutinize documents to unearth useful data.

3.3. Target Population

The target population for this study included journalists that work(ed) for the *Daily Nation* to be specific. They were better placed to answer the questions because they had an understanding of their audiences, their newspaper, and organizational objectives as far as going online is concerned.

3.4. Sampling

The researcher utilized purposeful sampling technique to arrive at the sample. Purposeful sampling, as the name suggests, is the type of sampling where the researcher identifies individuals from the target population that can answer the questions because they are experts in the field and also directly connected to the study topic (Polonsky & Waller, 2010). The advantage of using purposeful sampling is that it ensures the researcher is able to find useful data that will answer the research question, thus justifying its use in this study. To this end, the researcher approached journalists from *Daily Nation* print, digital media and broadcast departments to be part of the study. The inclusion criteria were journalists/editors/writers/managers working for the *Daily Nation* with more than 10 years of experience in the company. The approach helped understand the transformation in the organization that will offer rich information for the study.

3.5. Research Instruments

Data was collected using the interview technique. Particularly, it was an interview with open-ended questions. The advantage of this research instrument according to Polonsky & Waller (2010) is that it is capable of eliciting in-depth information from the respondents on the topic being discussed.

3.6. Data Analysis

Thereafter, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected. According to Braun & Clarke (2019), this involves the identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns of meaning that emerge from the qualitative data gathered. Therefore, the interview records were transcribed and then coded to identify themes and trends that emerge from them. They were then written in the report in the form of themes.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

There are a number of ethical issues that were taken into consideration given that the research involved human participants. First, the researcher sought the necessary approval from the authorities – the University of Nairobi’s Ethics and Research Committee as well as NMG’s management. Next, the researcher sought for informed consents from the likely participants (Miller et al., 2012). Details of the research were explained to them before they made the decision to participate by signing on the consent forms. While conducting the interview, the researcher ensured that the participants are not harmed (psychologically and/or emotionally) by the questions asked. Participants were free not to answer the questions they found uncomfortable. Furthermore, they were free to leave the entire study at any time without any explanation and repercussions. When writing the report, the research considered the important concepts of privacy and confidentiality. Any personal information such as names, job numbers, or emails were not recorded as Miller et al. (2012) suggested. Instead, they were given nicknames such as Respondent 1, Respondent 2 and so forth.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis reveals the findings of the interview and research process. As already mentioned, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected. What follows is a discussion of the findings to interpret the patterns of meaning that emerged from the qualitative data gathered. The discussion presented the findings according to themes. The main objective of this study was to find out trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area. Therefore, the main research question was: What are the trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area? The following were the research questions: (1) What are the demographics of Kenyans reading the e-newspaper? (2) How does the readership of e-newspaper compare to that of print newspapers? And (3) Is the e-newspaper threatening to replace print newspapers?

4.1. Findings

The findings of the research are presented in line with the objectives of the research:

The demographics of Kenyans reading the *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper compared to the print version

The reason for considering this variable was that it is assumed that it is the younger generation that reads the e-newspapers while the older generation have remained stuck with the print version. A majority of the respondents confirmed this general feeling. The demographics of the Kenyans that prefer the e-newspapers are younger compared to those that still purchase print papers. According to Respondent 2,

“Most of the readers of the traditional print copy are older people in their 40s and 50s. You do not find young people buying these newspapers on the streets. They get news/information from their phones” [Respondent 2].

The third Respondent had this to say when asked about the demographics that prefer to read the e-newspapers, *“From the data that we get to see, it is mainly male. The dominant age group is about 40 to 50 years”* [Respondent 3]. Respondent 4, however, had a different opinion. *“The users are similar. The major difference is the accessibility. eNewspaper is consumed in the diaspora as well”* [Respondent 4]. Still on the same, Respondent 5 had this to say,

“Just like myself, a majority of people that tend to prefer reading online news are young in age. These are people that can be described as tech-savvy. They have smartphones that are capable of browsing online news. They also have laptops and other gadgets. They read news from these gadgets instead of having to go to the streets to purchase print newspapers. On the other hand, those that go for print newspapers are older in terms of age. They are people that are used to reading print newspapers for a long time. As such, they have their favorite vendors and would make purchases whenever they encounter them in towns and villages. In terms of gender, male appear to be dominant when it comes to reading print newspapers. Few women buy newspapers to read on the streets. However, more women would read online newspapers especially if they find interesting news” [Respondent 5].

According to the 6th Respondent, *“I would say that e-newspaper readers tend to be young. However, I would not pinpoint the age group because they can be as young as 20 or as old as 50. The most important characteristic that brings together e-newspaper readers is that they have a gadget that they can use to read the newspapers online. Another characteristic is*

that one has to have Internet. Therefore, the age may not matter a lot". As for Respondent 7, he made the following statement,

"In my view, I do not see any huge differences when it comes to the demographics that read e-newspapers and those that read print newspapers. First and foremost, anyone that likes to read news may not have a specific preference. I think the most important thing to consider here is access. When one has access to print newspapers, let's say in the offices or kinyozi, they will pick up the print newspaper and start reading. As well, they can still do the same if they have access to the Internet thus read e-newspaper. The only thing that makes a certain section of the population let's say prefer reading e-newspaper is because of factors such as convenience. Without a doubt, the soft copy offers more convenience compared to printed news. You can read it anywhere as long as you have an Internet-enabled gadget" [Respondent 7].

Next up was respondent 8 with the following revelation, *"First and foremost, I would say that those going for e-newspapers will tend to be younger. Perhaps I would say somewhere between 20 years and 45 years of age. These people are tech-savvy, meaning that they like using technology to accomplish their objectives. They can just browse the news using websites. The good thing about online news is that one can compare the news with many other newspapers and sources, including social media to corroborate breaking news. Another characteristic is that e-newspaper readers are highly likely to be working-class with blue-collar jobs. The lifestyle that comes with this class is that they want to be seen as tech-savvy. Therefore, they will tend to prefer reading e-newspapers. Those that go for print newspapers tend to be a bit older and living in rural areas or working in other types of jobs. As for whether male or female, men tend to be the readers of newspapers in general, whether online or offline"*.

On his part, the 9th Respondent mentioned something interesting about the demographics of those that buy newspapers. This is the exact statement from Respondent 9, *“One thing that I have come to notice is that the clientele of e-newspapers can be anybody. It is hard to pinpoint the exact description because any type of person can use the Internet to browse for news and information as long as they have a smartphone and the Internet. As for the print newspapers, I have noticed that they are most likely to be establishments or organizations or businesses. They purchase daily newspapers for their employees and clients. These can be banks, offices, schools, and other types of institutions. Out there on the streets, the number of people buying newspapers is reducing. They will likely be older people from 50 years and above. These are people that are used to reading newspapers before the advent of technology and the Internet”*.

Last but not least, Respondent 10 gave this statement. *“In terms of gender, I would say that it depends with the type of news. There are more women that will read e-newspapers compared to reading print versions because online news offers them a wide variety of topics compared to print. Besides, it is easier to read or subscribe for specific kind of news that they like. For instance, women will tend to go for news that are entertainment-related, beauty, or gossip columns. This is why you will find many women preferring e-newspapers compared to print newspapers. Men will go for all kinds of news, and prefer sports-related news as well. In terms of age, I believe that it is the younger and tech-savvy generation that go for e-newspapers. You will not find a 20-year old Gen Z generation buying a newspaper. However, you will easily find them using their phone to browse for news that they find interesting”* [Respondent 10].

How the readership of the Daily Nation’s e-newspaper compares to that of print newspapers?

When it comes to this objective, there were a lot of sentiments that emerged. According to the first respondent, there is no much difference between the readership of the e-newspapers compared to that of print newspapers. *“I do not think there is much difference because our style for the e-newspaper looks the same [as the traditional newspaper]. It is just a replica. It is just the traditional newspaper but now on the computer machine”* [Respondent 1]. According to the second respondent, the main difference is that, *“The traditional newspaper is in printed paper but the e-paper is in the electronic format, you can get it on your phone or computer as pdf format”*. Nonetheless, there are certain characteristics that determine the readership of both kinds of newspapers. For instance, Respondent 2 had this to say, *“Since I work here at Nation, I have (easy) access to it for free on a daily basis. Nonetheless, the good thing with the e-newspaper is that you can get it conveniently on your phone without getting out of the house”*.

The 3rd Respondent stated the following, *“the main difference is in the delivery. As the name suggests, the hard copy is physical and the e-paper is electronic so you will need a gadget to read the paper, probably, a tablet, phone or laptop/computer. This is the major difference. In terms of look and feel, however, they are nearly the same”*. When asked which one he preferred, he stated that he is comfortable with both. According to him, *“I cannot say I am inclined towards one or the other because I have access to both. In my own view, however, the one that is both portable and friendly/easy to read is the e-newspaper. The print newspaper is fairly bulky.”* On explaining the terms of circulation, it became clear that the print newspapers still bypass e-newspapers. *“On average, about 70,000 print copies a day (printed) with a return rate of about 8%. The e-paper is a daily reader (rate) of about 50,000. However, these numbers can vary on a*

day-to-day basis [Respondent 3]. When asked to expound on these numbers, the respondent had the following to say:

“There is a lot. Although I am not sure about the scope of the research, but it is interesting. It would be better to get to the readers of both types of newspapers themselves. However, some of the insights to be gain include the following struggles. For the e-newspaper, people require data/Internet to read the news (from their gadgets). For the print newspapers, the numbers depend on the last-mile delivery. Are you able to cover everywhere? People living in remote places may not be able to access the print copies. They may not be able to read the newspapers online as well due to lack of data/Internet, the kind of phones people using (e-newspapers require smartphones), and the cost of data. Something else to note is that the Gen Z are not considered as newsreaders; there is a lot of other information on the Internet that they can consume/read – books, games, social media, and other websites” [Respondent 3].

The 4th Respondent also had this to say about the readership distinction between the physical/print newspapers compared to e-newspapers. *“Physical Newspapers are taken to the market in Print or tangible forms. eNewspapers are the digital versions that come as both ePaper or website stories. For our case the website is Nation.Africa”*. Nonetheless, people have come to like e-newspapers because of several reasons. Most importantly, e-newspapers offer breaking news thus make them appealing as compared to print newspapers that are printed just once in the day, thus offering news that happened the previous day. According to Respondent 4, *“All breaking news come with a spike in sales; Politics e.g. Swearing in, Calamity e.g. Kibaki Death, Education e.g. KCPE results and Economy stories e.g. budget reading”*. Another distinction is in the way the newspaper is being paid. As expected, much of the print newspapers

are paid by cash. One gives the cash to the newspaper vendor and in return they are given the physical newspaper. As Respondent 4 mentioned, *“The amount is paid through a paywall. Long-term subscriptions are paid for using bank transactions. Some subscribers pay through mPesa”*. More so, there are several factors that the respondent mentioned about what makes the e-newspapers favorite to read. There were several factors to consider here including appearance, immediate update of news, ease of use, functions such as chat, technology, and the fact that e-newspapers are environment friendly. Respondent 4, however, mentioned about two main properties, *“user-friendliness and up-to date news”*. Accordingly, *“User experience is key and platform frustrations lead to loss of sales”*.

Next up was the 5th Respondent. When asked between the two kinds of newspapers, the respondent mentioned the following as the difference, *“I believe that the difference between the two is found in the mode of delivery. In other words, how the final user reads the two types of newspapers. Traditionally, newspapers can be read in the print format, otherwise the hard copy. As for the e-newspapers, it involves the digital format. This means that news is delivered in the digital format, requiring the use of digital technologies such as smartphones and laptops. One also requires the Internet to read news online. I think these are the major differences. Otherwise, the news is mostly the same because news producers copy paste what is in the print format to the online format”*. The same respondent was asked about the kind of services offered in the e-newspapers that make them appealing? The following was the answer:

“One of the things that make e-newspapers appealing is the fact that they are very convenient to the user. First and foremost, one does not have to go the streets to purchase a newspaper. It is as easy logging online using a smartphone and browsing for the news from the comfort of the living room, office, or any other setup. Something else that makes

it appealing is personalization. The thing with the traditional newspaper is that once it has been published during the night and released to the public, there is no more editing. This can be considered as stale news because the audience reads what has happened yesterday. On the other hand, there is personalization in the e-news because first of all, it is possible to subscribe to only specific type of news, for instance, sports news. Besides, one can read as many newspapers as possible from different countries and not only from the Kenyan news organizations. Kenyans living abroad can also do the same using e-newspapers. They can read what is happening at home from abroad”.

As for the 6th Respondent, he made it clear that both types of newspapers are appealing. According to him, *“I find myself reading both types of newspapers largely because I have access to both of them. However, if I was to buy or prefer one, I would choose the e-newspaper. The reason for this is that is very convenient compared to the print newspapers. I am tech-savvy, which means I have Internet enabled gadgets. I own a smartphone and a laptop that I can able to access online news whether at the comfort of my home or at the office or when I am travelling.”* Moving on, the respondent had to answer questions about the type of services that e-newspapers offer, which make them appealing. *“When it comes to services, I would pick personalization, community information, and entertainment. Without a doubt, there is a lot that goes on in the e-newspaper. It is live in a way in that the news can be updated in real time. Besides, apart from the text, the e-newspaper allows for video to be embedded in the news as opposed to the print newspaper where only images and texts can be embedded. Therefore, this gives it an advantage over the print newspaper. When it comes to personalization, I believe that this has to do with analytics and Big Data. It is possible to use cookies to understand what the readers want or browse more and then present this news to them. This high level of personalization will make it*

more appealing to many people compared to print newspapers that largely generalize the audience” [Respondent 6].

Next up was Respondent 8 with the following response. *“In terms of content, I do not think there is a huge difference between the two. Most likely, they involve the same writers, journalists, and editors. The same stories that they write for the printed newspapers is the same that they will write for the e-newspapers. Therefore, both kinds of newspapers will be screaming the same headlines, especially if they are from the same media houses. For instance, if it is the Nation newspaper, the same stories found on the printed Nation Newspaper will be the same that will be written for their e-newspaper. The outline and the way the stories are arrange will also nearly be the same. Nonetheless, there might be small differences to expect. One of them is that printed newspapers, as the name suggests, will be read on print while the e-newspaper will be read online” [Respondent 8].*

The last respondent, Respondent 10, had this to say when asked about differentiating the readership of these two newspapers. *“Yes, there are several differences. I think the main one is the fact that the traditional newspapers remain to be read in print while e-newspapers have to be read in the digital format – which can be read using laptop, smartphone, or any other. Another difference is in the way they are presented. The way the news is presented online will slightly be different in the sense that the reader can only scroll up and down unlike the print newspaper where one can only peruse through the pages”*. He also gave the following sentiments when probed further about the kind of news that people like to find on e-newspapers. *“I believe that readers can find every type of news online. It depends on what one likes. I think that this is what makes people like e-newspapers compared to print newspapers. With the e-newspaper, one can subscribe or access only the type of content that they like. Unlike the print newspaper where one*

has to purchase the entire newspaper. Young people will tend to want to find entertainment news while sports-oriented persons will look for sports news. Therefore, it depends with what a person likes” [Respondent 10].

Is the e-newspaper threatening to replace print newspapers in terms of clientele?

Accordingly, the general feeling here was that the readership of e-newspaper is fast increasing. Therefore, it appears that the e-newspaper is threatening to replace print newspapers. However, it is hard to predict the future; therefore, no one was really sure about this. Respondent 1 had this to say about this topic, *“I think so. Right now everyone knows the print newspaper circulation is dropping. Most of the print newspapers mostly go to government institutions and office. Many are moving towards reading newspapers online using gadgets such as the tablet and computers. Not many are fans of the hard copy newspapers”*. Still on the same topic, the second respondent mentioned the following when asked whether he thought the e-paper is trying to replace the hard copy. *“I think it is catching up. {Looking at} The circulation of the print format has been dropping gradually. Therefore, the e-newspapers will be catching up in a few years. That is where we are heading as a news agency. More so, “Most of the readers of the traditional print copy are older people in their 40s and 50s. You do not find young people buying these newspapers on the streets. They get news/information from their phones. That means in the future, we may not have print newspapers on the streets. Another thing is that print copies are very expensive. Within this year, the price of print newspapers has doubled. So, it is becoming more expensive to buy. If this continues, many people will shift towards reading online news”* [Respondent 2].

The 3rd Respondent had access to data about the circulation of newspapers, both print and online newspapers and had the following to say about whether e-newspaper is fast replacing print

newspapers. *“That is more of a projection. If you look at the graphs, the physical (print) newspaper is declining. The assumption is that at some point, it (hard copy) may become extinct. The volume of sales of hard copies are declining. If you look at the large media houses’ statements in the public domain, there is an agreement that the numbers are declining at an alarming rate. As for the e-newspaper, it has been in the market for a while now but the numbers are yet to become huge. They are not growing as fast to catch up with the print copies. So, it is a tricky one. In my view, I cannot be sure about what the future holds (in terms of print newspapers being phased out). It is an open question. The only hope probably is that there is potential in pay wall, which might outperform the e-newspaper”.*

As for the 4th Respondent, he mentioned the following, *“eNewspapers have been growing over time. Their contribution to the industry is growing but we cannot say it will replace the Print versions of newspaper, at least not in the near future if we go by newspaper models/trends from the developed countries”.* Next was the 5th Respondent who mentioned the following, *“although it is hard to predict the future, but I believe it will be a threat that may fully replace print newspapers. Although this may not happen within just a few years. It may take a lot of time. But if I were to predict, I would say that in 100 years, things might be very different. There may be no print papers especially given the fact that the planet is facing climate change. Therefore, people are trying to protect the environment and they would want to do this by banning products that use trees. Therefore, I believe that e-newspaper is a real threat that will overtake print newspaper in the coming times. Another reason I say this is because the newer generations rarely buy newspapers. They consume news using not only online newspapers but also many other sources. More so, they get their breaking news from social media more than newspapers.*

Therefore, one cannot say that they will change their minds soon and adopt print newspapers like the previous generations”.

To probe further, the interviewer had asked about the factors that made e-newspapers favorite to read. Some of the characteristics that had been considered included the following: appearance, immediate update of news, ease of use, functions such as chat, technology, environment friendly. Out of these, those that stood out included “immediate update of news”, “ease of use”, “functions such as chat”, and “technology use”. This is what Respondent 5 had to say.

“Without a doubt, one of the things that makes e-newspapers better compared to print newspapers is that there is the component of the immediate update of news. This is impossible to achieve in the print version. Journalists and editors have to ensure that they deliver the news for the day to be printed overnight so that they can be circulated early in the morning. This means that any breaking news that will happen thereafter will have to be prepared for a day after. Yet, this becomes stale news and will have to be picked up by other news forms. With e-newspapers, however, things become easier because journalists, writer, and editors will just update the online version inserting the breaking news headlines. Next up is the ease of use. This means that the reader does not have to struggle or hassle a lot before they can read newspapers online. It is as easy as a click of the button on the computer or switching on the smartphone. With regards to extra functions such as chat, this is true. When people finish reading the online news, they can give their replies and comments with regards to the news. These features are only present online but not offline with the print version. The communication online is therefore two-way compared to offline that is only one-way. This definitely makes e-newspapers more

appealing compared to the print version. On the aspect of technology use, I think this depends with whether one is tech savvy or not. Definitely, the younger generation are attracted to e-newspapers because it is technology oriented. They are technology inclined compared to the older generation that prefer to do things the old fashioned way.”

Respondent 6 had a very interesting analogy to this objective on whether or not the online newspaper will fast replace the printed newspapers. This is what the respondent had to say, *“I do not think that it will fully replace print newspapers. I would say that it would be some form of complement. I would like to point to the readership of storybooks or books in general as a case study for what I am saying. For a fact, people can now read books online. Companies such as Amazon have thrived based on people being able to read books online, especially with the Kindle trajectory. This does not mean that people have abandoned reading printed books. Even the younger generation are somehow reading printed books despite also reading online books. Therefore, it is some kind of a win-win situation. They complement each other. I believe that this is what may be the case for the newspapers as well. The e-newspaper will complement printed newspaper somewhat. However, I do not know for how long this may go on”*.

According to Respondent 7, however, there is still a long way to go before being sure that the printed newspaper can be fully replaced. According to this respondent, *“this is a tricky question to say as of now. The reason for this is that despite people going online as predominant than before, they are still purchasing print newspapers. I do not know about the west countries; in Kenya and African countries at large, print newspapers still rule. Very few find themselves subscribing or reading online newspapers. I believe that if you look at the numbers, this is the story that is being told. Although the number of subscribers keeps on increasing, it is yet to surpass the number of people reading printed newspapers. Therefore, if I am to make any*

assumption about the future, I will have to use such data, and it shows that there is still a long way to go before we can say that the print newspapers are indeed under threat”.

As for the 9th Respondent, this was the answer. *“I am not sure about the use of the word “fully”. This means that print newspapers will be fully wiped out from circulation. Therefore, I am a little bit cautious from having to use such a word. However, perhaps I would say that it will replace print newspapers by a huge margin. Newspapers have been around for ages. The Internet and technology to facilitate e-newspapers have been around for less than two decades. Therefore, the strides made by e-newspapers has been significant and should be lauded. Apart from Nation and other Kenyan newspapers, I have witnessed the subscriber numbers for many other huge global newspapers soaring up higher than what can be circulated. The reason for this is that those that can subscribe to online newspapers can be plenty and come from different parts of the globe and not just from Kenya. Kenyans in diaspora can easily read the Nation newspaper from abroad, unlike the print newspaper which will have limited readership”* [Respondent 9].

4.2. Analysis

This part of the report delves into a discussion of the findings in line with the objectives. The goal is to reveal the themes that emerge from the above section and from the interviews delivered by the respondents.

The demographics of Kenyans reading the *Daily Nation*’s e-newspaper

The following are the themes that emerge from this objective taking into consideration the transcripts of the interviews. First, the majority of Kenyans that read the e-newspapers are of the younger generation. The age group, however, is very wide because even people in their 40s and 50s read their news online. However, the most predominant group can be said to be between

30 and 40s. This is a theme that resonates with several other findings out there. According to the research conducted by Mitchell (2016) younger adults are the ones that like to read the news instead of watching or listening to it. This may explain why the age group between 35 and 45 are the ones that like to read news. However, the interesting bit of the research by Mitchell (2016) the reading by young adults is more through digital text than print. The study established that 81% of the respondents who were between 18 years and 29 years liked to read their news from online sources as opposed to print sources. Only 10% of this group like to read from print sources. Another interesting bit is that a similar finding is among those between 30 and 49 years. However, as the age increases, those that like to read from print sources increases. According to Mitchell (2016), for those that are between 50 and 64 years old, 41% like reading from online sources while 40% like to read from print sources. The number for print goes higher with the age. For those who are 65 years and older, 63% prefer to get their news from print sources and not from online sources. Therefore, this is an interesting finding that rhymes with what this study has established about those that like reading e-newspapers compared to the traditional print newspapers. The older the age the highly likely they will prefer reading their news from print sources.

The second theme is that they are predominantly male. Just like the print newspapers, it appears that men like to read news more than women, whether online or offline. Third, there is a lifestyle being led by people that like to read the e-newspapers. For instance, they are tech-savvy. This word was common among the respondents, meaning that they like to use technology. To read news online, one will have to have an Internet-enabled gadget. This can be a smartphone, a laptop, or tablet. Secondly, one has to have Internet. Another theme is that they work in the blue-collar job group thereby most likely living in towns. Folks in rural areas will likely continue

purchasing print newspapers. People in town, however, are more technology-advanced thus have no problem utilizing technology to read news online. Internet penetration in town is also at a higher percentage.

The readership of the Daily Nation's e-newspaper compared to that of the print version

The following are the themes that emerged from the interviews in line with this second objective. Overall, there seems to be no much difference between the e-newspaper and the print newspaper. The style of how they paste the stories, as well as the look and feel of both newspapers appear to be largely the same. As the respondents working with the NMG outlined, the e-newspaper is more of a replica of the print newspaper. The only difference is the medium through which the stories are being delivered – the traditional newspaper is delivered on print paper while the e-newspaper is delivered online on the digital platform. Therefore, another prevalent theme is that the readership of the newspaper will largely depend on access to any of the type of newspaper. For those that have access to both types of newspapers, they will not have a preference of one type of newspaper over the other. Those working in offices, for instance, will more often than not have access to both types of newspapers and will read both. The reason for this is that institutions – government and private sectors – make up a huge clientele of the print newspapers. Therefore, those working in these institutions have (nearly free) access to the print newspapers. As for the e-newspaper, it is more convenient because it offers a high level of convenience compared to the traditional print newspaper. First and foremost, one can access the e-newspaper from whenever they are without having to go outside to the streets to make a purchase. There are two important things that one ought to have to access an e-newspaper. First, they ought to have an Internet-enabled gadget, this can be a computer, smartphone, and/or a tablet. Second, one ought to have the Internet. Without these, it would be impossible to read an

e-newspaper. This is an inconvenience on its own because people without the said gadgets and the Internet cannot have access.

Having said that, there are several reasons that emerged to explain the reason as to why people are increasingly coming to like the e-newspaper. One of the reasons that stood out is the fact that e-newspapers offer breaking news thus make them appealing as compared to print newspapers that are printed just once in the day, thus offering news that happened the previous day. Another reason that makes the e-newspapers convenient is the fact that it offers more ways to pay compared to the traditional newspaper. The majority of print newspaper readers have to have cash to pay for their newspapers and end the transaction. The e-newspaper, however, offers more flexibility where one can use digital platforms and bank transactions. Also, the payment system is not a one-time transaction but something that goes on for a long time. From the respondents, what became clear is that they pay their subscription fees using a paywall. They will then use bank transactions to pay for long-term subscriptions. Most importantly, some subscribers can use MPesa to make their payments. MPesa is a revolutionary digital payment system that has made money transactions easier across Kenya and East Africa. From the comfort of their home or offices, subscribers can make payment and receive confirmations without having to go to a bank. The reasons that make e-newspapers more appealing and convenient do not stop here. As some of the respondents mentioned, some of the reasons to consider include appearance, personalization, immediate update of news, ease of use, as well as functions such as chats. In terms of theory, this finding is supported by UGT, which proposes that media users are actively selecting the types of media they want and the content to consume (Peirce, 2007). Second, they are mindful about the reasons as to why they have chosen a specific medium. These reasons are inherent in them as they look for news messages that they can consume to fit their

needs and gratification. In the case of print versus digital newspapers, people go for each because it gratifies their needs, which may include nice appearance, personalized news, immediate update of news, ease of use, as well as functions such as chats.

These findings can be supported by other researchers who have conducted studies on the same topic. For instance, according to Lesitaokana & Akpabio (2014) found out that people like to read online news on e-newspapers because they were generally interactive, published immediate news, and had multi-media content. Some also like e-newspapers because the content being offered online is mostly free and they don't have to pay for any pay wall. As well, such content is highly accessible and convenient to read them while they are undertaking other type of tasks. For this reason, the researchers understood that many people want e-newspapers because of convenience and low cost, but not the layout of the publication.

The one thing that makes the traditional newspaper lose its appeal is the fact that once it has been published during the night and released to the public, there is no more editing. Any error can only be rectified with subsequent releases. This can be considered as stale news because the audience reads what has happened yesterday. If there are any damages that took place, then the news publishing company will have to deal with the consequences. With the e-newspaper, however, the publishing companies have an upper hand. To begin with, they can rectify any typos or stories in real time. This news can be considered live. They can also update on what is currently happening, including embedding a video. More so, the news agencies can as well pull down any false or damaging stories that may have been erroneously reported. They can then update the audience with the correct information and offer apologies if need be. This is not an option with the traditional newspaper.

Apart from offering live news, e-newspapers also offer what is referred to as user personalization. It is possible for users to subscribe to only specific type of news, for instance, sports news or entertainment news. As some of the respondents would attest to, readers can find every type of news online depending on their taste and what one likes. With the e-newspaper, one can subscribe or access only the type of content that they like. This is not possible with the print newspapers. If one wants to find information about sports, they have no option but to purchase the entire paper.

As well, readers are not limited by geographical differences or barriers when reading news from the e-newspaper platforms. As one of the respondents did say, “one can read as many newspapers as possible from different countries and not only from the Kenyan news organizations. Kenyans living abroad can also do the same using e-newspapers. They can read what is happening at home from abroad”. This is one of the characteristics that makes e-newspapers more convenient compared to print newspapers. Kenyans living in diaspora cannot access print newspapers easily.

Whether or not the e-newspaper is threatening to replace print newspapers

On the outskirts, most respondents projected that the e-newspaper is a threat to print newspapers. However, few were skeptical that this will happen any time soon. Therefore, the main theme that emerges from this objective is that although the e-newspaper poses a threat to the traditional print newspaper, this threat may not materialize any time soon especially in the Kenyan context. All of the respondents agreed that indeed the number of print newspapers in circulation has been dropping drastically since the emergence of the e-newspaper. However, it is yet to go down completely. One of the respondents used statistics to back up this fact. *“On average, about 70,000 print copies a day (printed) with a return rate of about 8%. The e-paper is*

a daily reader (rate) of about 50,000. However, these numbers can vary on a day-to-day basis [Respondent 3]. From this example, it becomes clear that print newspapers still rule and the e-newspaper has some catching up to do. The numbers may continue to rise in the future. This is an observation shared by Mudgal & Rana (2020) who conducted their study in India. From the focus group interviewed, this study established that print newspapers do not face immediate threat so long as they innovate and reinvent themselves. They did not see evidence of print newspapers dying any time soon. However, they were still citing caution. They mentioned that there is a need for news media to first accept that their prowess is slowly fading away and their day may come. This is why innovation is important. According to Mudgal & Rana (2020), they need to accept that this is an era of digitization and it is happening at a fast pace. Although it may take time in a country such as India, which may share certain similarities with Kenya, digitization will finally catch up. Therefore, as much as they continue with printing hard copies, news media companies should as well embrace technology and go digital. Apparently, the future is digital as Mudgal & Rana (2020) put it. Therefore, the finding by this research aligns with others.

An inference that can be made here is that both the hard and soft copies of the newspapers have their own advantages and disadvantages that make them convenience and inconvenient at the same time. The advantages of the e-newspaper are that it is convenient to the reader, it is easy to update news, and offers a lot of flexibility. However, the e-newspaper has its fair share of disadvantages. For instance, people without smartphones or Internet-enabled gadgets, and/or Internet cannot gain access to the news. This means that many especially in the rural areas and lower-class neighborhoods in towns cannot afford the luxury of reading e-newspapers. Therefore, unless the Internet continues to penetrate into many other areas in Kenya

and people afford smartphones or Internet-enabled gadgets, the subscription numbers will not shoot up drastically. This finding is shared by Patel (2010) who gives the following values of the e-newspapers: There is an increased demand for digital news and the demand keeps going up; it can provide news in real-time with constant updates and alerts with breaking news; users have the luxury of selecting the news that they want with much of the news being delivered for free thus they can cross-check if certain information is true; consumers can customize digital news selecting what they want and if they want to get alerts in their email; it gives consumers an interactive experience with quizzes, data, and video reports; e-newspapers are not bound by geographical boundaries thus opening up web traffic from the global population; the provision of digital news is somewhat cheaper and cost-effective compared to print; rates for online advertising are low thus a plus for advertisers; and the fact that e-newspapers are green and eco-friendly due to lack of printing. At the same time, Patel (2010) also gives several disadvantages of the e-newspaper: It is proving tricky to charge online newsreaders as they expect it to be free; there are security issues with online payments; there is the issue of poor content quality with some publishers doing fake or unprofessional stories to increase website traffic and revenues; no technology has replicated the tangible and aesthetic feel of traditional newspapers; there is a lot of information going on with digital news to the point that updates can go unnoticed; and the line between real news and rumors in the digital landscape appears to be camouflaged thus impacting the credibility of news organizations.

On its part, the advantage of the print newspapers is that it does not require one to have a gadget or the Internet to read the news. Vendors are strategically placed in many areas especially in towns for readers to purchase their favorite newspapers. However, as one of the respondents said, circulation depends on what is referred to as the last-mile delivery. This is one of the

problems that perhaps makes it hard for the circulation of print newspapers to go up. Folks living in rural areas have little access to newspapers. One has to go to town to have easy access to the print newspapers from vendors. Therefore, if the likes of NMG cannot reach far-flung places as much as possible, then the number of print newspaper readers will continue being low. Patel (2010) also conducted a study to understand the pros and cons of print newspapers. The following are the advantages: It provides aesthetic and tangible value/experience that cannot be replicated by technology; there is a huge readership that remains loyal to reading the print newspapers and most of them are above 45 years of age; the print newspaper does not require one to have access to the Internet or subscribe to be receiving news every time. More so, it is lightweight, portable, and foldable; the print newspaper is yet to be fragmented thus a plus for advertisers; and a huge chunk of advertising revenue comes from print newspapers for many publishers (Patel, 2010). Conversely, there are certain disadvantages that come with print newspapers and they include the following: There is a waste of materials with print newspapers with huge costs in printing, distribution and circulation; print newspapers cannot provide real-time updates; circulation has been going down across all age groups due to reduced demand for newspapers; print newspapers are standardized which means they cannot personalize their news; print newspapers are rarely interactive, only one-way communication; and that it is damaging to the environment given the amount of wood required to produce copies of print newspapers.

An interesting theme that emerged from the interviews revolved around the existing different generations. *“Something else to note is that the Gen Z are not considered as newsreaders; there is a lot of other information on the Internet that they can consume/read – books, games, social media, and other websites”* [Respondent 3]. This is something that other researchers can corroborate. Indeed, the younger generations are not ardent news readers like the

previous generations. This is especially true for print newspapers. It is rare to see a 20-year old going to the streets to purchase a print newspaper. Perhaps, they consider this to be old-fashioned and only their fathers or grandfathers continue to read print newspapers. Without a doubt, the newer generations have turned to newer sources of information, including social media. As some researchers would attest to, social media has become an important source of news, especially breaking news. If something is happening not only in Kenya but anywhere else in the world, social media users will be among the first to see videos, texts, or pictures of the events as they unfold from whichever place. This has been aided by the proliferation of smartphones and the Internet. Any person with a smartphone and with Internet connection can record an event and post on their social media account thus making them some kind of amateur journalists. Others will comment and share the news events thus spreading the news to far-flung places. News agencies have come to rely on social media to report breaking news as well. Apart from social media, the younger generation definitely have a lot to consume from the Internet. Therefore, they find little time and reason to subscribe to e-newspapers.

On the issue of generations, Bonner & Roberts (2017) nonetheless, have an interesting observation. They used a mixed-methodology design (combining the survey and focus groups) to investigate how the Millennial generation feels about the reading of print magazines during the Internet age. They then arrived at the following findings. First, they liked to read print magazines because of the following reasons. The first is content. The content provided by print newspapers are unique to medium that appeal to their narrow interests. The second is aesthetics. They mentioned that the print newspapers have their own unique aesthetic qualities that ranged from the general feel of magazines and the looks to layouts and several other technical aspects. Other reasons include the fact that print magazines offers entertainment, escape mechanisms, lifelong

habits and identity formation, ease of use, and such. For these reasons, Bonner & Roberts (2017) predicted that the younger generation may uniquely continue to read print magazines despite the fact that they are in the digital age. However, as mentioned earlier, it is important for news companies to be innovative so as to appeal to the younger generation to capture their unique interests and likes.

On the idea of social media playing a big role in the news industry, it is a finding that is supported by the American Press Institute (2017). According to this institute, digital subscribers are highly likely to pay for online news subscription or read news online after they see a publication of the said news on social media. Therefore, social media acts as the lead for their online news. As they browse social media, they will find interesting links about news article that they might find interesting. For this reason, the American Press Institute (2017) argue that while some may feel that social media is challenging for publishers, this is an oversimplification. It is indeed an opportunity for publishers. One thing they should know is that subscribers are highly likely to follow publications on social media compared to nonsubscribers. Therefore, they should not dismiss social media as a subscription strategy. Such data suggests, according to the American Press Institute (2017), that it is important for news companies to engage their subscribers and loyal customers on social media to expand their audience. At the same time, the subscribers can be empowered to become marketers and ambassadors because they are capable of sharing these links with other social media users.

Overall, this finding is in line with the theoretical view of functionalism, which stipulates that media and technology contribute to the smooth functioning of the society in many ways (Hooper, 2013). Arguably, technology, the Internet, and the digital landscape may be disruptive but it is playing a crucial role in enabling news readership. Without a doubt, online newspapers

make news easily accessible to the readers. Other functions of media and technology include commercial functions, entertainment functions, and social norm functions (Hooper, 2013). News media companies such as NMG make money from the two as a commercially viable organization.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This is the last chapter of the thesis. It sums up the most important arguments and insights that have emanated from this research in the previous sections. Most importantly as well, recommendations about future research are also made.

5.1. Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis paper was to understand the impact that e-newspapers and digital format of presenting news has had on the print version. It was important to conduct this study because newspapers have played an important role in many societies keeping people informed and up to date with the latest news and developments. Therefore, it can be regarded as one of the most powerful and significant tools of mass communication. However, the way news has been presented has been changing over the years with certain repercussions. Overall, it has moved from word of mouth or use of smoke signals to the digital era where information spreads faster across the globe over the Internet. The main focus of this thesis has been on the shift from print newspapers to the digital format, otherwise referred to as e-newspapers. Without a doubt, digital content is king. It can connect people, build brands, and engaged readers. Therefore, digital publishing has revolutionized mass communication. On its part, printing newspapers is a resource-intensive affair. Another huge advantage of digital publishing is that the consumers no longer have to be within the same geographical area as the printing press. Readers of a specific newspaper in a small country can come from all over the world. This is a revolution that has affected all newspapers worldwide, including in Kenya.

The case study has been the *Daily Nation* because it is regarded as Kenya's and East Africa's largest newspaper and one of the most influential. The main objective of this study was to find out trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area. Within this, there were three smaller objectives: (1) To find out the patterns of e-newspaper readership in Kenya; (2) To compare the trends in readership of e-newspaper and print newspapers; and (3) To analyze whether e-newspaper is a threat to print newspaper. The following are the findings according to these three objectives.

The demographics of Kenyans reading the *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper

First, the majority of Kenyans that read the e-newspapers are of the younger generation. The age group, however, is very wide from 18 to the 60s because even people in their 40s and 50s read their news online. However, the most predominant group can be said to be between 30 and 40s. The older the age the highly likely they will prefer reading their news from print sources. The second theme is that they are predominantly male. Just like the print newspapers, it appears that men like to read news more than women, whether online or offline. Third, there is a lifestyle being led by people that like to read the e-newspapers. For instance, they are tech-savvy. They work in the blue-collar job group thereby most likely living in towns. It is a finding supported by Mitchell (2016) who established that younger adults are like to read digital text that print. The older the age the highly likely they will prefer reading their news from print sources.

The readership of the *Daily Nation's* e-newspaper compared to that of the print version

Overall, there seems to be no much difference between the e-newspaper and the print newspaper. The style of how they paste the stories, as well as the look and feel of both newspapers appear to be largely the same. The only difference is the medium through which the stories are being delivered – the traditional newspaper is delivered on print paper while the e-

newspaper is delivered online on the digital platform. As well, the readership of the type of newspaper will largely depend on access to any of the type of newspaper. For those that have access to both types of newspapers, they will not have a preference of one type of newspaper over the other. However, it becomes that clear that the e-newspaper is more convenient because it offers a high level of convenience compared to the traditional print newspaper but there are two important things that one ought to have to access an e-newspaper. First, they ought to have an Internet-enabled gadget, this can be a computer, smartphone, and/or a tablet. Second, one ought to have the Internet.

Moving on, there are several reasons that emerged to explain the reason as to why people are increasingly coming to like the e-newspaper. E-newspapers offer breaking news thus make them appealing as compared to print newspapers that are printed just once in the day. E-newspapers offer more ways to pay compared to the traditional newspaper. More so, some of the reasons to consider include appearance, personalization, immediate update of news, ease of use, as well as functions such as chats. Apart from offering live news, e-newspapers also offer what is referred to as user personalization. It is possible for users to subscribe to only specific type of news and content that they like. As well, readers are not limited by geographical differences or barriers when reading news from the e-newspaper platforms. These findings corroborate with what Lesitaokana & Akpabio (2014) found out that people like to read online news on e-newspapers because they were generally interactive, published immediate news, and had multi-media content. Some also like e-newspapers because the content being offered online is mostly free. The content is highly accessible and convenient to read them while they are undertaking other type of tasks.

Whether or not the e-newspaper is threatening to replace print newspapers

The main theme here is that although the number of print newspapers in circulation has been dropping drastically since the emergence of the e-newspaper, it is yet to go down completely. The numbers show that print newspapers still rule and the e-newspaper has some catching up to do. However, news media need to accept that print media is slowly fading away and their day may come. This is why innovation is important. The main reason for the fact that both types of newspapers are tussling over each other is that each has own advantages and disadvantages. E-newspapers have the following values of the e-newspapers: Increased demand for digital news; real-time news with constant updates and alerts with breaking news; users can select the news that they want; consumers can customize digital news selecting what they want; it gives consumers an interactive experience with quizzes, data, and video reports; e-newspapers are not bound by geographical boundaries; digital news is cheaper and cost-effective; rates for online advertising are low for advertisers; and e-newspapers are green and eco-friendly. The disadvantages include: tricky to charge online newsreaders as they expect it to be free; security issues with online payments; poor content quality with some publishers doing fake or unprofessional stories to increase website traffic and revenues; no technology has replicated the tangible and aesthetic feel of traditional newspapers; a lot of information going on with digital news to the point that updates can go unnoticed; and the line between real news and rumors in the digital landscape appears to be camouflaged thus impacting the credibility of news organizations.

The following are the advantages for print newspapers: It provides aesthetic and tangible value/experience; there is a huge readership that remains loyal to reading the print newspapers and most of them are above 45 years of age; does not require one to have access to the Internet or

subscribe to be receiving news every time.; revenue comes from print newspapers for many publishers. The following are the disadvantages: There is a waste of materials with print newspapers with huge costs in printing, distribution and circulation; print newspapers cannot provide real-time updates; circulation has been going down across all age groups due to reduced demand for newspapers; standardized which means they cannot personalize their news; print newspapers are rarely interactive, only one-way communication; and it is damaging to the environment given the amount of wood required to produce copies of print newspapers. The above findings are shared by Mudgal & Rana (2020) who established that print newspapers do not face immediate threat so long as they innovate and reinvent themselves. However, there is a need for news media to first accept that their prowess is slowly fading away and their day may come. They need to accept that this is an era of digitization and it is happening at a fast pace.

Overall, therefore, this study has met its objective. The main objective of this study was to find out trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital era while the sub-objectives included: To find out the patterns of e-newspaper readership in Kenya; To compare the trends in readership of e-newspaper and print newspapers; and to analyze whether e-newspaper is a threat to print newspaper. As well, the study has filled the gap in research that envisages the impact of the technology and the Internet on newspaper readership. Both theories used in the study have also explained these findings. UGT has shown that news readers go for print or digital news because each gratifies their needs, which may include nice appearance, personalized news, immediate update of news, ease of use, as well as functions such as chats. Also, from the functionalist point of view, technology, the Internet, and the digital landscape may be disruptive but it is playing a crucial role in enabling news readership.

5.2. Recommendations

The main objective of this study was to find out trends in newspaper readership in Kenya in the digital area. Within this, there were three smaller objectives: (1) To find out the patterns of e-newspaper readership in Kenya; (2) To compare the trends in readership of e-newspaper and print newspapers; and (3) To analyze whether e-newspaper is a threat to print newspaper. The outcome of the research process has been presented in the previous sections. However, there still remains a gap in research with regards to why subscribers of online news or e-newspapers prefer e-newspapers. Therefore, this is room for further research. As one of the respondents mentioned, *“Although I am not sure about the scope of the research, but it is interesting. It would be better to get to the readers of both types of newspapers themselves. However, some of the insights to be gain include the following struggles. For the e-newspaper, people require data/Internet to read the news (from their gadgets). For the print newspapers, the numbers depend on the last-mile delivery. Are you able to cover everywhere? People living in remote places may not be able to access the print copies. They may not be able to read the newspapers online as well due to lack of data/Internet, the kind of phones people using (e-newspapers require smartphones), and the cost of data. Something else to note is that the Gen Z are not considered as newsreaders; there is a lot of other information on the Internet that they can consume/read – books, games, social media, and other websites”* [Respondent 3]. As a professional privy to what goes on in the newsrooms, this respondent basically mentioned that there is a need to conduct consumer research to understand what drives them towards e-newspapers. The consumers are better placed to answer such questions and not the journalists themselves. Therefore, this is the recommendation for future research.

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