

**INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND
COMMUNICATION ON THE RETENTION OF CORPORATE
SUBSCRIBERS OF THE PRINT MEDIA PRODUCTS OF THE
NATION MEDIA GROUP IN KENYA**

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wanjohi for instilling the discipline of education in me and for their moral support and guidance. I also dedicate it to David Odhiambo, my siblings Mary, Winnie, Mercy and Hillary and my friends for always looking up to me and for their unconditional support.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

NMG: Nation Media Group

FM: Frequency Modulation

CAGR: Compound Annual Growth Rate

VAT: Value Added Tax

RMT: Relationship Marketing Theory

ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of relationship building and communication on the retention of the subscription of print products of Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Nairobi. The study was necessitated by the fact that organizations need to invest in strategies that enhance customer loyalty, retention and acquisition. Specifically, the study sought to explore the trends in the print media subscription; the factors that affect the subscription of print media products; and to examine the influence of relationship building on the subscription of the print media products of Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Nairobi. The study was guided by the relationship management theory, which is drawn from the larger realm of the integrated marketing theory of corporate communication. Relying on the cross-sectional mixed method design, the study used systematic random sampling to choose 17 corporate organizations from a list of 51 corporate subscribers of Nation Media Group's print media products within Nairobi, three representatives of Nation Media Group's marketing, corporate affairs and subscription and circulations departments; and one representative from the Consumer Federation of Kenya. The study used a structured interview guide to collect quantitative data, and an open ended interview guide to collect qualitative data. The findings indicated that subscription of Nation Media Group's print media products by corporate organizations remained relatively stable of the five years under the study. The study also revealed that quality of media products, economic factors and relationship management affected subscription in differing manner. Lastly, the study found that relationship building greatly influenced subscription retention among corporate organization, even though certain factors played a role in this. The study concluded that communication and relationship management, however unquantifiable, are very central in building lasting relationship between organizations and their publics, which gave them high competitive advantage. The recommendations from the study were that an organization should not only focus on products and services that it offers to its clients, but should put extra effort in ensuring that customer relationship management with its clients remains steady. It also concluded that a proper disposal mechanism to be adopted for these print media products as in the long run this is actually going to be something that will affect the subscription of the print products as some of the loyal subscribers may switch to other options.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background, problem statement and study objectives. It also includes the research questions, justification and significance, scope and limitation and definition of terminologies.

1.1 Background of the study

Managers of business and production organizations throughout the world today create various strategies and techniques for competitive advantage as well as to help in the achievement of their organizational goals. In the antiquity, most businesses relied on only slim staff capacity due to low competition levels. This has since changed as marketing is now professional with high demand for social, economic and technical skills according to Abbasi and Torkamani (2010). More strength is required to retain a customer than attracting one (Kotler, 1996). Even then, it is also quite difficult to retain a customer on which your business relies for revenue. Consequently, lasting relations with clients are fruitful considering that the cost of getting new ones may be high.

Companies are more focused on customer satisfaction and ensuring that their customers remain loyal to them by continuing to purchase and use their products and services. The realization of satisfied customers is one of the most important reasons for the increased interest in the companies to ensure seamless relationships with their customers. Businesses with higher level or rate of customer retention do not have a difficult time accessing others since customers look for reliable brands and those able to fulfill their interests entirely (Hong-Youl & Perks, 2005). A great experience or

interaction with a brand increases loyalty but a poor one impacts the brand adversely (Westbrook & Oliver, 1999).

Marketing also entails providing customers with good after sales experience and boosting long term relations. Nation Media Group has had subscribers for its print media products over the last 57 years it has been in existence. These customers pay a monthly, quarterly or yearly subscription and the newspapers are delivered to them on a daily basis. The customers have been loyal to the organization due to factors such as good experiences with the product. This however can be made better as the number has recently been on the decline. The success of a business in as a far as sales is concerned depends on the loyalty of the customers especially in the contemporary business environment (Ellinger, 2000). In this study, the key variables are customer retention, relationship building and customer subscriptions as outlined below.

1.1.1 Customer retention

Customer retention ensures that the business keeps the customers over a long period of time. Good customer retention promotes customer loyalty. It requires a strategy to appeal to them by reminding them of the products, ensuring that customers are appreciated, and ensuring that all the issues affecting their buying behavior are addressed in time. With regard to mass media product and services, customer retention is evident through subscription to the product over a long period of time. To promote retention of subscription, most organizational or individual customers pay attention to product quality and the nature of business relationship. Consequently marketing and communications departments of the organizations establish desks or offices that sustain relationship building and communication with the customers.

1.1.2 Customer relationship building and communication

Customer relationship building is a component of customer relationship management. It is a technique used by the management to create lasting relationships with the existing and new consumers. It mostly entails the application of technology to coordinate, mechanize, market, technical assistance and customer care (Shaw, 1991). Every business unit emphasizes on building a unique relationship with each customer in order to succeed in the business they are in. The expectations of the customers are both limited to buying a superior product and service and interact physically with the business.

Customer relationship management is considered as a direct approach used to fortify and improve relationships with clients and also lower expenses and enhance output and profitability for an entity. Recently, the needs of the consumers have transformed and so have the demographics and spending patterns (Kotler, 2009). It has since forced businesses to interact with consumers physically in different locations and appeal them to acquire their brand (Kotler, 2009). It shows that the retailers are continuously in quest to embrace customer relationships in a bid to be unique (Zehir et al., 2011).

A retailer who fails to embrace customer relationships impairs the loyalty of consumers. Therefore, to foster a lasting relation, it is important to keep in various elements such as satisfaction, trust and experience with the brand. Nation Media Group has relationship managers who are tasked with ensuring that the subscribers are efficiently and effectively attended to and respond to their various needs. This has a direct effect on the loyalty of the print media products and subsequent subscription renewals.

1.1.3 Customer subscription

Subscription refers to a situation where a client makes payment (subscription price) to enjoy a particular product. Businesses gain since they are guaranteed of certain and continuous cash flow from subscribed clients for a specific timeline as per the subscriber's contract. It mainly lowers uncertainty and the threat of the business and it mainly gives payment early while giving clients the chance to be heavily attached to utilizing the service and probably go past by entering into an agreement for the coming session when the subscription is due (Burez, 2006)

The structure of subscription pricing is formulated in a way that the revenue inflow from continuous subscriptions is relatively higher than that of a one-time purchase. It further raises sales, by not granting subscribers the alternative to embrace or deny any particular issue. It lowers the acquisition expense and facilitates personalized marketing.

For this to work efficiently the business must have in place an accurate, reliable and timely way to manage and track subscriptions.

1.1.4 The media industry in Kenya

The media industry in Kenya is dynamic and its future is not certain or pre-determined. It encompasses a number of daily newspapers, at least 300 radio stations and TV stations. An essential element for the years ahead for the press is the wide cross-media ownership in the country, with particular media houses in possession of particular media houses. Kenyan culture was marketed through the mainstream media under the stewardship of the First President of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta as more programmes started being broadcast in the national language and focused on African music and dance. The daily newspaper market increased to six. There have been

government regulation and media controls under various legislative bills. The industry has several players who are in the different facets which are newspapers which include: *Daily Nation*, The Standard, The Star, People Daily, *Business Daily* as well as some other smaller newspapers and others known as the gutter press. Television includes NTV, KTN, CITIZEN TV, KBC, K24, GBS and Aljazeera. Radio stations include Kiss 100, Classic FM, Hot 96, Capital FM, and Hope FM among others. There is also the digital platform which is online which most of the newspapers have turned to in collaboration with their hardcopy presence. There are also about forty two magazines which are part of this industry.

Kenya is regarded as a vibrant and dynamic market in East Africa and Sub-saharan Africa. An expanding middle class, improving literacy levels, a huge urban populace and the burgeoning significance of the mobile phone as a means of communication and content are aiding in the creation of many opportunities for the entertainment segment and the media. The media industry in Kenya was expected to expand by around 17.8% to reach a staggering \$3.2bn come at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 16.3% from 2013 – 2017. It is also expected to expand to \$3.1 bn by the end of 2017.

The internet is regarded as the fastest area of growth and is driven by the various mobile operators in Kenya. It was expected that the internet access in Kenya to expand at a CAGR of almost 48.3% from 2013 to 2017. The country's Internet space was anticipated to expand to \$961m by the end of 2017 (www.africanbusinesscentral.com)

1.1.5 The case of Nation Media Group

Nation Media Group (NMG) is the leading multi-media house in *The East African* region and has print as well as electronic media and the internet which attracts a regular readership quite unparalleled in the region. In the print category, there are four products which are *Daily Nation*, *Business Daily*, *The East African* and *Taifa Leo*. Out of the 6,008,487 respondents in the survey who read newspapers in the past 7 days, 80% read *The Daily Nation* and 16% read *Taifa Leo* (KARF Q1 2016). *Daily Nation* is Kenya's leading newspaper. It is a product of Nation Media Group (www.nationmedia.com). Nation Media Group was founded by his Highness the Aga Khan in 1959. *Daily Nation* took its place on the newsstands on October 3 1960 and is now the flagship brand of the group. *Daily Nation* sales are approximately 220,000 copies per day. *Taifa Leo* was launched in 1958 and is the only Swahili national newspaper. *Taifa Leo* is an approved newspaper by the Ministry of Education to be used as a teaching aid in schools. *Taifa Leo* sales are approximately 5,000 copies daily.

Business Daily was launched in 2006 as a business oriented paper meant to look into the business aspects and carry business stories. It has a circulation of 20,000 copies each day. *The East African* is a weekly newspaper published in Kenya by the Nation Media Group. Circulation happens in Kenya and other regions such as Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. It factors stories and in-depth review from every nation in East Africa with international stories complementing (www.nationmedia.com).

Nation Media Group's newspaper subscriptions have reduced over the last five years due to different factors. Customer relationship has had a great impact on this performance. In the wake of this challenge it is imperative to examine the role that

communication and relationship building has had in retaining and increasing subscription as a strategy for increasing dependable income for the business.

1.2 Research problem

Corporate organizations exist for business purposes. Their businesses are often successful when clients or customers are satisfied with products and services. To a large extent this satisfaction is created when the organizations offer quality products and services as well as employ mutual relationship and communication with clients. The organization's relationship with customers can change from time to time because it evolves under different situations which include exploration, awareness, expansion, commitment and or dissolution. There has been a debate within the marketing circles on the actual quantifiable value of relationship building and communication on corporate organizational bottom-line, where managers with profit-focus have failed to appreciate their value. However, based on the bigger picture that relationships and communication are responsible for the creation of brand and corporate image, many people have attributed organizational success to relationship building and effective communication, which they have claimed, have indirect influence on all aspects.

Previous studies have focused on the value of customer relationship management. For instance, Gituro (2011) studied the relationship between customer relationship building and the competitiveness of commercial banks in Kenya. The ultimate conclusion of the research was that the competitive nature of an organization is not determined by a combination of various factors like size, age, the types of clients served, the ownership structure and length of customer relationship management or even the level of technology. Instead it is by proper customer relationship management practices and the success of marketing efforts.

Additionally, Ndambuki (2014) studied the customer relationship management in the hotel industry and concluded that customer relationship management practices are an important component because of incremental impact it has to the market share. He observed that customer relationship management practices track customers' relationship with the company and facilitates workers to immediately access data about the client, for instance, previous sales, experiences, recalls and market trends. Ndambuki (2014) suggested that the management must constantly work to grow customer relationship management practices in the hospitality industry and adopt customer management practices that render the industry competitive and not averse to the trends of the consumers that are constantly changing.

The studies by Gituro (2011) and Ndambuki (2014) create impetus for researchers to determine the place of relationship building in similar circumstances. For instance in the media industry a lot has been observed regarding audience trends due to technology and other factors.

1.3 Research objectives

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1.3.1 General objective

The study sought to investigate the influence of relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate subscribers of the print media products of the Nation Media Group in Kenya

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i. To explore the trends in the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Kenya

- ii. To investigate factors that affect the subscription of print media products by corporate customers of the Nation Media Group
- iii. To examine the influence of relationship building and communication techniques in the retention of corporate subscribers of print media products of Nation Media Group.

1.4 Research question

This study sought to answer one over-arching research question: What is the influence of relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate subscribers of print media products of the Nation Media Group?

1.4.1 Specific questions

- i. What are the trends in the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Kenya?
- ii. What factors affect the subscription of print media products by corporate customers of the Nation Media Group?
- iii. What is the influence of relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate customers of print media products of Nation Media Group?

1.5 Justification of the study

Nation Media Group has over time attempted to address the changing trends in customer loyalty to the print media products. From reports, the subscriptions have been in stagnation in the last five years. In such circumstances, there has been urgent need to improve the situation with the business dynamics where customers currently access to information through the Internet. The abundance of information in the internet encouraged customers to make comparisons between companies and the

lowest prices (Schriver, 1997). This study therefore sought to investigate the role of customer relationship building and communication in retention of corporate subscribers of the print media products of the Nation Media Group.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is importance to Nation Media Group because it provides insights into how they can effectively manage both current and potential subscribers. It also informs Nation Media Group on how to strengthen its customer relationship management which in turn has an overall effect on the organizational bottom line.

The study is importance since it is used as a reference material to other companies that wish to grow and measure their customer relationships against the performance of its media products. Stakeholders, both internal and external, in the industry would directly benefit as a result of the organization being able to post better profits and sustaining a better working environment. The study has helped in academia to bridge the gap in role of relationship building and communication in audience retention.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study focused on the media industry with Nation Media Group as the study context. It examined the views from 17 corporate organizations which subscribed to the print media products in Nairobi between 2012 to 2016. The target group comprised of heads of procurement and communication in these corporate organizations totaling to 34 respondents. Additionally, the study examined perspectives from Nation Media Group's Corporate Affairs, Marketing, Subscriptions and Circulation departments, and the Consumer Federation of Kenya. The aim of this study was to explore the role played by relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate subscribers of the NMG print products.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The study was restricted to the media industry with one media organization chosen, namely, Nation Media Group. As such the generalization of findings was limited as the challenges of Nation Media Group may not be the same as other media companies and there could be some problems not researched on. Another limitation was be the time frame for this study as there was limited time to cover all subscribers and also a limitation on finances required for stationery, photocopy and typing services.

This study was also limiting as it investigated the corporate subscribers of the print media products of Nation Media Group and not the individual subscribers who were more in terms of number of customers subscribed. This was because customer relationship managers put more effort in keeping corporate subscribers as they would subscribe to more copies per subscriber as opposed to an individual subscriber who would purchase a single copy.

1.9 Operational terms

The terms which were under study included relationship building and communication, retention, corporate subscribers and print media products. They are defined as below.

Relationship building and communication is a technique used by the management to create lasting relationships with the existing and new consumers. It entails the application of technology to coordinate, mechanize, market, technical assistance and customer care (Shaw, 1991).

Retention refers to a lasting relationship established between sellers and consumers in a manner that enables them to remain loyal to products and services.

Corporate Subscribers refers to single organizations who purchase products in large quantities for their employees.

Print Media Products refers to Newspapers published by Nation Media Group which are *Daily Nation*, *Business Daily*, *The East African* and *Taifa Leo*.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter has two main sections. The first section is a critical review of literature on key variables of the study such as communication and relationship building; factors affecting product subscriptions; customer retention and loyalty; customer acquisition. The last section of the chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study.

2.1 Review of study variables

2.1.1 Factors affecting product subscriptions

Product subscription is introduced in businesses in order to ensure constant flow of income through consistent payment by customers and clients. It depends on agreement and it can be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. There are several factors that affect product subscription. These include economic, quality and relationship factors which interplay between the company and its clients. In terms of economic factors, there is need to understand human behavior concerning their interests. Among the items that is sought is the demand for the goods and services and the impact of occurs in the event of a change. It reviews how enterprises attempt to supply products to satisfy that demand and review challenges faced in the process.

Globally, people exist in diverse economic surroundings. Some nations, especially in the West, have a high living conditions, housing and education for most of the people, nonetheless, in the third world countries is the opposite. There are various reasons for the many and diverse economic structures globally. Some of this is partly due to the quantity of capital a nation has. Also, has to deal with the resources present to its

nation based on raw materials and availability of labour. Governments all over the world also hugely affect the economy by creating laws, having taxes and regulating the flow of money. Such factors can either aid or bar development.

The economic surrounding of a business is important for the failure or success of a business (Ventures, 2015). In the events that the rates of interests are high so is the cost of borrowing and bars expansion of a business. Conversely, a high unemployment rate implies that labor is cheaper. The high level of unemployment can lead to an economic crisis and reduced customer spending leading to businesses making losses. Government controls greatly impact the economic environment for any business. For example a government can change laws which mean that they can bring in complex and informative criteria which make it hard for a business or firm to acquire credit.

2.1.2 Customer relationship building

Customer relationship building is a component of customer relationship management. It is a technique used by the management to create lasting relationships with the existing and new consumers. It mostly entails the application of technology to coordinate, mechanize, market, technical assistance and customer care (Shaw, 1991). Every business unit emphasizes on building a unique relationship with each customer in order to succeed in the business they are in. The expectations of the customers are both limited to buying a superior product and service and interact physically with the business.

Customer relationship management began in the 1980s. Its strategy was then to influence and automate the customer relationship management function in the specific departments or specified business units. Its primary objective was to aid stabilize and

mechanize various systems such as automating customer support. The essence of customer relationship management motivates companies to shift from a product-oriented towards a more customer-oriented technique of conducting business (Reinartz et al., 2004).

Customer insights are defined as the degree to which a firm has an understanding of current customer needs, the reasons behind these needs, and how these change over time. Giving such a central place to customer knowledge fits well within the market orientation and organizational learning (Sinkula, 1994), which indicates that organizations learn about their customers by registering, integrating, and analyzing customer information. The extent to which firms process relational information affects the amount of customer insights they acquire. These insights lead to enhanced customer relationship performance, which is customer retention. Having customer insights helps firms to tailor offerings to customer requirements and establish enduring customer relationships by creating and delivering additional customer value (Homburg et al. 2008) and thus increases a firm's customer relationship performance.

The purpose of creating customer relationship management strategies is planning to determine strategies and opportunities that create win-win condition in the competitive environment. Implementation of these strategies requires a change in way of doing commercial transactions and the business structure of the company in general. The role of the departments and units that interact with the customer should be correctly determine, and it should be determined which unit can create more added-value for the customer.

2.1.3 Customer retention

Customer retention is the practice that an entity takes to lower any defections incurred by customers. Proper retention begins with the immediate contact an enterprise has with a client and progress through the whole life of an association. In the emerging business environment effective customer retention is a huge goal (Mehta, 2005).

Customer retention is simply giving customers whatever they anticipate and surpassing their interests to improve brand loyalty. Developing customer loyalty ensures that customers are valued first other than maximizing returns and value of the shareholder (Reicheld, 1996). The crucial disparity in a dynamic environment is mostly the delivery of a constant high standard of customer care. Determining the retention ability should encompass behavioral intents and the actual behavior of the customers. Behavioral intentions are in this case is dependent on the notion that intentions are a strong sign of future traits. In other words, clients with stronger intents to buy a brand again have stronger corresponding traits. The maximization and measurement of customer profitability can be a difficult practice as it calls for resource allocation choices and consideration of the various costs such as sales and marketing. An intensive interest in customer relations is also evident in the marketing practice and pronounced in a company's crucial element in managing customer relationship (Kerstetter et al, 2001). Customer retention rates and customer share are important metrics in customer relationship management (Hoekstra et al, 1999). Customer share is defined as the ratio of a customer's purchases of a particular category of products or services from a supplier to the customer's total purchases of that category of products or services from all suppliers (Peppers and Rogers, 1999). Kurtz and Clow (1998) suggest that, regardless of the measures by an organization to execute competitive techniques to attract clients and regardless of their attempts to

manage supply and productivity with the aim of giving clients with consistent and high service levels.

A retention framework must incorporate relationship marketing endeavors, compatibility management, service recovery attempts and defection management (Petzer, 2005). Relationship marketing aids entities to create robust rapports with clients. These are the relations that most businesses rely on for success (Claycomb, 2001). Managing customer-to-customer interactions or compatibility management is also another important component in retaining customers (Kurtz & Clow, 1998).

2.1.4 Customer acquisition

It alludes to the process of getting new clients. Getting new clients entails a lot of persuasion of the customers to buy the products of a company. Marketing is in most cases termed as the process by which firms generate value for the clients and generate rigid customer relationships to get value from the clients in return as noted by Kotler et al (2013). Customer acquisition management is the set of procedures and structures for the management of clients prospects and inquisitions that are created by a combination of various marketing procedures. Referrals and loyalty programs are among the main elements of effective customer acquisition.

A company with a properly established customer retention plan requires to get and substitute its current clients. With time, customers can substitute the firm's goods with others or find them obsolete. Therefore, customer acquisition is an essential marketing procedure and is in most cases mentioned as a constituent of customer lifecycle management. Marketing experts are highly interested in the management of customer relationships, customer equity and asset (Gupta, et al, 2003).

Customer lifecycle management can also be divided into three categories which are acquiring new customers, retaining existing customers and developing customer value (Buttle, 2009). Customer relationship management and customer acquisition management must be viewed as strategic organizational goals and play crucial roles for organizations (Buttle, 2009). According to (Chaffey, 2013) crucial marketing organizational procedures can be apportioned to acquisition and retention groups. An acquired customer can be perceived as a client who has traversed the entire funnel from unaware to the advocacy level.

Comprehending the consumer's process of making decisions and promotion techniques utilized in every stage is quite important. The customer acquisition funnel model begins with awareness, then interest where an entity normally requires another interaction with the client to re-inform them of the product. It can either be accomplished by positioning or targeting customer using adverts. The aim here is to foster trust with the customer and be the desired provider prior to carrying out the purchase (Jaffe, 2013). The latter stages of the sales or customer acquisition funnel usually include on-site product optimization and customer support to assist customer acquisition (Jaffe, 2013). The sales funnel approach to customer acquisition is a perfect structure when an entity is aware of the market and customer.

2.1.5 Customer loyalty

It is regarded as a deep conviction to buy the products of a particular company again and consistently in the years ahead thus leading to the likelihood of a consumer not switching to another product or company (Oliver 1999). In other words, customer loyalty implies that the client is loyal to the products of a certain entity and only opts for another in one or a few cases. Dedication is normally used to buyer-seller

relationships present in marketing networks. Specific relations are created between a consumer and an organization. It is not normally the case for many marketing relations. Studies have proven that commitment is a two-way path and at the same time calculative, cognitive and emotional (Berghall, 2003). Calculative commitment is reliant on conscious and transactional assessment whereas emotional commitment is primarily subconscious. Diverse loyalty techniques are applicable in an attempt to improve loyalty in a single customer.

The involvement of a customer in a product is immediately associated with brand commitment within a product class (Traylor, 1983). A product class which is highly associated to a person's ego or identity sense will lead to a rigid psychological attachment to a desired brand. Feurst (1999) apportions customer loyalty to 4 diverse categories. He attempts to group the concept of loyalty based on the force which provides loyalty. The categories are based on the level of loyalty. High level of loyalty is associated with more customer involvement or interaction with a brand. The levels go from enforcement from the outside to inner commitment. The first grade is: forced loyalty. Elements in this encompass inadequate time, shortage of alternatives and costly to switch suppliers. The next is bought loyalty. It is consciously chosen and is based on some sort of bonus that customers receive in money or discount, if they are loyal. An example could be that the customers are loyal because when they buy five of something they get the sixth for free. There is also practical loyalty of habit. It is unconscious and the customers' choices are based on routines. Customers always use one supplier and will continue to do so without thinking about it. If they change, they will choose within an evoked set of suppliers. For example, when customers use the same hairdresser all their lives.

The next grade is practical loyalty of convenience. Customers are aware of their loyalty to the easier way of doing things that the offer supplies. There is also engaged loyalty quality. In this grade customers are aware of their loyalty to the functionality of the service or product. The customers have certain demands on quality that the supplier provides. The last grade is engaged loyalty commitment. The customers are aware of their loyalty to a symbolic value, or status and social values and inner awards and they get a certain feeling when using the service or product. (Söderlund, 2001) apportions loyal clients to two main categories: loyal and strongly loyal customers.

In the loyal category, there exist both satisfied and unsatisfied clients. The satisfied are not supposed to be loyal though there is a relationship between satisfied and loyal clients. There are those who are unsatisfied but at the same time loyal. A combination of the unsatisfied and high loyalty is at times referred to as false loyalty. The main rationale for this combination is the factors which are barriers for the client to select suppliers. Such elements are known as switching costs. In regards to the presumption that a satisfied client is mainly a loyal customer Söderlund (2001) maintains that high level requirements appear to have the biggest potential to develop strong loyalty.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The study was based on the Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT). It is a comprehensive theory that borrows key tenets from marketing, public relations and corporate communications in a fashion resembling integrated marketing communications. The Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) derives its meaning from the American Marketing Association's explanation of marketing that shows that marketing is an organizational role and a set of procedures for developing and

communicating to clients and for the management of relationships with customers in a beneficial manner to the company. The main explanation of marketing determines the procedure of managing relations as a crucial charter and in line with conventional marketing-mix elements (Berry 1983).

Relationship marketing has changed from a fundamental focus on the consumer products in the 50s, industrial marketing in the 1960s and non-profit marketing in the 70s to relationship marketing in the 90s according to Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne (1991). Grönroos (1994) points out that a paradigm change is undergoing evolution from the initial 4Ps to fostering relationships. Relationship marketing, as an element of marketing, entails the interactions between suppliers, clients, rivals among others. The focus has shifted to another paradigm where a highly market driven and customer as the focal point are recommended as the marketing element.

Relationship building can be seen as the cornerstone of marketing (Grönroos,1994). The challenge for most companies today is to thrive in a relationship economy. Competition for the most profitable customer relationships is tough and companies need to understand their customers. Customers have become very demanding and their expectations have increased to new heights. The environment has evolved into a complex landscape, which has resulted in the high value placed on relationship marketing today. Relationship marketing has focused on customer retention, service, and product benefits, a long-term scale, service emphasis, high customer commitment, customer contact, quality, and finally customer loyalty (Cheese, 1994; Gummesson, 1998; Abratt & Russell, 1999). Its focus is to move customers up the ladder of loyalty (Voss & Voss, 1997).

The relationship marketing theory also seeks to change the market demands in favour of a particular company by providing unique value, which must be sustainable over time. It is seen as a combination of quality, customer service, and marketing. The key relationship is based on the relationship between the supplier and the customer. All of this reflects the ideology that the core of the relationship marketing philosophy is to make the most of existing customers to enable the company to make long-term profits. The customer relationship must be maintained to sustain repurchase loyalty and retention, which will lead to profitability. Customer value reflects on benefits and costs, or the difference between the benefits from the market offering and the costs of obtaining the benefits. Providing continuous value to customers understates the relationship (Cram, 2001).

Relationship marketing can result in long-term retention, which leads to improved financial and market performance and an increased competitive edge. It also cements the bonds with customers to ensure long-term relationships of mutual advantage. Companies need to be marketing-oriented and customer-focused to achieve their business goals (Christopher et al, 1991). Relationship marketing has been addressing the importance of getting customers, keeping customers and building an ongoing relationship (Rayner, 1996).

To create customer loyalty, various value-added services, must be delivered (Wetzels, de Ruyter & van Birgelen, 1998). The concept of relationship marketing is embedded in services marketing and incorporates service delivery processes. The relational exchange provides a competitive advantage and creates barriers to switching. To be effective and successful the relationship marketing philosophy needs the support of other departments and business functions. An appropriate relationship marketing

strategy will ensure that customers are managed by market or segment level. According to (Gummesson, 1998) there are certain themes emerging in the relationship marketing literature: Placing emphasis on the relationship rather than on a transaction approach to relationship marketing. The focus is to increase customer loyalty and customer retention.

The relationship is also based on equal and respectful terms; companies should understand the economics of customer retention. They must ensure the appropriate allocation of marketing resources to existing subscribers. The increased retention will lower costs and will lead to increased productivity; Customer segmentation is critical for an effective relationship marketing strategy. It involves targeting a selected profitable customers and maximizing the lifetime value of the customers and customer segments.

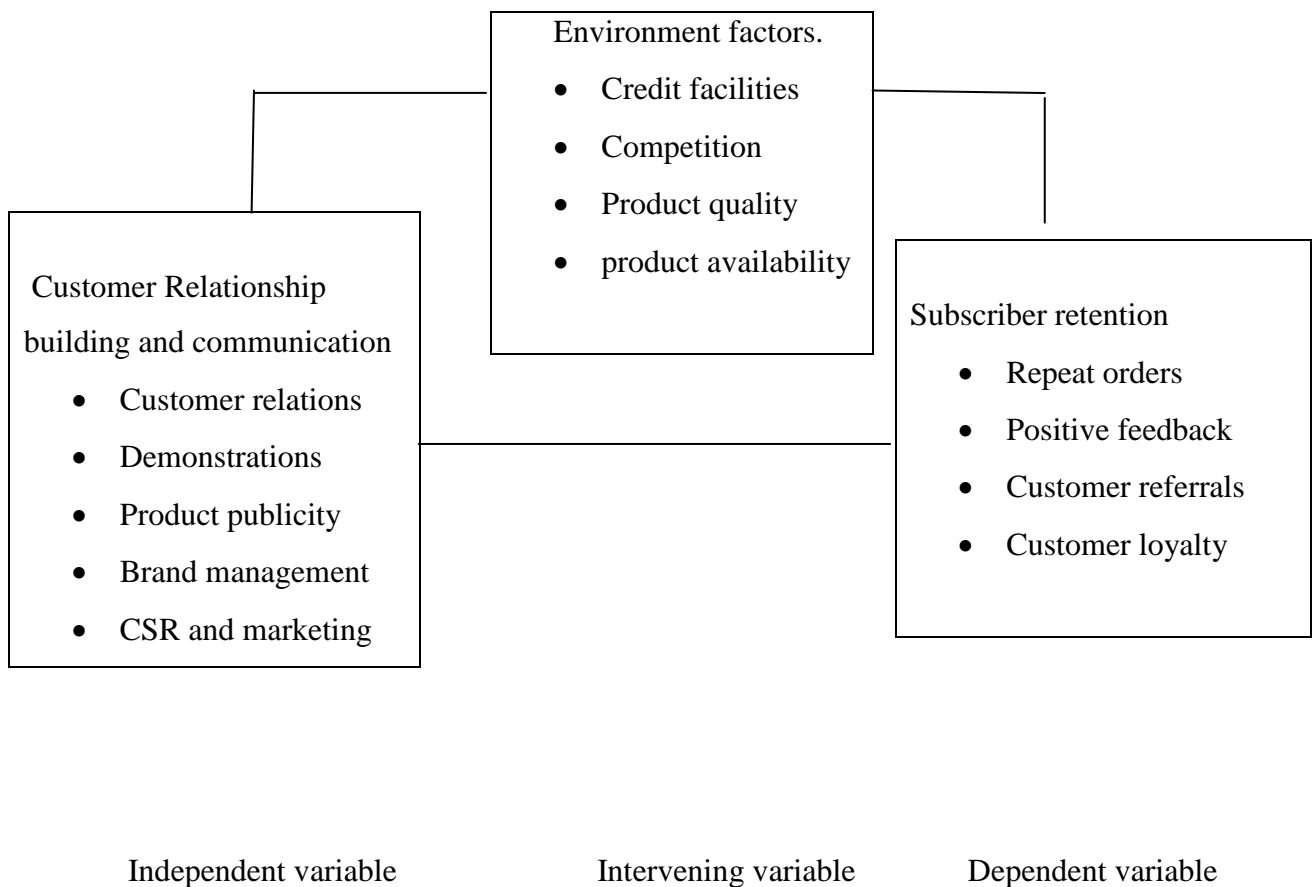
All parties involved receive increased and mutual value; Marketing and quality customer service needs to be integrated. This would lead to the establishment of trust and will build commitment throughout the length of the relationship; Companies need to care for existing customers and also increase their share of spending. Relationship marketing can differentiate a company and lead to competitive advantage. An example is subscribers who become less sensitive to price over time.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework shows the interconnection between the research variables and how solutions are derived for the research problem guided by the theories. In this study independent variables include communication and relationship building, while retention of corporate subscribers is the dependent variable. In the study also

environmental factors such as product quality and economic determinants are the intervening variables. The relationship between these variables is illustrated below

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study. It focuses on the research design, study location, targeted population, sample size and sampling method, data collection methods and tools, research instruments, methods of analyzing and presenting data and the research ethics.

3.2 Research design

The study employed a mixed method approach, with a cross-sectional survey of corporate subscribers within Nairobi City and participants drawn from the Nation Media Group's departments of Corporate Affairs, Marketing, Subscription and Circulation; and the Consumer Federations of Kenya. According to Shaughnessy (2012) a survey consists of a predetermined set of questions that is given to a sample to generate quantitative data. With a representative sample, one can describe the attitudes of the population. Qualitative data was sought from participants to triangulate the results from the survey. The two methods were therefore used to complement and supplement each other.

3.3 Study location

The study was conducted on corporate subscribers of the print products of Nation Media Group who are based in Nairobi. These included those who were subscribers in the last five years. From available data, Nairobi has 51 active corporate subscribers of the print media product of the Nation Media Group (www.nationmedia.com). Other

participants who provided data work at the Nation Media Group headquarters located at the Nation Centre along Kimathi Street in Nairobi.

3.4 Target population

A population is a well-defined or set of people, services, elements, and events, group of things or households that are being investigated (Ngechu, 2004). The study targeted 51 corporate subscribers of print products of Nation Media Group who have been subscribers' between 2012 and 2016. These are the subscribers who subscribed to the various print products which are *Daily Nation*, *Business Daily*, *The East African* and *Taifa Leo*. They included insurance companies, universities, hotels and banks. Also targeted were representatives from the Nation Media Group's departments of Marketing, Circulation and Corporate Affairs, as well as a representative from the Consumer Federation of Kenya.

3.5 Sample size and sampling procedure

The study used systematic random sampling technique to select 17 corporate organizations from the register of corporate subscribers of the print media products of the Nation Media Group. Using the list the researcher picked the first corporate organization and subsequent ones based on a class interval of three, from a list of 51 subscribers. The researcher then used purposive sampling techniques to recruit a communications and a procurement manager from each of the 17 organizations, thereby constituting a sample size of 34 respondents representing the corporate subscribers. Additionally, the researcher purposively selected a representative from the marketing, corporate affairs and circulations departments of the Nation Media Group and the Consumer federation of Kenya.

3.6 Data collection methods

The study relied on both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were collected using interview method which comprised of semi structured questions. The study also used survey method to collect quantitative data from respondents drawn from the corporate subscribers. Secondary data were also collected through documentary analysis of the subscription sale reports and other company records.

In all the three methods the guiding questions were in line with the three specific objectives of the study, namely: to investigate the factors that affect subscription of print media products from the Nation Media Group; explore the trends in the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Kenya and lastly, to examine the influence of relationship building and communication techniques in the retention of corporate subscribers of print media products of Nation Media Group.

3.7 Research instruments

The study relied on structured and open ended interview guides (see appendix A and B) to collect the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The structured and open ended interview guides were divided into four similar parts, namely: background information of respondents, factors affecting subscription, communication and relationship building techniques, and the role of communication and relationship building in retention of print media subscriptions. Each instrument comprised of open and semi-structured questions, which enabled the researcher to collect the required data. All reports from the organizations were studied using documentary analysis guides.

3.8 Data analysis and presentation techniques

After the data was collected and validated, quantitative data were processed using SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics. They were presented in tables, charts and graphs. Quantitative data show percentages, frequencies and means depicting trends or relationships (Saunders et al, 2007).

The qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis and presented as narrative reports and quotations of what the participants said. According to Saunders, et al. (2007) qualitative data is very useful in filling gaps left by quantitative methods or on its own merit to provide a detailed data set for the sake of triangulation.

3.9 Ethical issues in research

Ethics are the moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity. It is the core of human relations and dignity. Ethical codes are written to cover the specific problems and issues that researchers frequently encounter during research work. In this study a written request was sent to the respondents to give feedback.

The respondents were assured of confidentiality and protection of their names. It was further made clear that the information gathered would solely be used for this study as was supported in Appendices C to E which include the certificate of field work, originality report and certificate of correction respectively.

Any deception in data collection was to be disclosed and explanations given. The interviewees were also asked to give consent for their identity to be used in the study. However, most of the participants preferred that attribution of their statements be made using the positions they hold in the organizations or by making reference to the departments as opposed to their real identities.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents and interprets the research findings. The quantitative data is first presented followed by the qualitative data from each question in the research instruments.

4.1 Introduction

The presentation strictly follows the three specific research objectives. In view of this, the chapter has four sections, namely: background information of the organizations and respondents; trend in the subscription of the print media products of NMG; factors affecting subscription of print media products; and influence of relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate subscribers of the NMG print media products. The data was collected from 17 corporate organizations represented by 34 respondents, making a 100 percent response rate. This was achieved because of the sufficient time the researcher had to follow up with the corporate organizations. In this chapter, every question asked has the data interpreted and discussed immediately. The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives: to explore trend of print media products of NMG subscription by corporate organizations in Kenya; to investigate factors that affect the subscription of print media products of NMG by corporate customers; and to examine the influence of relationship building and communication in the retention of corporate customers of the NMG print media products.

4.2 Organizational characteristics

The study sought to find out the features of the study organizations and their representatives in order to determine the representativeness of the subjects of the study. This was necessary because perceptions of organizations depend on their characteristics. It was also important to find out the demographic characteristics of the representatives of the organizations to ensure data were collected from relevant people. The sub-sections below present the results.

4.2.1 Number of years the corporate organizations have being in existence

The figure below shows the number of years the corporate organizations have been in existence. Understanding this was important in determining the subscription trends of print media products in these organizations. This was also important in determining whether subscription retention was influenced by the number of years an organization has been in existence.

Figure 4.1 The number of years corporate organizations have existed

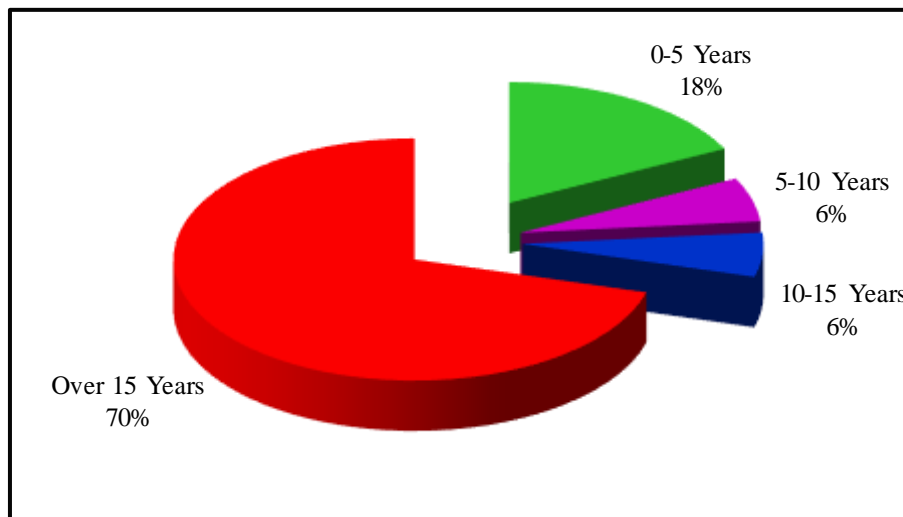


Figure 4.1 shows that majority of corporate organizations (70 percent) had been in existence for over 15 years. Those that had existed between 10-15 and 5-10 years were six percent each. However 18 percent of the corporate organizations had been in

existence between 0-5 years. These findings imply that most organizations in Nairobi had existed long enough and it was possible to analyze the trend in the subscription of various products and services offered by various actors in their environments. This is because the existence of any organization depends on a constant flow of inputs in the environment for various processes to take place. From the results, it was clear that among the services received included either the vending or subscription of newspapers. The fact that 18 percent of the organizations had only existed for 0-5 years is acceptable since organizations are formed every year and take time to establish.

It is also important to note that corporate organizations' choice of whether to subscribe to services and products does not depend on the number of years they have existed.

4.2.2 Job category of respondents in their respective organizations

The study sought to confirm the job category of respondents in their organizations. This was important to verify whether the data were sought from the appropriate people in these organizations. The target respondents of the study were the corporate communication and procurement officers in Kenya's corporate organizations. This was because the procurement personnel are charged with the responsibility of seeking for various services and products on behalf of their organizations. Additionally, the communications office was important because they provide the necessary link for all organizations with their publics. In doing this, they form the organization-customer interface by relationship building and communication contacts. The table below presents the results on job category of respondents.

Table 4.1 Position of respondents in their organizations

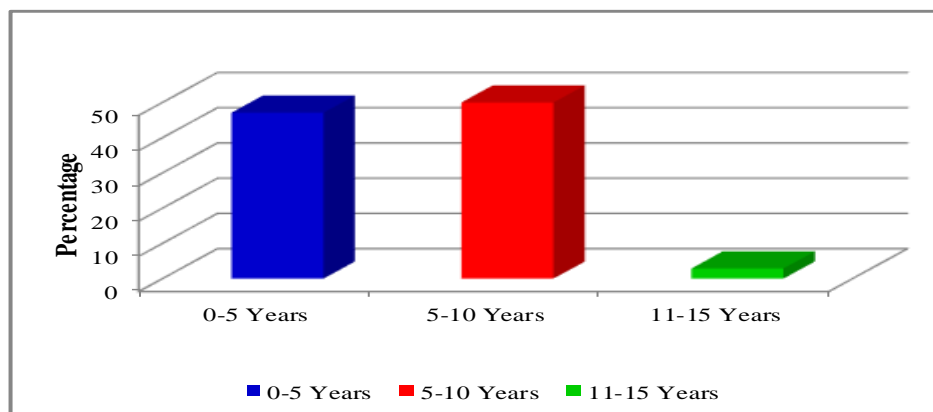
	Frequency	Percent
Head of Procurement	17	50.0
Communication Manager	17	50.0
Total	34	100.0

Table 4.1 indicates that the study relied on data from all the 17 corporate organizations that subscribed to the print products of the Nation Media Group. In each organization, two respondents who were recruited into the sample of 34 people gave responses. The table indicates that 50 percent of them were heads of procurement while 50 percent were heads of corporate communication departments. This implies that the data were sourced from all the relevant officers of the corporate organizations. Although this was the case, the decision to include the two officers from each organization was based on purely purposive strategy.

4.2.3 Length of service of respondents in their respective corporate organizations

The study sought to establish the length of time the respondents had served their respective corporate organizations. This was important to in order to understand their level of knowledge on the trend of subscription to various services and products, specifically the newspapers. The graph below presents the results.

Figure 4.3 Length of time the respondents have served in their organizations



From the figure, 50 percent of respondents had served in their specific job positions for a period ranging between 5-10 years, followed by those between 0-5 years at 47 percent. There was a very small percentage (3 percent) of those who had served in for a longer period of between 11-15 years in their current positions. From the results it clear that most of the respondents had served in the institutions from a substantive number of years. This means that they had had a long experience with their organizations, and therefore fully understood the various subscription dynamics. There were respondents who had served in their organization since the inception of these institutions and therefore had favorable institutional memory. The latter were dimmed to have more experience on the matters of the present study and were more likely to provide valid results. With them being part of the sample, the validity of the results was assured.

4.2.4 Nation Media Group products subscribed by corporate organizations

From each corporate organization, the study sought to document the products from the Nation Media Group which they had subscribed since their inception. This was important to map the trend of their subscription of the various media products. The table below presents the results.

Table 4.2 Nation Media print products subscribed

	<i>Daily Nation</i>		<i>The East African</i>		<i>Taifa Leo</i>		<i>Business Daily</i>	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	34	100.0	34	100.0	8	23.5	34	100.0
No	0	0	0	0	26	76.5	0	0
TOTAL	34	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0

This table indicates that the major print products of the Nation Media Group that were consistently subscribed were the *Daily Nation* (100 percent), *The East African* (100

percent) and the *Business Daily* (100 percent) newspapers. However, a small percentage of corporate organizations (23 percent) subscribed to the *Taifa Leo* newspapers. After a close scrutiny, it was found out that this small percentage of *Taifa Leo* subscribers were mainly the educational and government institutions. This trend supports the results from a survey conducted by KARF Q1 in 2016, that out of the 6,008,487 respondents in the survey who read newspapers, 80 percent read the *Daily Nation* and 16 percent read the *Taifa Leo*. These results also confirm that most subscribers or readers of newspaper in Kenya prefer the ones written in English to those in Kiswahili. Important to note is that mainstream newspapers cover items drawn from across Kenya, East African region and the world. It also confirms the Nation Newspapers as the one with the highest readership in Kenya.

4.2.5 Number of copies of the print media products corporate organizations subscribed

4.2.5.1 The *Daily Nation* Newspapers

The study sought to investigate the number of copies of the *Daily Nation* newspapers that corporate organizations subscribed to. This was important in understanding the effect of subscription on the success of the *Daily Nation* newspapers as a product of the Nation Media Group. The study also sought to find the extent of subscription of the print media products. The results are presented in the figure below.

Figure 4.5 Number of copies of *Daily Nation* newspapers currently subscribed

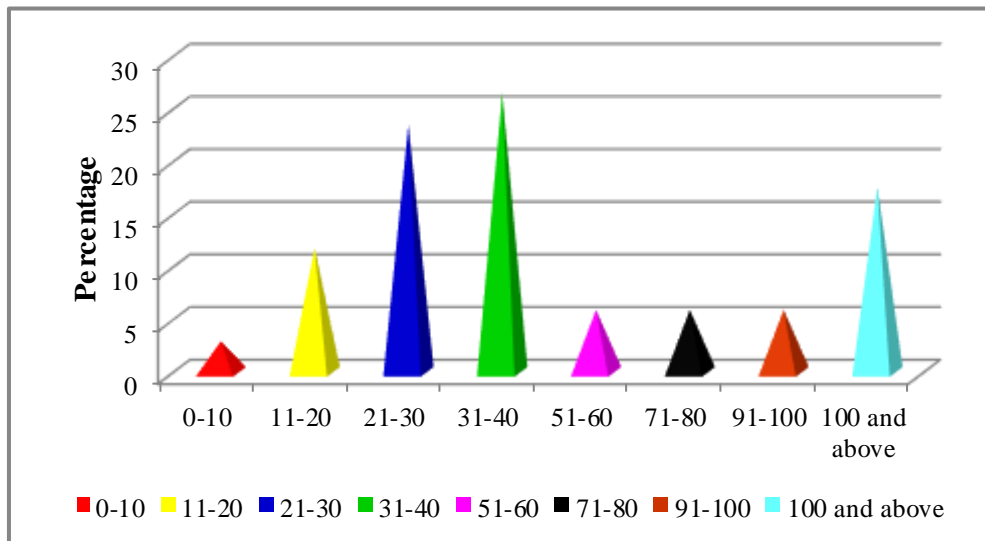


Figure 4.5 shows that three percent of organization subscribe between 1-10 copies, 10 percent (11-20 copies), 23 percent (21-30 copies), 25 percent (31-40 copies), five percent (51-60 copies), five percent (71-80 copies), five percent (90-100 and 16 percent (100 and above copies). This implies that despite the *Daily Nation* being the leading newspaper in Kenya, only 16 percent of organizations subscribe to 100 copies and above. However, the findings confirm the importance of subscription in the newspaper business where individuals and organizations that subscribe to newspapers account for substantial revenue that the media houses receive from the sales of newspapers. From the findings, it is also clear that subscription of newspapers can be very important if maintained or up-scaled to ensure sustainable income to the media house. This trend might be due to some economic environmental factors that affect their subscription. The fact that organizations subscribe to different number of copies may depend on the size of the organization and the diversity of the departments and sections.

4.2.5.2 *The East African* newspapers

The figure below presents the results of the number of *The East African* newspapers that corporate organizations in Nairobi subscribe to.

Figure 4.6 Copies of East African newspapers currently subscribed

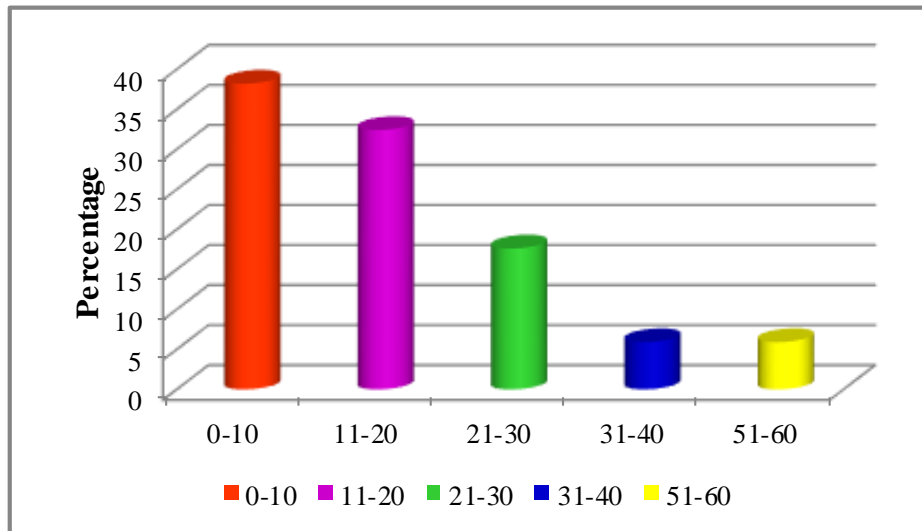


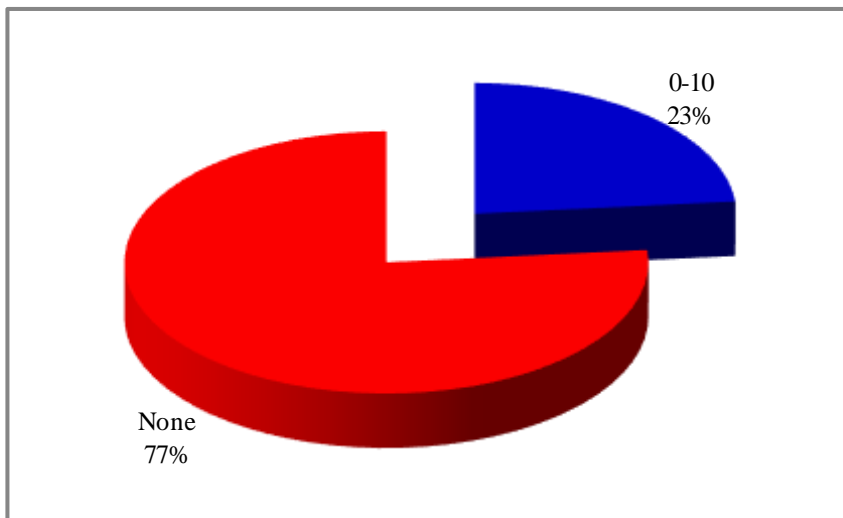
Figure 4.6 shows that the number of copies of *The East African* that these organizations subscribed was minimal across the board, whereby majority (38 percent) subscribed to copies between 0-10. From the figure, 30 percent of the organizations subscribed between 11-20 copies, 15 percent subscribed to copies between 21-30, while four percent subscribed to 31-40 copies, and the last six percent subscribed 51-60 copies of *The East African* newspapers. During an interview, the researcher found out that the low subscription was due to the fact that *The East African* was considered as an executive paper hence it was specially reserve for the executive personnel in various organizations. One participant representing one of the corporate organizations said: “Although, I read all papers brought to my desk here, there are our colleagues who select only this paper. This, I think, is because they have been exposed to *The East African* region in their line of work”. It was also noted that

most multinational organizations with regional business connections subscribe to *The East African* newspapers in order to give them regional focus.

4.2.5.3 *Taifa Leo* Newspapers

The figure below shows the subscription of the *Taifa Leo* newspapers by the corporate subscribers in Nairobi City.

Figure 4.7 Number of copies of *Taifa Leo* newspapers currently subscribed



From the Figure, few organizations subscribe to the *Taifa Leo* newspapers with between 0-10 copies. According to the findings only 23 percent of corporate organizations are subscribed to *Taifa Leo* Newspapers, while a large percentage of these institutions did not subscribing to them. After a closer analysis of qualitative response, it was found that only educational and some few government institutions were subscribed to the *Taifa Leo* newspapers despite it being the only Swahili newspaper in Kenya. It may form an interesting area of further research to understand why subscription of this particular print media product of Nation Media Group is low despite its uniqueness and level of literacy in the region.

4.2.5.4 *Business Daily* newspapers

The study sought to establish the number of copies of the *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed by corporate organizations in Nairobi City. The chart below presents the results.

Figure 4.8 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers currently subscribed

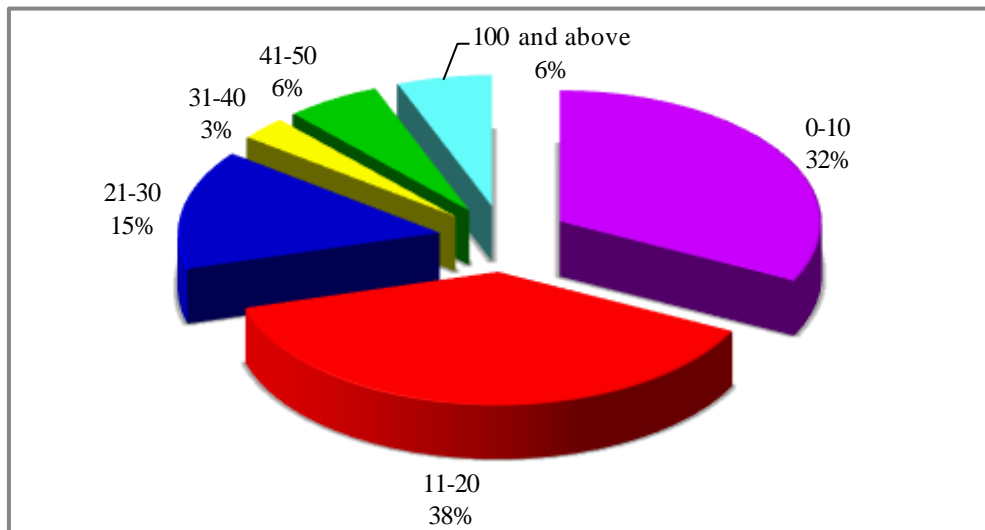


Figure 4.8 shows that only six percent of corporate organizations were subscribed to 100 and above copies of *Business Daily* newspapers. Most of corporate organizations were in the subscription category of 11-20 copies at 38 percent, whereas 0-10 copies were subscribed by 32 percent of these organizations. Additionally, copies of between 21-30, 21-30 and 41-50 were subscribed by 15 percent, three percent and six percent, respectively. From the findings, it is clear that *Business Daily* newspapers were the second most subscribed print media product of the NMG after the *Daily Nation*. It is also clear that most corporate organizations leaning on business practices such as the banks, insurance and security sectors were the most dominant subscribers of the *Business Daily* newspapers.

4.3 Trends in the Subscription of NMG print media products in the last 5 years

The first objective of the study sought to establish the trend of subscription of all print media products of the Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Nairobi City. This was important to show whether there was increase or decline in the subscription of the newspapers. The study was hinged on the premise that there is a relationship between relationship building and retention of subscriber of newspaper products by corporate organizations. The sub-sections below present the results on all the four newspapers.

4.3.1 Subscription of the *Daily Nation* Newspapers in 2016

The figure below shows the subscription of the *Daily Nation* newspapers in 2016

Figure 4.9 Subscription of the *Daily Nation* newspapers in 2016

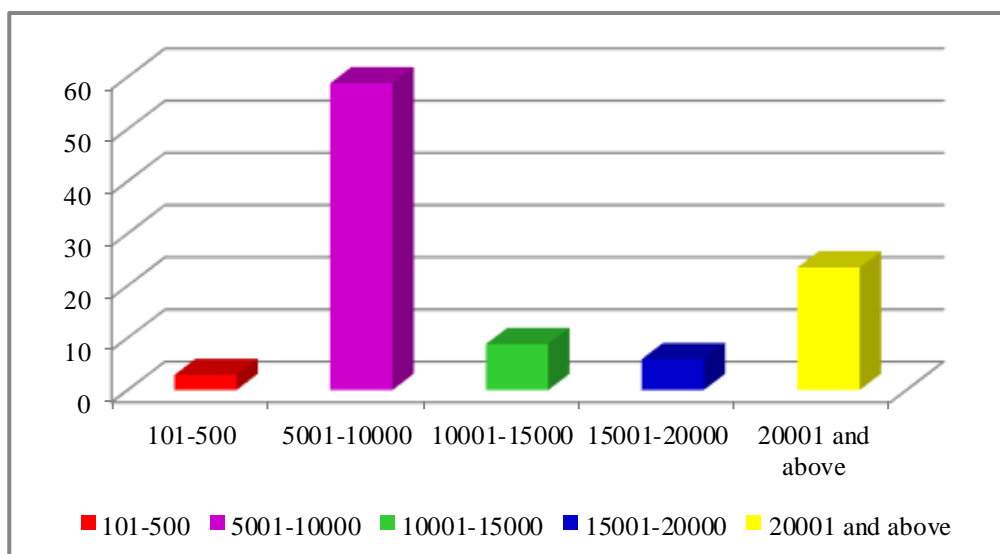


Figure 4.9 gives a reflection of how corporate organizations currently subscribe to the *Daily Nation* newspapers. From the figure it is clearly shown that the total subscription of the *Daily Nation* Newspapers for the year 2016 was mostly in the category between 5001-10000 pieces, representing 59 percent. This proves that the subscription has actually gone down from the previous years as shown in the figures

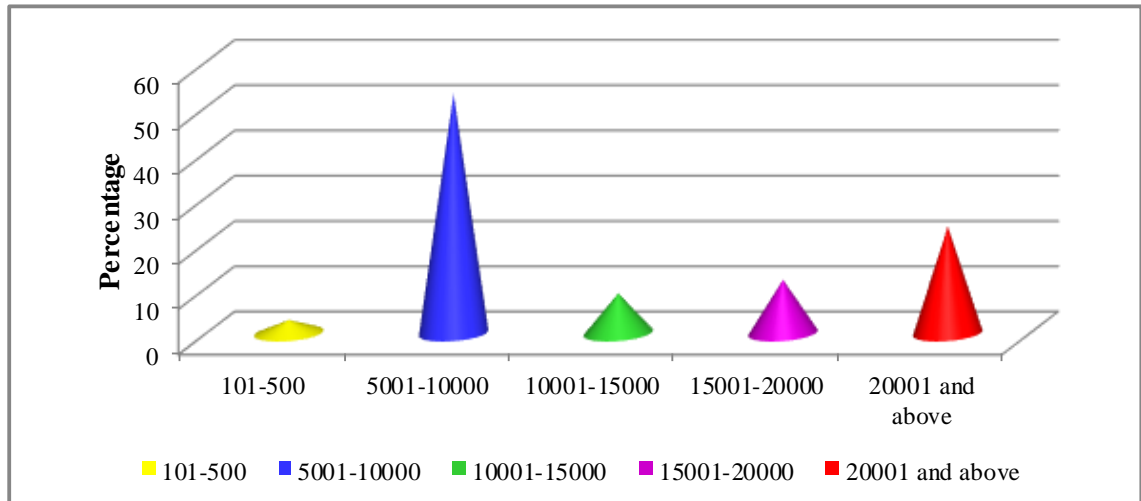
below. This was confirmed because the survey targeted the two heads of departments from the same organization, both giving identical figures of their current subscription which were then used to calculate the total number of copies subscribed in the year, using the formula: *Number of days in a month x the number of the copies currently subscribed to x 12 months of the year.*

Only 24 percent of corporate organizations had a total subscription of 20000 copies and above in the year 2016. Nine percent subscribed copies of between 10001 and 15000, six percent subscribed copies of between 15001 and 20000; and, lastly only three percent had a total of between 101-500 copies in 2016. During an interview a participant from the Subscription and Circulation Department of NMG indicated that the number of copies subscribed throughout the five years was consistent with what they practically experienced since they had worked with that target. The participant said: *“Although there seems to be a decline, the difference is minimal because we recruit new organizations to replace those that have fallen along the way”*. When the same question was asked to the corporate organizations’ representatives, they generally indicated that subscription of these products are pre-planned and budgeted every year and it always remains the same unless reviewed.

4.3.2 Subscription of *Daily Nation* in 2015

The figure below shows the subscription of the *Daily Nation* newspapers in 2015.

Figure 4.10 Copies of *Daily Nation* newspapers subscribed to in 2015



In Figure 4.10 respondents who had a total number of copies between 5001 and 10000 of the *Daily Nation* newspapers were 53 percent, which demonstrates a slight increase of six percent in the year 2016. For the rest of the categories the trend remained almost the same.

A closer analysis of the status indicated that most organizations budget for the subscriptions early enough to avert any change.

4.3.3 Subscription of *Daily Nation* Newspapers in 2014

Figure 4.11 Copies of *Daily Nation* newspapers subscribed to in 2014

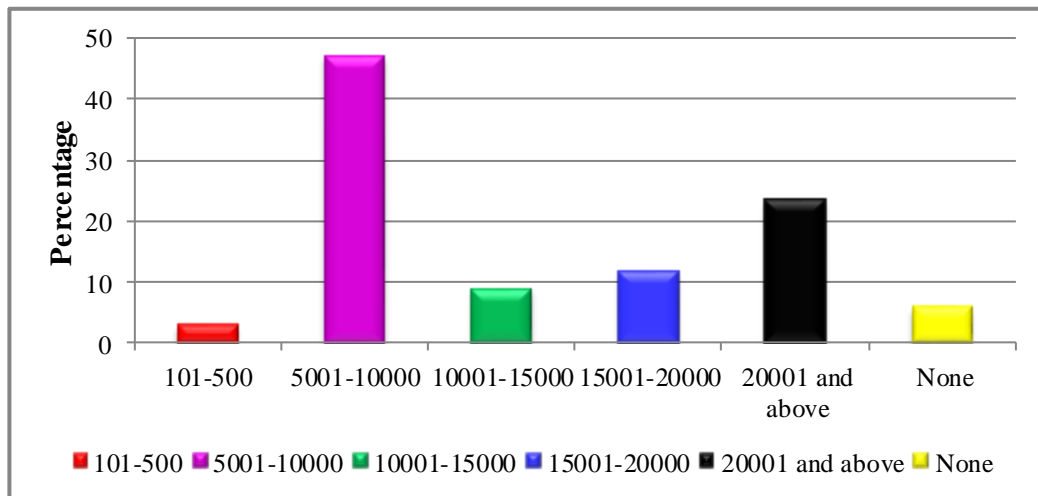
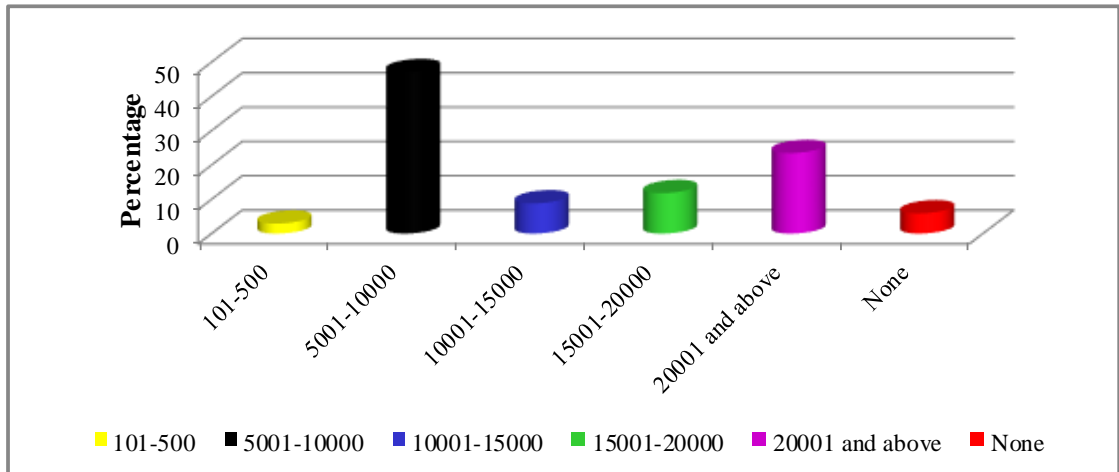


Figure 4.11 shows that in 2014, six percent of the respondents did not subscribe to the *Daily Nation* newspapers. This had nothing to do with effects of the economic environment on their subscription as the researcher found out that it was because one of the organizations that formed part of the sample size had not began its operations in Kenya in that particular year. This was intimated to the researcher by one representative of the media organization, and was confirmed by the views from the corporate organization. This proves that *Daily Nation* newspaper was still the leading newspaper that was largely subscribed.

4.3.4 Subscription of the *Daily Nation* in 2013

The figure below presents the data on the subscription of the *Daily Nation* newspapers in 2013.

Figure 4.12 Copies of *Daily Nation* newspapers subscribed to in 2013



The same result was noted in 2013 due to the consistency of the subscriptions as explained in Figure 4.9 and 4.12 above. The reason for the consistency was that budgets of the corporate organizations were not varied by any environmental factors.

4.3.5 Subscription of *Daily Nation* newspapers in 2012

Figure 4.13 Copies of *Daily Nation* newspapers subscribed to in 2012

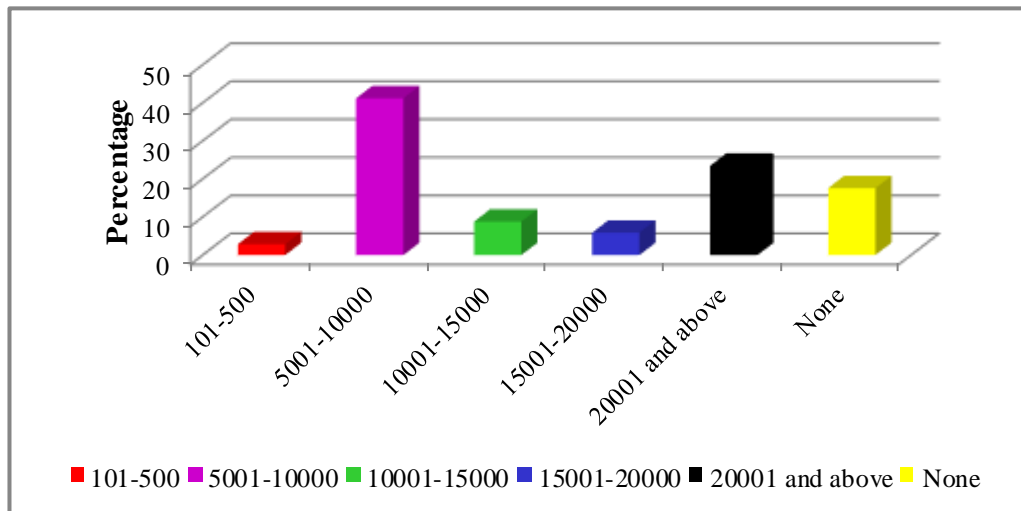
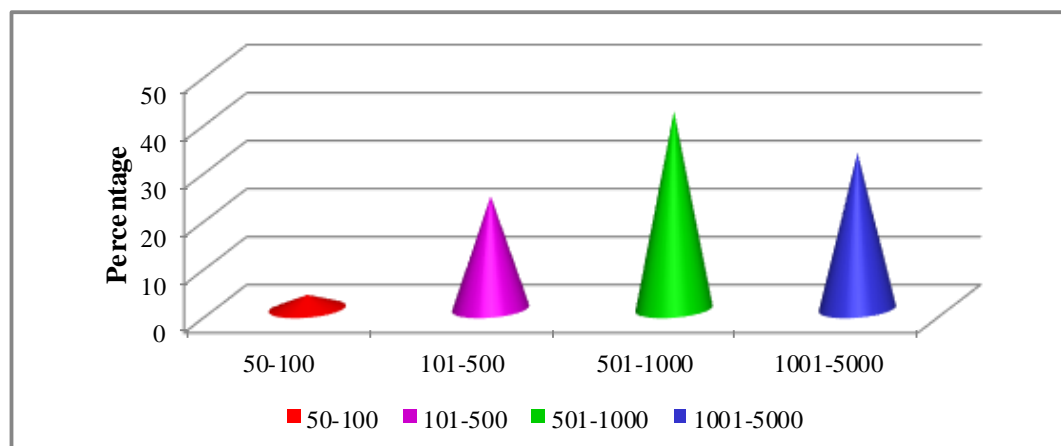


Figure 4.13 indicates that corporate organizations which did not subscribe to the *Nation Daily* Newspapers in the year 2012 were 18 percent. Just like Figure 4.11, the results here were not due to environmental factors but the fact that some of the corporate organizations had not started their operation in the country.

4.3.6 Subscription of *The East African* Newspaper in 2016

Figure 4.14 Copies of *East African* newspapers subscribed to in 2016



The findings in Figure 4.14 show that the highest number of copies of *The East African* newspapers that were subscribed in 2016 was those in the range between 501 and 1000 at 41 percent. Thirty two percent subscribed to copies between 1001 and 5000 and those between 101 and 500 were 24 percent with only a small percentage of three percent subscribing to copies between 50 and100.

Since *The East African* is a paper that is published weekly by the Nation Media Group, the researcher used the formula: *Number of copies currently subscribed to x the number of weeks in a year* to come up with the figures that were then placed in ranges as seen in Figure 4.14.

4.3.7 Subscription of *The East African* newspaper in 2015

Figure 4.15 Copies of East African newspapers subscribed to in 2015

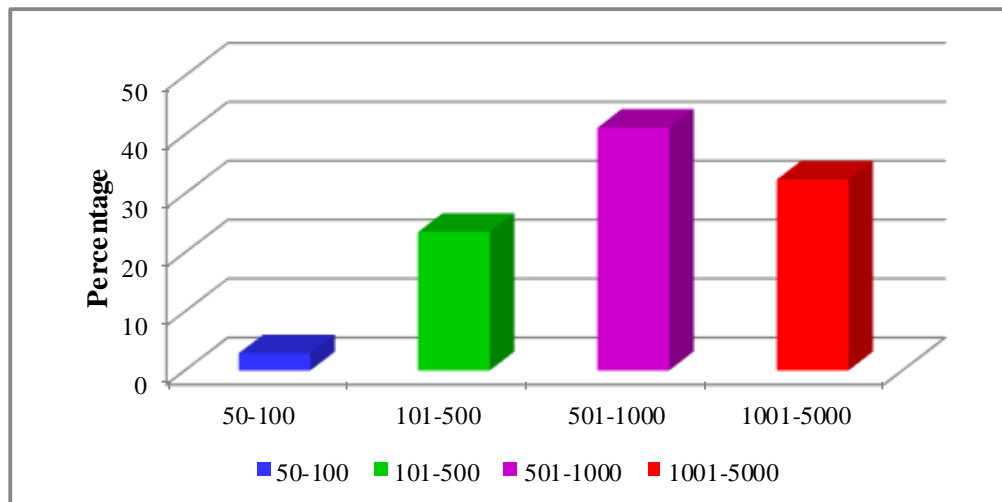
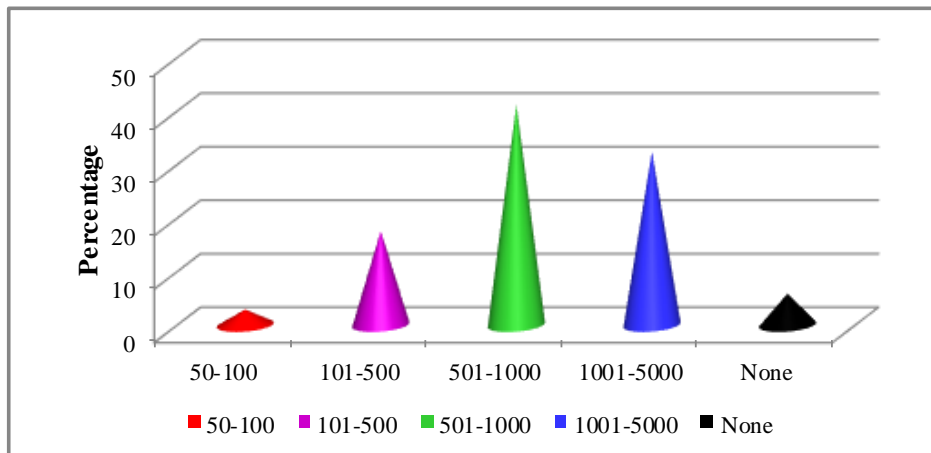


Figure 4.15 shows that the trend of subscription for *The East African* newspaper was consistent in the two successive years. This is why the findings were exactly identical to those in Figure 4.14. This was because the subscription of newspapers is something that is always part of the organizations' budgets. Therefore unless reviewed, the subscription remained consistent in subsequent years.

4.3.8 Subscription of *The East African* in 2014

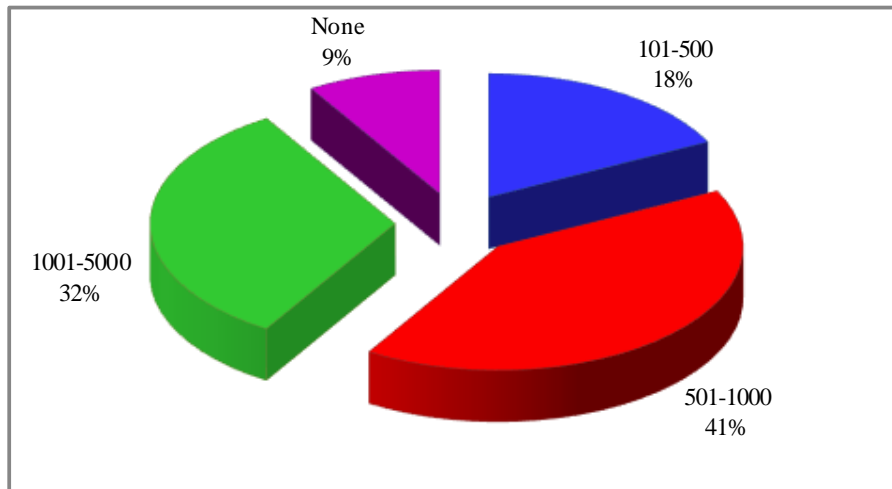
Figure 4.16 Copies of East African newspapers subscribed in 2014



In Figure 4.16, the trend was still almost the same as in Figure 4.15. In Figure 4.16 there was a difference of six percent of those who did not subscribe to *The East African* newspaper in 2014. From the findings, organizations that did not subscribe to *The East African* newspaper did not do so due to the fact that one or two corporate organizations that formed part of the sample size had not began their operations in the year 2014.

4.3.9 Subscription of *The East African* in 2013

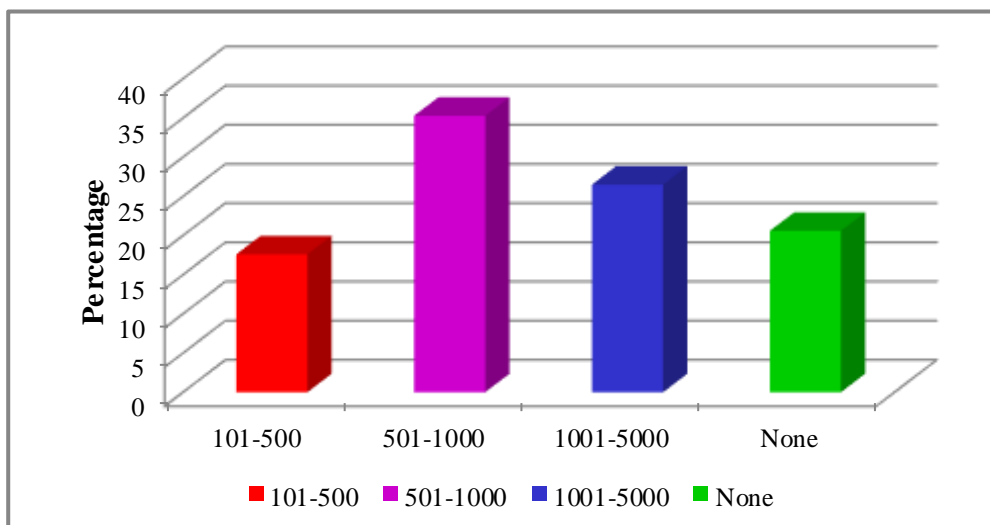
Figure 4.17 Copies of East African newspapers subscribed in 2013



Findings in Figure 4.17 are the same as those in Figure 4.16 with only those that did not subscribe to the newspaper being slightly above at nine percent. The finding was also due to the fact that in this year certain organizations that were surveyed had not begun their operations.

4.3.10 Subscription of *The East African* in 2012

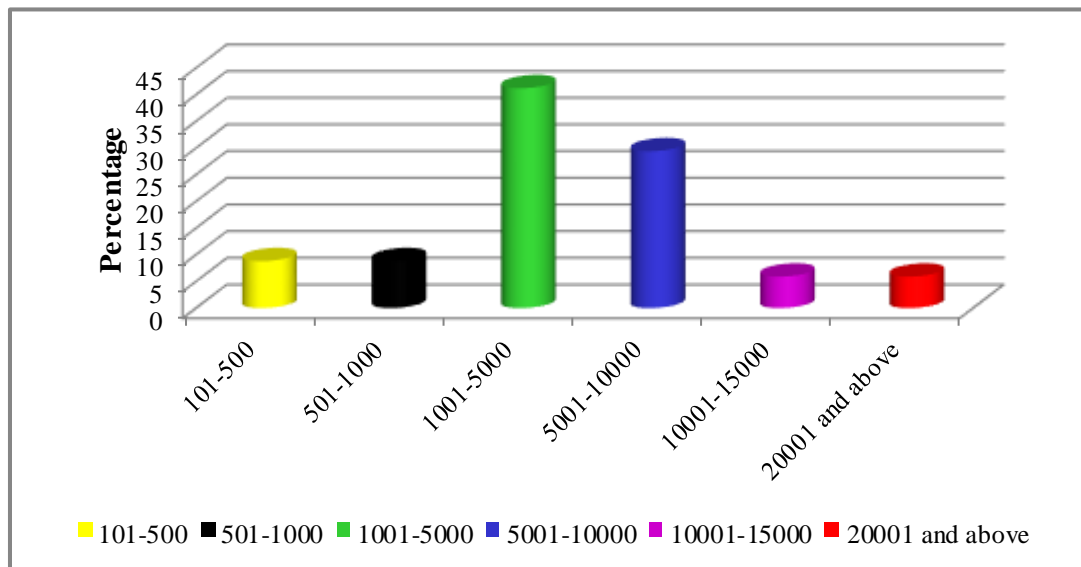
Figure 4.18 Copies of East African newspapers subscribed in 2012



In Figure 4.18, 35 percent of corporate organizations subscribed to copies between 501 and 1000. Those that subscribed to copies between 1001 and 5000 were 27 percent; and 18 percent subscribed to copies between 101 and 500. In this finding, those that did not subscribe to *The East African* newspaper were high at 21 percent.

4.3.11 Subscription of the *Business Daily* in 2016

Figure 4.19 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed in 2016



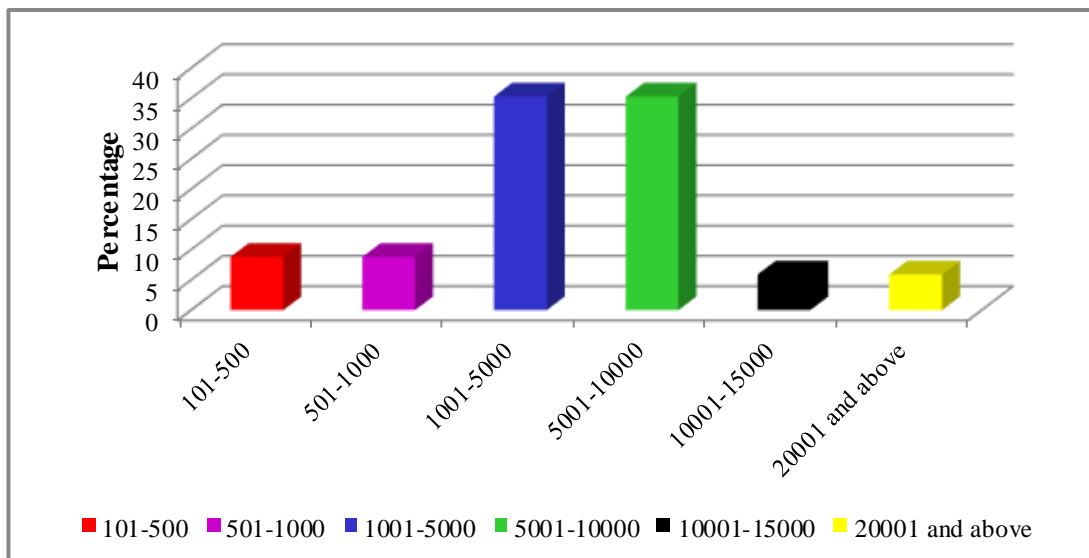
The findings in Figure 4.19 show that majority of the respondents at 41 percent had a total subscription of copies between 1001 and 5000 followed by 29 percent for those who subscribed to copies between 5001 and 10000. Only a small percentage of six each subscribed to copies between 10001 and 15000 and those who with 20000 copies and above. Nine percent subscribed to copies between 101 and 500 and 501 and 1000 copies each.

The *Business Daily* is a daily publication hence the researcher used the formula: *Number of the copies currently subscribed to x Number of days in a month x 12 months of the year*. It is to be noted that for those organizations that are in 24 hour

operations, the number of days used in the calculation were different from those who operated on weekdays only or weekdays and Saturdays only.

4.3.12 Subscription of the *Business Daily* in 2015

Figure 4.20 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed in 2015



In Figure 4.20 those who subscribed to copies between 1001 and 5000 were 35 percent. This was similar to those who subscribed to copies between 5001 and 10000. The rest were the same as those in Figure 4.19. This shows that subscription budgets remained largely unchanged in the successive years.

4.3.13 Subscription of the *Business Daily* in 2014

Figure 4.21 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed in 2014

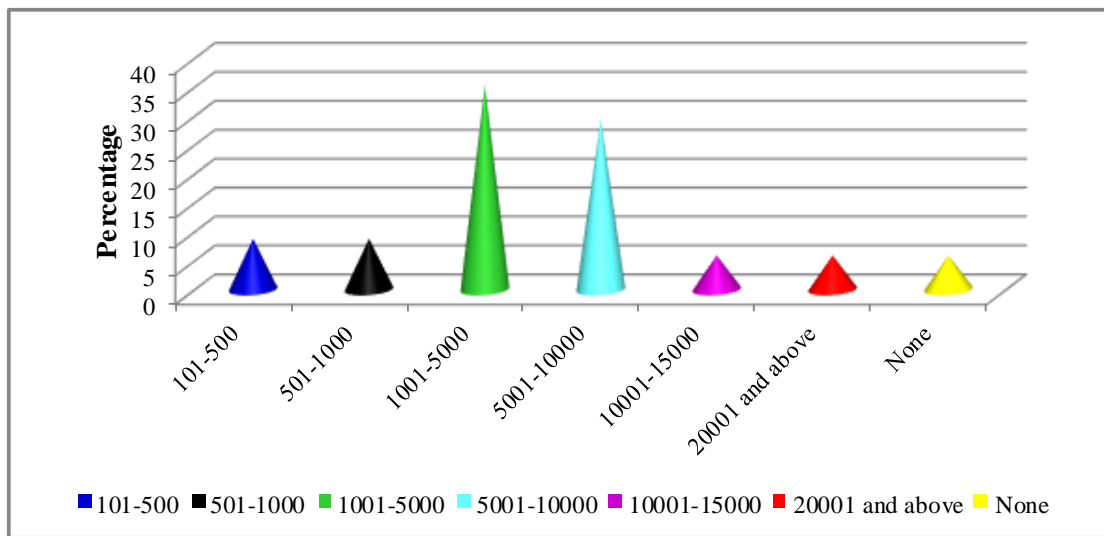


Figure 4.21 indicates that those who did not make any subscription to the *Business Daily* newspapers were six percent. From the interview, the respondents who indicated this figure explained that during this particular year they made no subscription because they had not yet started their operations in Kenya.

The consistency of subscription is still seen here just as it was with the *Daily Nation* and *The East African* newspapers whereby the respondents in the survey explained that the consistency across the years was due to the fact that subscription of prints was always something that was budgeted earlier.

4.3.14 Subscription of the *Business Daily* in 2013

Figure 4.22 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed in 2013

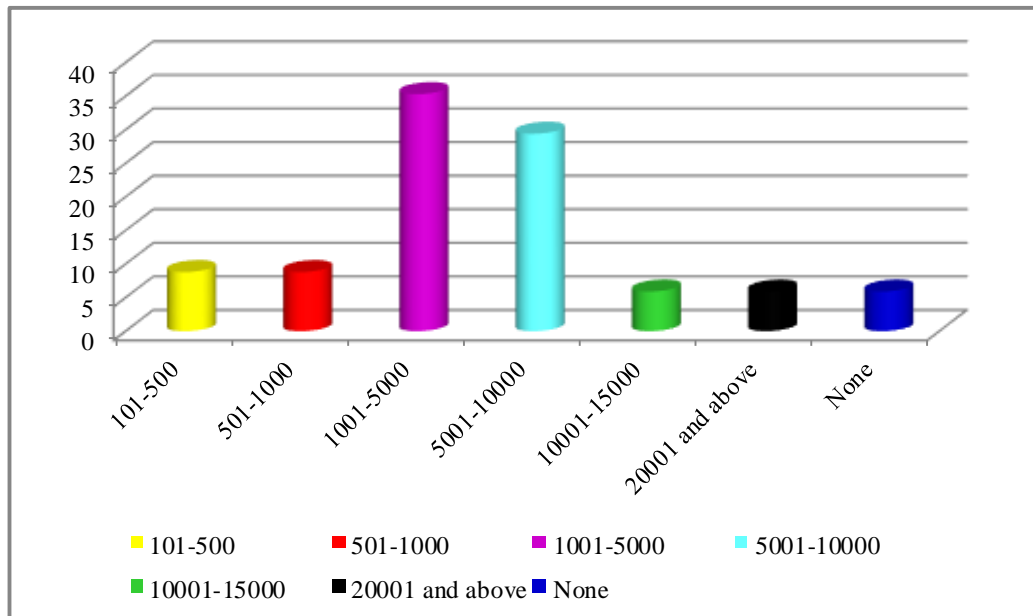
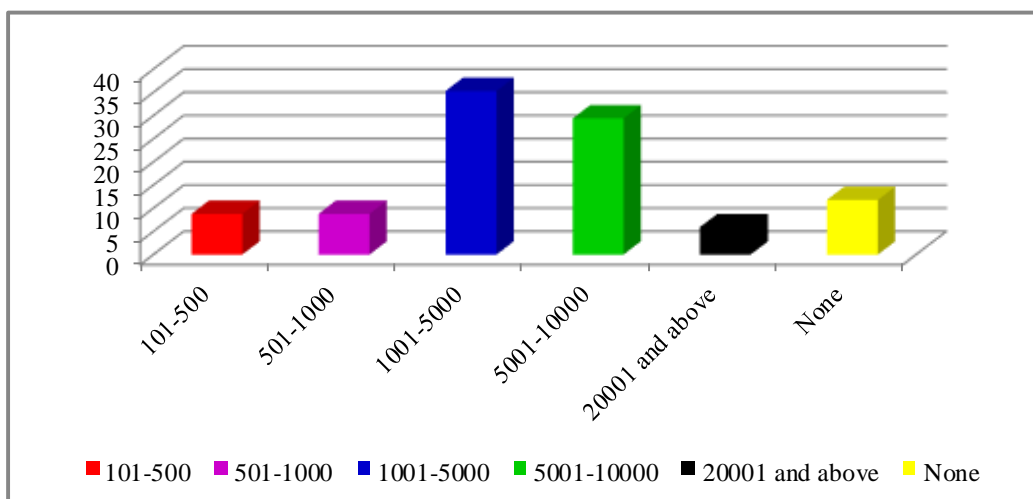


Figure 4.22 findings were a replica of the findings in Figure 4.21. This was due to the consistency in subscription of the newspaper by the corporate organizations in Nairobi.

4.3.15 Subscription of the *Business Daily* in 2012

Figure 4.23 Copies of *Business Daily* newspapers subscribed in 2012



In Figure 4.23, those who did not subscribe to the *Business Daily* newspapers were a bit higher at 12 percent. This resembles what the researcher found in Figures 4.21 and 4.22. This was because certain organizations had not begun their operations in Kenya. The rest of the findings were just the same as other years because of their consistent way of subscription budgeting for newspapers.

4.3.16 Subscription of the *Taifa Leo* in the 2012-2016 periods

Table 4.3 Copies of *Taifa Leo* newspaper subscribed to from 2012-2016

	2016		2015		2014		2013		2012	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1001-5000	8	23.5	8	23.5	8	23.5	8	23.5	6	17.6
None	26	76.5	26	76.5	26	76.5	26	76.5	28	82.4
TOTAL	34	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that those who subscribed to *Taifa Leo* newspaper were below average, at below 50 percent across all the five years under the study. Those who did subscribe to this newspaper were 30 percent with a total of copies between 1001 and 5000. This was because they made their subscriptions according to what they had already budgeted, hence the consistency across the years. During this study, the researcher found out that only some educational and government institutions subscribed to this particular newspaper despite the fact that it was the only Swahili national newspaper in Kenya. From the interview with a representative of the Consumer Federation of Kenya, many people do not buy newspapers, but rely on the subscriptions of institutions, which obviously lean towards English newspapers to gain international recognition. In these institutions, finding Swahili papers is not an

easy task. Additionally, educational institutions subscribe to Swahili papers in order to boost the mastery of students or pupils in the national language. From an interview with representatives of educational institutions, it was generally argued that Swahili newspapers were written in standard grammar to facilitate the teaching of the language. One participant had this to say: *“At times we have to forgo the English newspapers just to buy the Taifa Leo. This is because it is our policy to help learners develop competency in their national language. If we don’t do these children won’t like it because to them it’s a language of the low class people!”*

4.4 Factors affecting print media subscription among corporate organizations

The second objective of the study was to investigate the factors that affect the subscription of print media products of the Nation Media Group by corporate organizations in Nairobi. This was important to show the place of communication and relationship building in retention of subscription of the newspapers. From the interview with heads of various departments in the Nation Media Group, corporate organizations and consumer federation, three classes of factors emerged. These included media-centric factors like product quality, product cost, marketing strategy, subscription dynamics and customer relations with the media organization. The second group of factors is audience-centric like audience preferences and the relationship between audiences and media organizations. Lastly, institution-centric factors like publicity, international acclaim and public relations. From the three groups, the factors that stand out are on relationship between the media organization and its key publics; and economic factors related to demand and supply.

4.4.1 Economic factors affecting subscription of print media products

The respondents were asked whether economic factors affect the subscription of the media products in question. They were also asked to mention some of the economic factors that affect print media products subscription. The sub-sections below present the results.

Table 4.4: Economic factors that affect print media product subscription

	Frequency	Percent
No economic factor affect subscription	1	3
Not much affected because we subscribe to the prints mainly for information	15	44
Lack of proper disposal mechanisms making them very cumbersome	6	17
Thinking green aspect makes us want to opt for e-papers	3	9
Capping of interest rates	1	3
Skyrocketing tax rates	1	3
Fall in consumer confidence levels brought about by uncertainties e.g. major terrorist attacks	5	15
Decrease in clients' discretionary incomes affecting their spending and savings	2	6
Total	34	100

Table 4.5 shows the opinion of respondents regarding the economic factors that affected their subscription of the Nation Media print products. The responses were diverse according to the type of organizations studied. Those who felt that they were not much affected by the economic factors because they mostly subscribed to the Nation Media print products for the sake of getting information were the majority at 44 percent. They said that for the sake of a win-win relationship they had with their newspaper suppliers, the effects were limited on their subscription as they also relied on the newspapers to advertise their products and services and in return got feedback from their clients.

Those who felt that lack of proper disposal mechanisms affected their subscription were 17 percent. This could be the reason why there had been some decline in their subscription as they were opting for digital or e-papers. Fifteen percent of the respondents said that the fall in consumer confidence levels was their major setback that affected their subscription because of the kind of the business they ran. Therefore when there was a recession in their business this would automatically have an impact on their subscription. The other responses were from those who said that the *thinking green* aspect affected their subscription, as well as the capping of interest rates and skyrocketing taxes with a total percentage of nine, three and three percent, respectively. Again these kind of responses depended on the type of organization or business that the respondents were operating.

Only six percent of respondents felt that the decrease in clients' discretionary incomes which end up having an impact on their spending and savings habits affected their subscription. Additionally, only three percent of the respondents felt that nothing affected their subscription.

4.4.2 How inflation rates affect newspaper subscriptions

Figure 4.31 How inflation rates affect the subscription

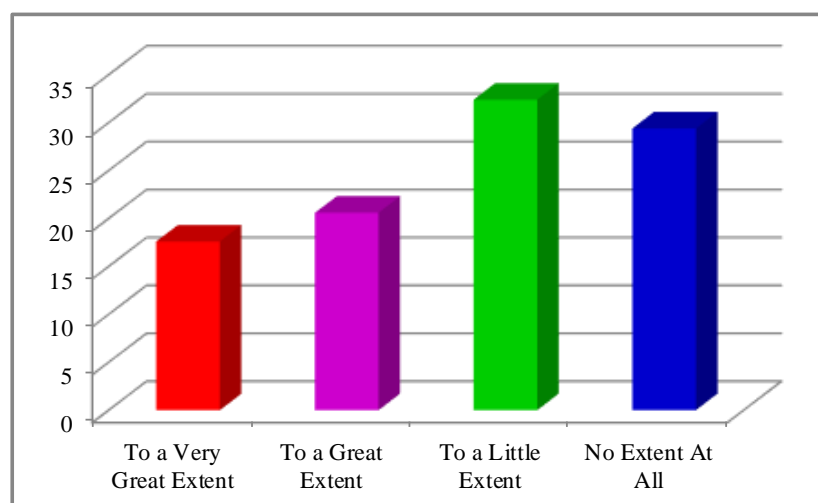
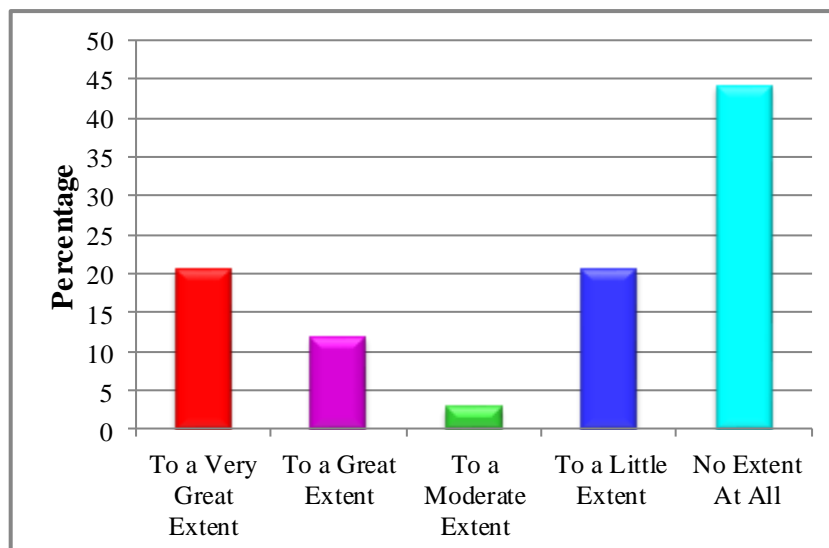


Figure 4.31 show that 32 percent of the respondents felt that inflation rates affected them to a little extent. Those who felt inflation rates had no effect on their subscription were 29 percent. Those who felt that inflation rates had an effect on their subscription of the Nation Media print media products were 21 percent; and 18 percent of respondents agreed that it affected them to great extent and to a very great extent, respectively. Inflation rates cause most of the commodity prices to increase and this affects the organizations' budgets thereby affecting subscription. But some respondents pointed out that the inflation rates have no impact on their subscriptions at the moment but it would depend on how much the prices went up. These findings reveal what the researcher found out in Figure 4.30 whereby it depended on which type of business the organization run that determined the extent they were being affected by the economic factors.

4.4.3 How government control affects subscriptions

Figure 4.32 How Government controls affect the subscription



In Figure 4.32, majority of the respondents felt that government controls either had none or little effect on their subscription at 44 and 21 percent, respectively. This

category of respondents felt this way because subscription of Nation Media prints was something that they budgeted for in advance during their monthly or yearly budget reports. Unless the budgets were reviewed, nothing affected the numbers they subscribed. The category that felt it affected their subscriptions was mainly from the government side.

The respondents from government institutions indicated that from time to time they were controlled by government circulars and presidential directives. For example, the recently introduced “MY GOV” where they are supposed to advertise their tenders and other services affected them. Those who felt they were affected to a very great extent were 21 percent and to a great extent at 12 percent. Lastly those who indicated its effects were to a moderate extent were three percent. In general, the study revealed that government controls affected the print media subscription of government organizations.

4.4.4 How cost control affected subscription

Figure 4.33 How cost controls affect the subscription of print media products

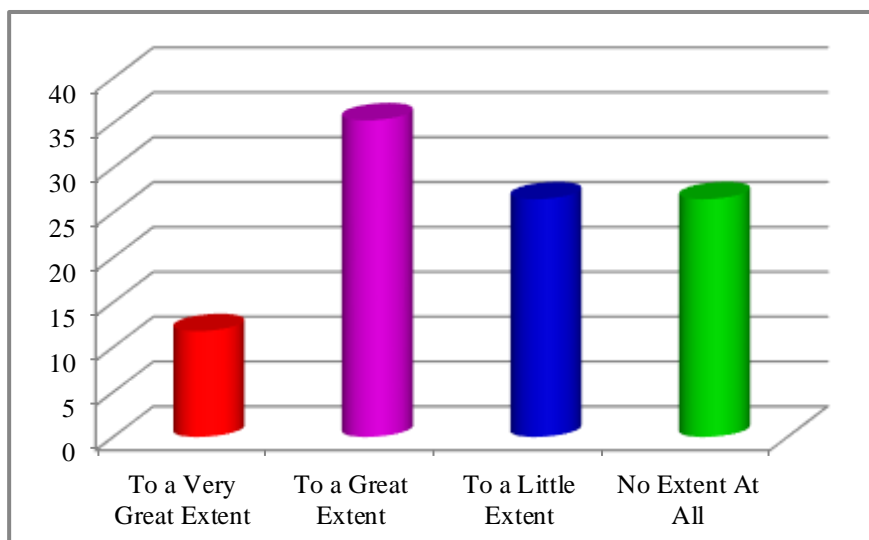


Figure 4.33 shows that majority of the respondents at 35 percent agreed that cost controls would actually have an impact on their subscriptions to a great extent. 12 percent also felt the same, that it affected subscription to a very great extent. These findings indicate that even though some corporate subscription of newspapers is something they budgeted for in advance, any change in the cost caused lack of stability that calls for regular budget reviews that attract audit queries. High cost of subscription may lead to a reduction in purchase of the newspapers or prioritization of procurements of what is really necessary.

Those who felt that cost controls affected subscription to no extent or to a little extent were at 27 percent each. This is for those who felt that they were not much affected by the economic factors because of the win-win relationship that they had with the Nation Media print products as they relied mostly on them for advertising their services and products. These subscribers had become less sensitive to price over time. This finding has proven how relationship marketing can differentiate a company and lead to competitive advantage.

4.4.5 Whether the subscription processes were satisfactory to the customers

Figure 4.34 Whether the subscription processes were satisfactory to customers

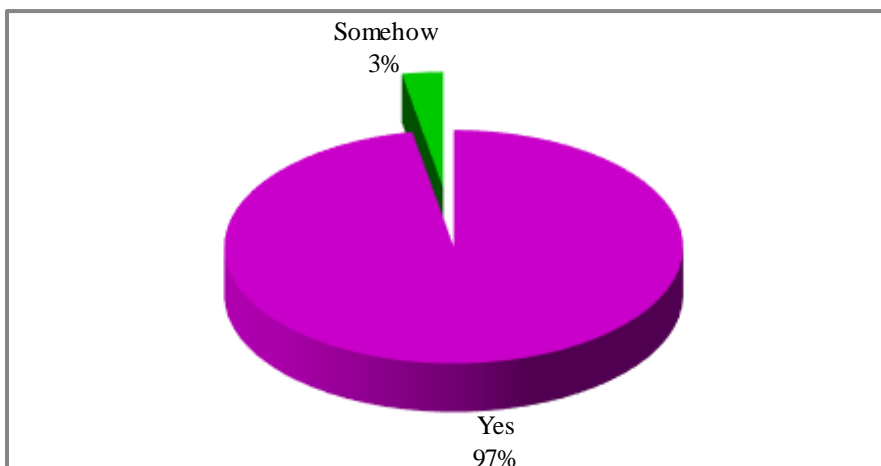


Figure 4.34 shows that almost all of the respondents at 97 percent agreed that the subscription processes were satisfactory to them especially in terms of costing, quality and timely deliveries. It is only three percent who felt that the processes were somehow satisfactory giving reasons like they would wish if the period of payment can be extended as it at times catches them off guard or unprepared. These findings prove that there is a strong loyalty base that the Nation Media has built with these corporate organizations over the years (Ellinger, 2000).

4.4.6 Importance of efficiency and turnaround time of subscription

Figure 4.35 Importance of efficiency and turnaround time of subscription

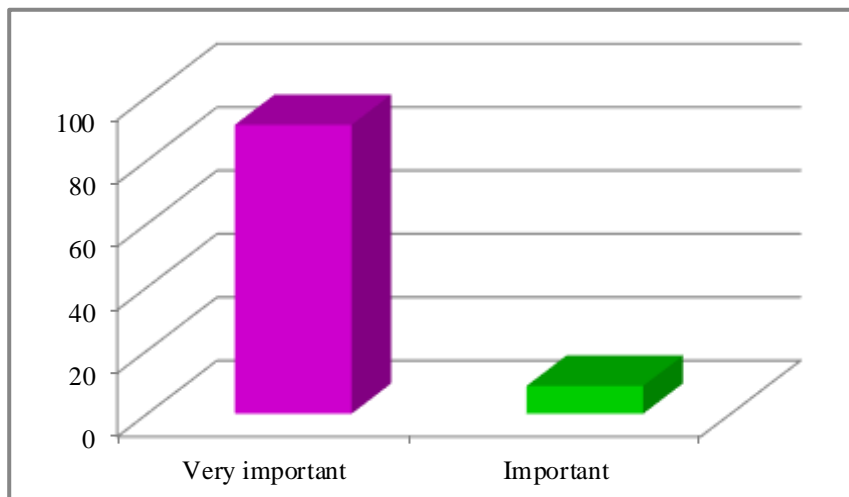


Figure 4.35 shows that all respondents agreed that efficiency and turnaround time of subscription of the print media products was either very important or important to their organizations with 91 percent saying it was very important and nine percent agreeing that it was important. This proves the confidence, attachment and loyalty that these organizations have for the Nation Media Group print products for the longest period that they had been in existence. What might have also enhanced this kind of response was the fact that customers are looking for brands that will provide them with unique and memorable experiences (Hong-Youl & Perks, 2005).

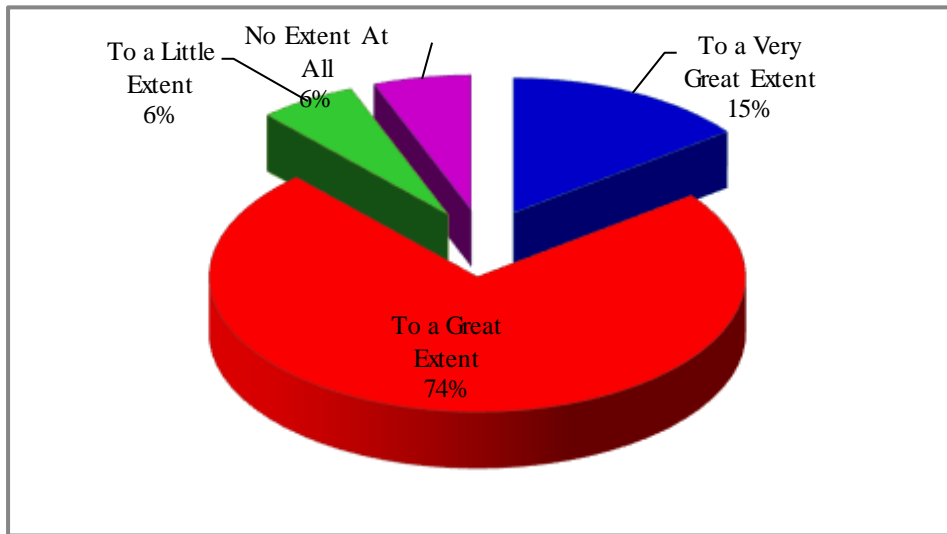
A good number of the respondents said they consider Nation Media print products as the fourth estate for confirmation. They might have gotten or heard the same information from other sources but because of the trust they have for the Nation Media prints especially the *Daily Nation* newspaper, they subscribed to the print media products for confirmation and trusted information. It is also a product was the way they communicated with their external publics, therefore consistency was vital. They said they depended on Nation Media print media to advertise their products and services like tenders, disposals and new developments. They observed that the newspapers are the most available and convenient means of information because not everybody could have access to the internet.

4.5 Influence of relationship building on subscription of print media products

The third and last objective of the study sought to investigate the influence of relationship building on the retention of the subscription the print media products of the Nation Media Group. This was important because there was need to establish the role played by communication and relationship building techniques in enhancing customer relations necessary for the retention of subscription among corporate subscribers in Nairobi. The sub-sections below analyze the results.

4.5.1 Extent of influence of relationship building on subscription of newspapers

Figure 4.36 Extent of influence of customer relationship on subscriptions



In Figure 4.36, majority of the respondents at 74 percent agreed that customer relationship management affected their subscription to a great extent. Those who felt it greatly affected their subscriptions were 15 percent with only six percent feeling that it can affect them to a little extent or to no extent at all. This finding proves that any challenge in customer relationship management will actually have a negative impact on the loyalty of the subscribers and in the end affect their subscription. Those who felt it had no effect on their subscription mentioned that since there are only two major print media organizations who publish newspapers in Kenya, they really have no much choice. From an interview with representatives of the Nation Media Group, it was revealed that key departments responsible for creating relationship with subscribers are the marketing, corporate affairs and the Subscription and Circulation departments. It was revealed that each of these departments has relationship management executives who take up issues affecting the media and its customers. It was also revealed that these departments have their own smooth internal relations.

One participant had this to say: *“Even though each department has a clear cut and well demarcated roles in the industries, their individual and collective roles relate with ensuring that their key publics are satisfied”*. It was also clear that opinions were divided on which department was responsible for the most critical responsibility for the current state of subscription. While all of the participants agreed that the huge responsibility was shared between marketing and subscription and circulation departments, advertising department had very little or no responsibility at all. Additionally, there was a corporate desk within the Corporate Affairs department, whose role was to receive customer complaints and direct them to the relevant offices for action. The study also revealed that while the marketing department played the initial role of establishing the relationship between the customer and the media organization, retention and ensuring healthy relationship among them was reserved for the corporate affairs and subscription and circulation departments. One of the participants from the NMG said: *“Our role as a department is to initiate the relationship, recruit customers and use various publicity and marketing tools to woo customers. After this is done, our responsibility is then shifted to the Circulation Department, although the organization is structured in such a manner that any one of us can help out in other departments without further training and orientation because we understand these roles.”*

4.5.2 Whether relationship building attends to customer needs and enquiries

The respondents were asked to state whether relationship building appealed to their needs for products, complaints, delivery and enquiry. This was important to gauge the place of communication in satisfying customer needs which might eventually lead to retention of subscription. The table below presents the result.

Table 4.5 Whether customer relationship management attended to customer needs

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	100.0
Total	34	100.0

According to Table 4.5, all the respondents agreed that their customer relationship manager attends to their needs and inquiries. They gave reasons like if there is any breach in the relationship between them and the media, their customer relationship manager visits or call them to address the issue. This is because they realize that this can negatively affect the normal flow of operations in the organization.

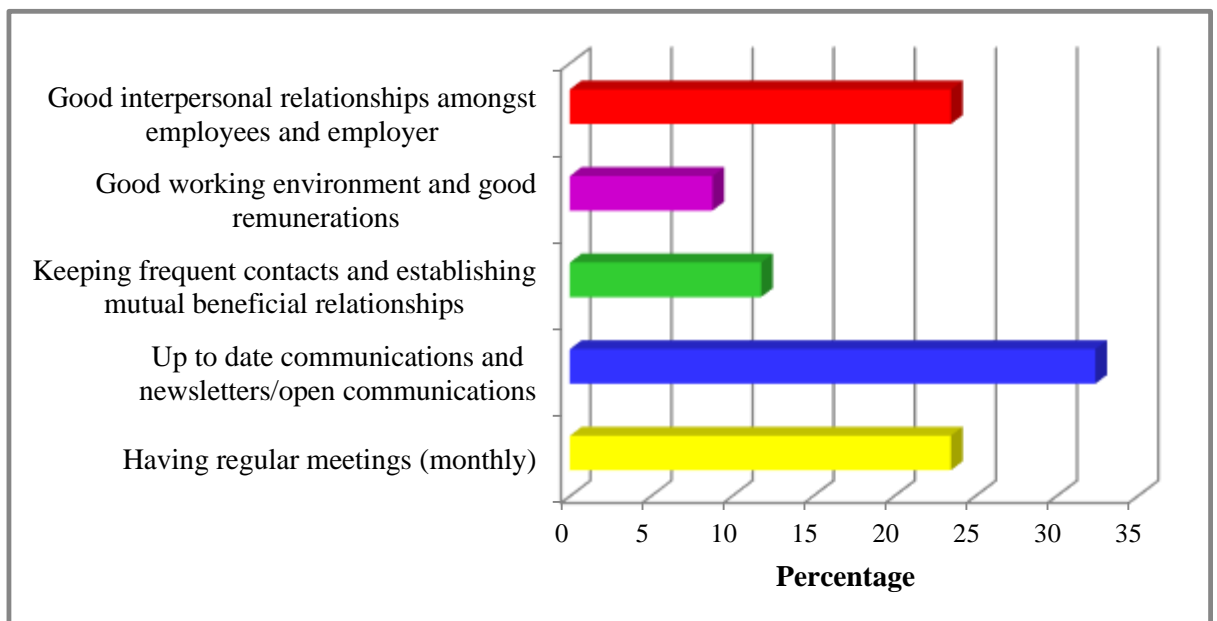
This trend clearly proves the assertion that retailers and organizations are constantly seeking to adopt customer relationships management in order to stand out (Zehir et al 2011). It can be said that customer relationship management is the engine that drives an organization-public relationship. This finding was confirmed by representatives of the NMG, corporate organizations and the consumer federation of Kenya who observed that effective communication and relationships that organizations have with their business publics boost the confidence of customers. This eventually builds trust and loyalty necessary for repeat purchase or subscription of the products. One of the respondents said: *“It is not all facts that most institutions with large customer base have the right products. Not really. Customers do not always buy the quality products, but what they perceive as of high quality due to the relationship they have with the organizations. Sometimes they do not complain because of the kind of relationship.”* The import of this statement is that people always do not associate with products because of quality products, but also the relationship they have with the organization.

This enables these organizations to build their brand image. Where there is good brand image, the products and services are easily subscribed or purchased.

4.5.3 Ways of improving the relationship between Nation Media Group and corporate organizations

The respondents were also asked to mention the various ways by which the relationship between the media and corporate organizations can be improved to ensure continuous subscription of the products. The figure below shows how they responded.

Figure 4.37 Ways to improve the relationship between customers & organizations



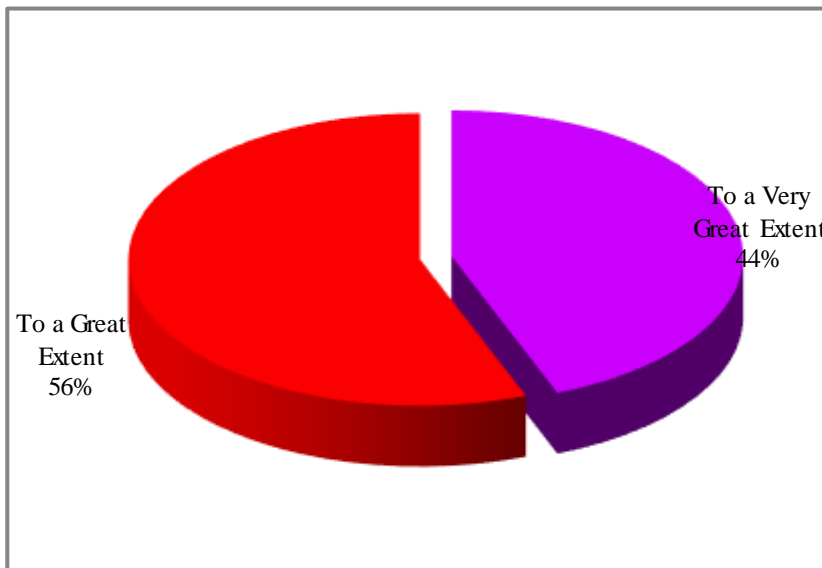
From Figure 4.37, opinions were divided on the techniques that the media can use to build relationship with the organizations. The implication of this is that the media had relied on audience specific techniques to reach its publics. Among the approaches that were mentioned include interpersonal relationships, good working environments, keeping frequent contacts, up to date communication through newsletters, internet and

social media and regular meetings with stakeholders. Specifically, 32 percent of the respondents felt that up to date communications and newsletters including open communications will improve their relationships. A good interpersonal relationship between employees and employer was emphasized on by 24 percent. Another opinion that tied at 24 percent was having regular meetings. Those who felt that keeping frequent contacts and establishing mutual beneficial relationships were 12 percent and lastly nine percent felt that good working environment with good remunerations would improve their relationships. In all these opinions one thing that was noted is that for a good working relationship to be maintained, people need each other or rather interactions amongst themselves. This is in line with (Shaw's 1991) explanation of what customer relationship management constitutes. The findings were confirmed by all the representations of the NMG, corporate organizations and Consumer Federation of Kenya. They observed that without points of conducts with the public, business organizations cannot survive. That is why most of them invest in creating relationship management departments to handle customer related issues. One participant indicated: *"You can see all over that organizations have resorted to creating public relations departments to manage their publics. Even where these are absent, people still do covert public relations"*. This finding confirms what various literatures say about the inevitability of relationship management and communication.

4.5.4 How challenges in customer-organizational relationship are addressed

The study sought to investigate how challenges that occur in the relationship between customers and corporate organizations are resolved for continuity. This was important in understanding the strategies and techniques used to manage relationship issues that affect subscription of products. Figure 4.28 presents the results.

Figure 4.38 Extent of addressing challenges in customer-organization relationships



In Figure 4.38, the respondents were all in agreement that the challenges in customer relationship were serious matters and they were always addressed adequately. 56 percent of the respondents agreed that the challenges are addressed to a great extent and 44 percent agreed that the challenges are addressed to a very great extent. This proves that customer relationship management is a critical aspect in day to day running of an organization and if any challenges are experienced they are addressed fully. The findings confirm that relationship management is an important component in organizations.

4.5.5 Whether the challenges with customer relationship have impact on subscription

Figure 4.39 Whether the challenges have an impact on the subscription

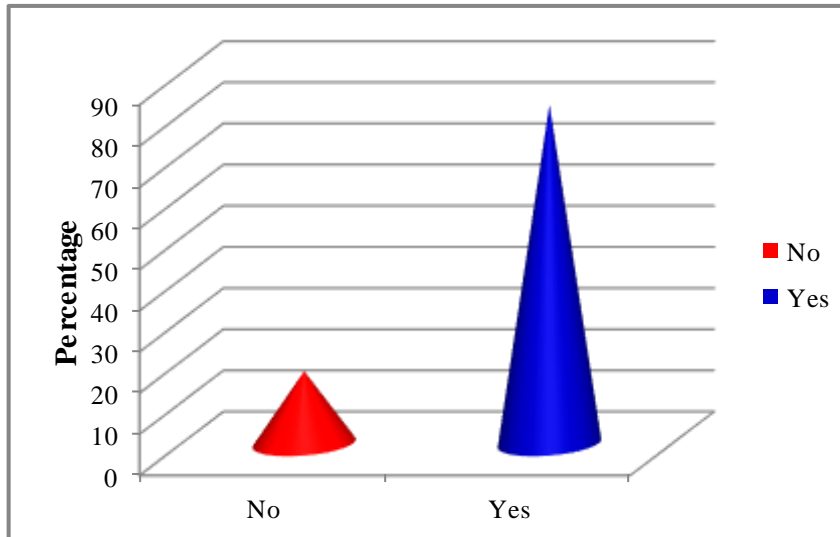


Figure 4.39 shows that 82 percent of the respondents agreed that any challenges in customer relationship has an impact on their subscription with only 18 percent disputing that it has no impact on their subscription. Even with these responses, the researcher found out that the respondents were not confirming that they are currently having challenges that are affecting their subscription but they came out strongly that if they will ever experience any challenge in customer relationship with the Nation Media Group, it will automatically have an impact on their subscriptions. These findings were confirmed in the interview with representatives of various organizations studied.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter is summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The study sought to investigate the influence of relationship building and communication on the retention of subscription of corporate organizations of NMG print media products. Using structured and open ended interview guides and content analysis, the study relied on data from 34 corporate customers drawn from 17 corporate organizations in Nairobi County, three NMG representatives, one representative of the Consumer Federation of Kenya and the media strategy documents to answer the research questions, namely: to investigate the factors that affect the subscription of print media products, to analyze the communication and relationship building techniques used for retention of corporate clients and to investigate the influence of relationship building in the customer retention.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

5.1.1 Trends in the subscription of the NMG products by corporate organization

The study findings are significant because it gives the answer to how customer retention and loyalty is an important matrix in customer relationship management. The findings of the research indicate that most of the organizations subscribe to the print products of the Nation Media Group and have been in existence for over 15 years. This study was conducted on a few subscribers of Nation Media print products, and since it was randomly selected it was not easy to conclude that these are the exact percentages. From the study, it shows Nation Media Group has had a good customer relationship with its subscribers and hence has continued to retain them as it came out

clearly that they have been subscribing to the prints for the entire period they have been in existence and still counting.

5.1.2 Factors that affect the print media subscription by corporate organization

There are various factors that affect corporate organization subscription of the Nation Media Print products. Although the majority at 44 percent felt that they are not much affected by the economic factors, there emerged quite a number that should be very worrying as the responses they raised might be something that the Nation Media Group should follow on to ensure that they do not lose this category of subscribers. Those who felt that the thought of thinking green makes them long to go digital were nine percent and those who felt that lack of proper disposal mechanism for the papers is affecting their subscription were 17 percent. With these two categories combined it shows that quite a big percentage cannot go ignored as these issues in the long run will automatically cause them to switch to alternative options completely.

5.1.3 Influence of customer relationship building on corporate subscription

The effectiveness of relationship strategy has to do with the results attained after its implementation. According to online dictionary, effectiveness is the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. The main objective of an organization is to ensure that all parties involved receive increased and mutual value. In regard to the effectiveness of customer relationship management results showed that customer relationship management affects their subscription of the print media products.

The finding demonstrated that customer relationship management was a very effective way of ensuring customer retention and in the end make them remain loyal to media print products of Nation Media Group. It confirms that relationship marketing has

focused on customer retention, service, and product benefits, a long-term scale, service emphasis, high customer commitment, customer contact, quality, and finally customer loyalty (Cheese, 1994; Gummesson, 1998; Abratt & Russell, 1999). Therefore the findings mean that for an organization to retain and ensure that its clients remain loyal to its products and services, customer relationship management should be on point as it provides a competitive advantage and creates barriers to switching.

From the findings the respondents were in agreement that interdependent relationship is the efficient way of ensuring subscribers of Nation Media print products continues to remain loyal to them. Effective customer relationship management has to do with how many subscribers know what it entails and even practicing it. The study demonstrated that the target audiences were already using this strategy even in their organizations. Therefore Nation Media Group has an added advantage as their major corporate subscribers of the media print products understand the importance of customer relationship management hence ensuring mutual benefit for both of them.

5.2 Conclusion

The research established that customer relationship management is indeed the engine that will create customers loyalty and helps an organization realize the customer retention and even future customer acquisition as these established loyalty base become advocates and ambassadors of the brands they subscribe to. The findings have demonstrated that though the way forward is for the organizations to invest in customer relationship management, these strategies cannot be used exclusively at the expense of ensuring that their customers get the best products and services. A clients experience with a product will ensure that they either remain loyal or not to a brand

they subscribe to. Therefore a steady customer relationship management only gives an organization a better means to keep their customers loyal to their brands but making their products and services appeal to their customers more and more should not lag behind. Therefore this research recommends that both should go hand in hand at all times. The findings of this study confirmed that customer relationship management it is indeed the engine that drives an organization making it a key and core strategy in running of businesses. Almost all the respondents were in agreement that challenges in customer relationship are addressed adequately in their organizations.

This finding indicates that organizations are investing in strategies that will maximize the value of every customer by keeping them satisfied according to their needs (Turban et al, 2003). The study found out that respondents' needs and enquiries are attended to ensuring good flow of operations in their businesses. Customer relationship is area that organizations need to maximize on. The subscribers' loyalty and retention also came out clearly in this study. The respondents' loyalty towards Nation Media print products was enormous. A customer retention rate is a major metric in customer relationship management (Hoekstra et al, 1999). It makes organization clients loyal advocates of the brand. Despite some of respondents saying they lack proper disposal mechanisms of the papers, they have continued to remain loyal to the print products as they find it easier to retrieve information than if they decide to go completely digital.

The subscribers' loyalty is also depicted in what they responded to regarding the efficiency and turnaround time of the Nation Media Group print products. This analysis gives the Nation Media print products an edge higher from their competitors

as the loyalty base they have created with these subscribers seems will continue for a long time.

Keeping customers satisfied is one thing that companies are more focused on ensuring that their customers remain loyal to them. The findings in this study show that Nation Media Group has not been left behind in keeping customers who subscribe to its media print products satisfied. Almost all the respondents at 97% agreed that the subscription processes is satisfactory to them. This concludes that a good experience will stay longer in the customers mind while a negative experience will affect the brand negatively, which will also impact the relationship (Westbrook & Oliver, 1999). The analysis of the data showed that most of the respondents were in agreement that customer relationship management is a vital management strategy that an organization needs to invest in and make it a priority in the day to day running of their businesses. They were unanimous that any challenges experienced in customer relationship management would actually have a great impact on their subscription of the Nation Media print products. Although some of the respondents raised some of the economic environmental effects that might have been affecting their subscription, what came out clearly is that the advantages of subscribing to Nation Media products outweighs the effects as most of them operate a win-win relationship with the products.

5.3 Recommendation

Having undertaken the study on the influence of relationship building on the retention of subscription of print media products among corporate organizations in Kenya, the study therefore makes the following recommendations:

- That an organization should not only focus on products and services that it offers to its clients, but should put extra effort in ensuring that customer

relationship management with its clients remains steady. This will ensure there is customer loyalty and retention is almost guaranteed

- That a proper disposal mechanism to be adopted for these print media products as in the long run this is actually going to be something that will affect the subscription of the print products as some of these loyal subscribers will switch to other options

5.4 Suggestions for further research

The study explored the influence of relationship building on the retention of corporate subscription of the Nation Media print products. Implicitly some gaps in the study have emerged which need further research to be carried.

There are other factors that might be affecting the subscribers' loyalty to the Nation Media print products that might not be connected to relationship building. A good number of the respondents raised the issue that although they have continued to remain loyal to the brands, they keep grappling with lack of proper disposal mechanisms for the papers and hence sorting out themselves by going for an alternative which is e-papers.

The *Taifa Leo* is the only Swahili national newspaper and also Swahili is Kenya's national language. The trend from the finding portrays nothing close to this as the newspaper has the lowest subscription. It is an area that needs some further exploration.

These subscribers know that they have more different styles, variations, products and services to choose from. The subscribers have access to information in abundance such as service information and all the available information on the Internet. Today the customers are also more aware and they have higher expectations. The abundance

of information encourages customers to make comparisons among the available service providers. Further research on these various styles and ways of getting information needs to be undertaken to find out how they might be affecting the reduction in subscription of the Nation Media Group print products.

Another pattern was noticed when the respondents were asked to what extent does cost control affect their subscription of Nation Media Group prints. A good number of the respondents, the majority at 35% actually felt that cost controls affect their subscriptions. This subjects them to frequent budget reviews which in the end lead to a reduction in the previous number of papers that they have been subscribing to. If this notion is true, then a study should be carried out on how the cost controls has been affecting reduction in subscription of Nation Media print products for the past five years.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS.

Introduction

I am Rose Wanjohi a student from the University of Nairobi pursuing a Master's Degree in Communication Studies. As part of the academic requirements, am required to undertake a research study entitled 'Influence of relationship building and communication on the retention of corporate subscribers of the print media products of the Nation Media Group in Kenya'

I wish to assure you that all the information you provide shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for academic purposes only and under no circumstances will your identity be revealed in the report without your prior permission. I therefore request for your contribution to some chosen questions here in.

Kindly answer all the questions;

Part A.

1. How old is your organization?

- 0-5 Years
- 5-10 years
- 10- 15 years
- Over 15 years

2. What is your position and how long have you served in this position?

- Head of Procurement
- Communication Manager

3. Which Nation print media products you subscribe to?

- *Daily Nation*
- *The East African*
- *Taifa Leo*

- *Business Daily*

4. How many copies of Nation Media Group’s print products do you currently subscribe to?

<i>Daily Nation</i>	
East African	
<i>Taifa Leo</i>	
<i>Business Daily</i>	

5. How many copies have you subscribed to in the last 5 years?

Year	<i>Daily Nation</i>	East African	<i>Business Daily</i>	<i>Taifa Leo</i>
2016				
2015				
2014				
2013				
2012				

Part B: Customer Relationship Management.

1. What are the factors affecting subscription of print media products by corporate organizations
2. Is your customer relation manager able to attend to your needs and enquires?
3. In your opinion what would be the ways in which the relationship between you and the organization can be improved?
4. To what extent are the challenges in customer relationship management addressed and do they have an impact to the subscriptions?

Part C: Economic Environment.

1. Which Economic environmental factors affect the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group?
2. To what extent do inflation rates affect the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group?
3. To what extent do Government controls affect the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group?
4. To what extent does Cost control affect the subscription of print media products of Nation Media Group?

Part D: Subscribers Satisfaction.

1. Are the subscription processes satisfactory to you?
2. How important is efficiency and turnaround time of subscription of the print media products to your organization?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COFEK AND NMG.

- 1). Introduction to participants
- 2). Background information of corporate organizations and participants
- 3). Trends in the NMG print media products subscriptions from 2012-2016
- 4). Factors affecting subscription of print media products by corporate organizations
- 5). Influence of relationship building on retention of subscription by corporate organizations
 - Relationship building and communication techniques
 - Role of relationship building in subscriptions
 - Challenges to subscription management
 - Ways of addressing subscription challenges
 - Influence of communication and relationship management in retention of subscriptions.

APPENDIX C: CERTIFICATE OF FIELD WORK



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This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 20/1/2017 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: KS0174386/2014

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Title: Influence of relationship building and communication on the retention of

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APPENDIX D: ORIGINALITY REPORT

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Title: Influence of Relationship building and Communication on the retention of Corporate

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