

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

TOPIC: PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE REPORTING ON CORRUPTION IN
THE PRINT MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATION NEWSPAPER

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF THE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN MASS COMMUNICATION

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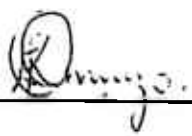
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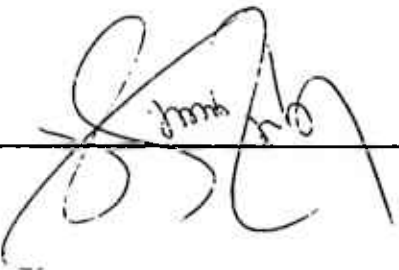
DECLARATION

This is to declare that this project is our original work and has not been presented for examination in any other institution.


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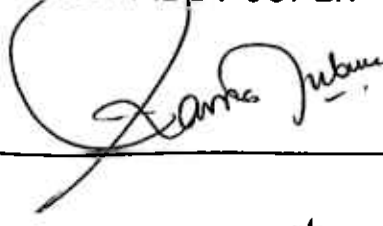
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We are especially grateful to Kamau Mubuu for the guidance he gave us in the entire research process.

Dedication

We dedicate this research project to the SOJ class of 2005 and all our Lecturers

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Abstract

This study, submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of the Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication, examined the impact of the print media on the anti-graft campaign in Kenya. Working from relevant literature review, theoretical approaches and content analysis, it assessed and found the corruption situation in Kenya as grave enough to warrant research. With a particular emphasis on the print media's role in the campaign, findings were intended to provide a basis for making recommendations on strengthening the role of the Press in fighting graft. The major objectives for the study included establishing (i) whether the media pursued more reactive reporting on corruption at the expense of proactive reporting (ii) whether investigative reporting on graft translated into prosecution of the alleged perpetrators, among other actions [e.g. sackings] (iii) whether the media treated corruption-related stories as important or not. Largely in agreement with the study's hypotheses, the research findings led to the conclusions that (a) There was more reactive than proactive reporting on corruption in Kenya (b) investigative journalism practice in the country was inadequate and was yet to make any major impact on the anti-graft campaign (c) whenever reported, corruption-related stories were given editorial prominence, with the likelihood of such stories appearing as leads much higher than as fillers. The study's recommendation is that a more proactive approach by the media in reporting graft should be pursued, as it would impact positively in fighting graft. Further research to establish reasons for inadequate proactive reporting on corruption in Kenya would go along way in building up the important body of knowledge on graft.

Key words: Story, corruption, media, reactive, proactive.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Transparency International [TI] defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” [Otieno, G: 2004]. Borrowing from this definition, the study treats a story as corruption-related if it reveals abuse of power by an individual or group to unfairly gain material advantage.

According to Ringera, A. [2000], three major factors contribute to the occurrence of graft: *motive, opportunity, and an unethical disposition*. The **motivation** to engage in graft is usually the urge to seek quick financial or material gain without paying for it. However, for the act of graft to occur, **opportunity** to indulge in the vice must be present. And, for one to be motivated towards indulging in corruption, and to search for an opportunity to satisfy the indulgence, he has to have **an unethical disposition**- a complete insensitivity regarding the harmful consequences arising from his actions.

Wherever it is rampant, corruption seriously affects development. It diverts resources towards undeserving individuals or causes, thus stifling those better placed to effect positive social change. Any one falling victim of corruption ends up feeling short changed, and loses faith in merit as the basis for reward. A good number of such affected individuals may themselves end up being sucked into corruption, thus perpetuating the vice.

Graft is a sophisticated evil, which requires both cultural and scientific approaches. Dealing with the vice demands the input of all sectors of society- government, civil society, religious groups, the mass media, and academic institutions, among others. The media has a pivotal role in combating this vice. When this role is not performed satisfactorily, the media become a weak link in the anti-graft effort. This study sought to examine the impact of the media [with a particular focus on print media] as an important link in the complex anti-graft campaign in the Republic of Kenya. The Nation Newspaper was chosen [for reasons explained later] in the conduct of this examination.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Corruption has substantially affected Kenya's development. It is generally acknowledged that graft precipitated a near collapse of the country's economy. The most serious forms of this evil recorded are those perpetrated by members of the ruling elite and their associates. According to the World Bank [Githongo: 2000], the top 10 percent of Kenya's population earn 47 percent of the national income. Most analysts assert that the majority forming this 10 percent acquired their wealth illegally.

The country's media, public servants and public institutions-Public Investment Committee [PIC] and Public Accounts Committee [PAC], for example- have over the years blown the whistle over myriad corruption scandals, ranging from a few thousand shillings to billions. Unfortunately, Government reaction has often attracted the perception that only perpetrators of small-time corruption are pursued, while the "big fish" go scot-free. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that top Government officials

suspected of involvement in the Anglo-Leasing scandal¹ have not been subjected to any kind of investigation so far. Government anti-graft efforts are, therefore, interpreted by the public as mere pronouncements aimed at portraying the Government as fully committed to fighting corruption.

It can be argued that public debate on graft was raised to a new level when Transparency International started publishing the Corruption Perception Index [CPI] in 1995. With the annual release of statistics, which consistently placed Kenya among the most corrupt countries in the world, and following subsequent analyses published by the local media, Kenyans came to appreciate the extent to which corruption was affecting the country's development. The same can be said of the auditor-General and PAC/PIC reports.

Clearly, the media played a great role in educating the public regarding the negative effects of corruption. A more pronounced proactive approach by the media in reporting graft would definitely, therefore, help a great deal in beating the vice in the country. Unfortunately, the media have largely pursued a reactive approach as far as reporting corruption is concerned.

Several arguments have been advanced to explain this state of affairs. Some experts argue that since some of the wealthiest individuals in the country are the same suspects in

¹ The Anglo Leasing firm was given an order worth Ksh 2.7 billion, without competition, to supply terrorist-proof passports for the immigration department. It was also given contracts worth Ksh 4 billion, again without competitive bidding, for building and fitting out three forensic science laboratories for the Criminal Investigation Department [CID].

mega-scandals, they have found it easier to cover up their murky deeds by controlling and influencing the media.

Another argument advanced is that proactive coverage requires huge investments in the form of hiring investigative journalists, prolonged periods of researching the stories, and large financial budgets. The local media are seen as being too much profit-oriented. Critics point out the disproportionate reliance on correspondents for news by the media houses as evidence of this fact.

Research questions

- Is the media preoccupied with reactive reporting on corruption at the expense of proactive reporting?
- Have investigative stories on corruption translated into prosecution of alleged perpetrators and into other positive actions by the Government?
- How do the media treat corruption-related stories [whether proactive or reactive] in terms of editorial placement?

1.2 Objectives

The objectives for this research were to:

- Determine what kinds of stories [whether reactive or proactive] dominate the media coverage on corruption.

- Establish whether investigative stories on corruption have sufficiently influenced the Government in combating graft.
- Determine the frequency of placing corruption-related stories as splash, lead, second lead, anchor or filler in the country's print media.

1.3 Justification

Many Kenyans are yet to understand the link between corruption and the country's ailing economy. The media can play a major role in educating them so that they can capture this connection more graphically. Studying the media's impact on the anti-graft campaign is, therefore, necessary. The government has claimed that Sh 70 billion is stashed away in foreign accounts but it needs to show that the money was stolen to be able to recover it [Daily Nation, January 2 2005;12]. It is important to establish whether the media have played any role in proving the existence of such stolen money and the people involved.

This study sought to contribute to available knowledge on corruption and the media and investigative journalism. The paper also sought to show that were the media to handle the corruption issue more vigorously, it would most likely influence anti-graft policy-formation

Selecting the *Nation* newspaper as the sample for the study was appropriate because the Nation Media Group is recognised as the market leader. It also has been the most reliable and most consistent, thus the more influential in public opinion formation.

1.4 Hypotheses

1. Investigative stories have not had any major impact [including influencing the government] on the anti- graft campaign.
2. Corruption stories in Kenya are more likely to be reactive than proactive
3. Revelations of major corruption scandals always attract extensive reactive media coverage and the editorial placement is usually prominent.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study sought to establish whether corruption reports in the media are proactive or reactive, and the outcome of the cases as reported in the media. Most of the cases reported were still under investigation, while in others, the outcome was not documented in newspaper reports. Due to these, the report was not able to document such outcomes.

The study focuses on proactive and reactive reportage of corruption in the media and was limited to a period of four months, January to April, 2005 and to one mainstream newspaper (Nation Newspaper), out of the available four in Kenya. The nation newspaper was chosen because it was felt that being a market leader; it has a lot of impact in its reportage or non-reportage of vices like corruption. The focus was entirely on the reportage of corruption, whether investigated, plain news, opinion and analysis and other forms of reportage. The study did not focus itself on reportage after this period or on any other corruption allegation that was not highlighted in the Nation Newspaper during the specified period of time.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature review and Theoretical Framework

In their research, Ayiro, A.D. and Otieno, A.J. [2000:30] established that corruption related stories were most of the time written as hard news. They also found that very few commentaries were written on corruption. The two concluded that the media could influence public debate on corruption if they focused more attention on the vice-by writing more investigative articles, for instance. Another conclusion they made is that media freedom was a prerequisite to the successful practicing of investigative journalism.

On his part, Njogu, C. [2000; 19] concluded that there were very few cases of investigative journalism in the country. He also concluded that the *Nation* newspaper had the strongest inclination towards investigative journalism, followed by the *Standard*, the *People*, and *Kenya Times*, in that order.

The researcher established that local media houses rely more on correspondents for news gathering than on professional staff reporters, who would be best placed to conduct investigative journalism.

Another of Njogu's findings was that the media house with links to Government was least likely to engage in investigative journalism. He concluded that Government interference was partially to blame for the limited practising of investigative journalism in the country.

He recommended that media houses increase investment in investigative journalism. That it was the media's responsibility to set the public agenda, and not the politicians, who seemed to be playing that role. We agreed with Ayiro, A.D. and Otieno, A.J., and with Njogu, C. that media freedom is necessary for vibrant investigative journalism to thrive in the country. We, too, expected to reach the conclusion that corruption-related stories in Kenya are usually presented as hard news. Another point on which we agreed with the researchers is that more investigative stories in the country's media would positively impact the anti-graft war.

However, this assertion by Ayiro, A.D. and Otieno and A.J's conclusion that the mainstream media do not treat corruption seriously in terms of editorial placement is rejected by this paper. This research's hypothesis was that stories on corruption are more likely to be presented as the splash, lead, second lead and, to a lesser extent, as anchor stories, but hardly as fillers.

Regarding Njogu, C's research findings, this paper is in agreement that investigative stories are very few in the country's media.

However, whereas he found that the *Nation* newspaper had the strongest inclination towards investigative journalism, we hypothesised that this inclination had waned at around the period we were studying. This hypothesis is consistent with Njogu; C's finding that the media house with links to Government is least likely to engage in investigative journalism, particularly on issues that could hurt the Government. While we were not conducting a comparative content analysis of the major newspapers in the country, it is our suggestion that at around this period, the *Standard* was more likely to be a head in terms of investigative reporting on corruption.²

² The change of government -from Kenya African National Union (KANU) to National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC)-meant that the people whom the *Nation* newspaper was uncomfortable with [but who

In recent years, a number of systems have been put in place by the Government in an attempt to counter this perception. In 1998, Parliament created a special committee on corruption-the Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Select Committee [PACSC] [Ringera, A: 2000]. The committee was mandated to, among others:

- Study the nature and extent of corruption in Kenya
- Identify the key perpetrators of corruption in Kenya
- Develop a more comprehensive Bill to widen the scope of the definition of corruption.

Among the first undertakings of President Mwai Kibaki on assuming power in early 2003 was the establishment of the Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption, chaired by the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Other members included the Minister for State in charge of Provincial Administration and Internal Security, the Minister for Finance, The Minister for Roads and Public Works, and the Minister for Local Government. The committee's mandate was to oversee the implementation of Government policies on corruption and reviewing the progress in the fight against corruption. In May 2004, President Kibaki appointed the National Steering Committee against Corruption. The Committee comprises of the civil society, religious groups, Government and the private sector.

had close links with the *Standard* newspaper] were now out of office and those that the Nation had fought along side with to dethrone Kanu had assumed the country's leadership.

Recently, the Government unveiled further plans to combat graft. They include a draft national anti-corruption action plan aimed at regulating decision making by public servants so that they base their decisions and actions on laid down rules and procedures.

Parliament has also passed a law, which provides for the appointment of a Director-General of Public Procurement, who will be the chief executive officer of the Public Procurement Oversight Authority [PPOA]. The PPOA Director-General will have powers to stop a tender and order an investigation to determine whether law has been followed in awarding any tender.

Despite all these efforts, and in spite of the Government assertion that cases of grand corruption had stopped, the general public mood regarding Government anti-graft efforts is that of scepticism and disillusionment.

It is also argued that whenever the media boldly report on social issues by publishing investigative stories, they often face the risk of harassment from Government officials. In early 2005, a Senior Editor with the *Standard*, Mr Kwamchetshi Makhoha, was questioned by the police while the paper's investigative journalist, Mr Kamau Ngotho, was arrested and charged, after writing a story titled "Mr Money Bags", in which he claimed that new corruption had emerged in the Narc Government. [Daily Nation, January 13 2005; 5]

One of the alleged beneficiaries of this corruption, Dr Chris Murungaru, the then Minister for State in charge of Internal Security and Provincial Administration, was so angered by

the report that he asked the police [whom he was directly in charge of] to charge Mr Ngotho with criminal libel under Section 194 of the Penal Code- a colonial relic that had never before been used in independent Kenya.

Although the Attorney General [who had initially been side stepped in the prosecution of the case] eventually dropped the charges and promised that the law would never be used again, the case clearly showed the risky nature of conducting investigative journalism in Kenya. Such cases of harassing investigative reporters abound in the country's history books.³

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Corruption is a complex moral, social, political and economic problem. It cannot be eliminated by judicial means alone. Defeating the vice requires a holistic approach. Besides law enforcement strategies, other efforts including education, socialisation and cultural re-evaluation, must be employed. Such a holistic approach is more likely, in the long term, to lead to attitude and behaviour change.

The battle against corruption must be an unrelenting one. Such an assault requires the input of the public, civil society, private sector, and the media- to complement Government efforts.

³ For instance, journalist David Makali was abducted, tortured and dumped in Karura forest after he wrote an investigative story on local drug cartels

The media's role in educating the public and motivating them will go along way in encouraging whistle blowing, building resistance against graft and stigmatising the vice. Media's role is founded on a number of communication theories. The relevant ones for our research are (i) *Agenda Setting* (ii) *Gate Keeping* (iii) *Socialisation* (iv) *Social Responsibility*.

2.1.1 Agenda Setting

Media support for the purpose of educating the public about the sanctions attached to Corruption is invaluable in addition to objective investigative journalism.

[Ringera, A: 2000]

Agenda Setting is defined as the media's ability to influence the salience of events in the public mind. Professors Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw are famous for their research on agenda setting. Through their studies, they were able to prove that "media emphasis on an event influences the audience to view the event as important" [Agee, K. et al: 1991; 53].

About ten years earlier, political scientist Benard, C. Cohen had made a similar finding. He declared in his book, The Press and Foreign Policy thus:

The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about

[Agee, K. et al 1991;52].

Through their research, Professors McCombs and Shaw proved that by emphasising on a given event, the media were able to influence the audience to view the event as

important. But how are events selected for the media to emphasise on? Three different possibilities are mentioned by experts [Kindl, K: 2000]:

- (1) Media owners and executives may determine the content- though the gate keeping function.
- (2) The subjects of the publications/broadcasts -politicians, for example-may determine the content.
- (3) Activist groups with a strong position on an issue may determine what is published /broadcast.

The argument from the theory is that by depending more on reactive reporting on corruption, the media is letting politicians and activists set the agenda. The challenge is to assume the responsibility of setting this agenda by stepping up proactive reporting, giving prominence to corruption related cases in the media.

2.1.2 Gate Keeping

Gate keeping, according to George Donohue, Phillip Tichenor, and Clarice Olien [Agee, K. et al 1991; 52], is more than the simple exercise of making choices among available news stories. Besides rejecting or accepting a story, the scholars argue, there are the extra tasks of editing, designing, and timing, repeating or killing a story.

Because they have the ability to control the flow of communication, the mass media (newspapers) have immense power in deciding what the public reads or does not read. The editors in media houses are, therefore, in a very strong position to promote [or hamper] reportage on corruption. The less frequent a story is published, the less they are fighting corruption.

2.1.3 Social Responsibility

Developed as an alternative to the libertarian theory, which seemed to advocate excessive freedom for the Press, social responsibility theory is driven by the principle that whoever enjoys freedom has certain obligations to society- as the media enjoy constitutionally guaranteed freedom, they ought to perform certain essential social functions. [Rivers, W. L., et al: 1971]

Social responsibility theorists regard the two tasks of (i) promoting democratic processes and (ii) public enlightenment as the most important of these functions. *New York Times'* Henry Raymond, for instance, believes that the newspaper should actively promote the community welfare. In 1904, Joseph Pulitzer, writing in the *North American Review*, asked publishers "to place duty to the public above duty to the counting room". [Rivers, W.L., et al: 1971]

From the above arguments then, the conclusion can be drawn that the media have no excuse to continue ignoring their responsibility of developing investigative journalism as one of the most important fronts against corruption. Investigative reports on corruption make the citizenry aware that whereas the media have a role to inform, they have a more important role of performing an essential function in society- that of exposing corruption in society. By so doing, they engage the public in democratic process of naming, shaming and enlightening

2.1.4 Social Learning

Havland, Janis and Kelly [1985; 101], the major proponents of the learning theory, empirically proved that attitudes can be changed by altering related opinions held by an individual or group.

The theory assumes that a new opinion, attitude or behaviour is learnt after the target audience have rehearsed and memorised it. Another assumption is that before the rehearsal and memorising stage, the audience must first of all be interested enough to attend and comprehend the message. The theory also assumes that learning of the new message is not enough for change to occur-that the audience must first be provided with motivation to accept [rather than reject] the new message.

The implication of this theory to this study is that the more the frequency of the story, the better the placement, means the more we are fighting corruption. So if the media consistently report on corruption, followed by action say prosecution of the offenders, then this will cause people to fear engaging in corrupt practices. The media should develop interesting and captivating investigative journalism-where well-researched articles are written in attractive language to make readers pay attention. They should also desist from glorifying corruptly gained wealth, but instead make such wealth unattractive to readers, who having been shown the ugly face of corruption will hopefully learn to keep a distance from it.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

To overcome the shortcomings of time, labour and money, the study used content analysis as the method for collecting data. According to Barbie, E. [1989; 308], the greatest advantage of the method is its economy in terms of time and money. That is, the content analyst does not have to employ large research staff. Neither does he need sophisticated equipment. All he requires is time and access to the research material.

Another reason that motivated our choice of the method is that it is considered especially effective in studying written documents- such as books, magazines, letters, newspapers and paintings, among others.

Content analysis [together with historical/comparative analysis] is classified as a method that allows researchers to conduct social studies from a distance, thus avoiding the risk of influencing the study. [Barbie, E.: 1989; 309]

The research method has the other advantage of flexibility- the researcher is able to study events unfolding over long periods of time. In addition, whenever one commits some error, he can always go back to the research material to correct it.

The months of January-April 2005 were chosen for the study because there was extensive coverage on corruption around this period of the year compared to other local newspapers

during this period. At the same time, many corruption scandals were exposed during this time.

3.1 Data Collection

A content analysis of the Nation newspaper's editions published between 1 January 2005 and 30 April 2005 was conducted. For each edition, the total number of stories on corruption was recorded in a tally sheet. This yielded a total of 120 editions for the four-month sampling frame.

The stories were classified as units of analysis, and analysed on the following basis:

- Nature [of story]-*hard news, editorial, special reports, opinion, interview, analysis, and press release.*
- Placement [on page] - *splash, lead, second lead, anchor, filler.*
- Frequency [recurrence of story]
- Initiative- [proactive versus reactive.]

3.2 Measurement and Analysis

Stories reacting to some corruption-related development were classified as reactive. These were compared with the total number of stories published on the initiative of a reporter/ editor [proactive].

For proactive stories, the study sought to determine whether the stories led to any kind of intervention, and if so, how often and what kind of intervention it was. To determine the level of seriousness accorded to reportage of corruption-related stories, the focus was on an assessment of the kind of editorial placement that was given to the story (ies). For

instance, a high percentage of stories presented as leads would indicate a corresponding high level of seriousness and vice versa.

By analysing the editorials written on corruption during the sample period, we intended to establish whether the Nation newspaper editorial writers ever wrote proactive editorials on corruption and therefore pushed the anti-corruption agenda or not.

To establish how often the reportage on corruption had led to a police/court action, a comparison was done between the number of cases that were initiated by state investigations and those initiated by investigative reporters of the newspaper under investigation.

By ranking the most frequently recurring stories, the intention was to establish the biggest corruption-related stories during the sample period and whether the stories had been reported proactively or reactively. This had an impact on the war against graft because, according to this research, the more frequent the stories were in the newspaper, the more the impact on the war on graft.

To test this study's hypothesis that most corruption-related stories were reported as hard news, the stories were broken down the stories according to their nature and thereby the conclusions reached. The data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 The Findings

Table 4.1 Nature of Stories

Nature	Number	Percentage %
Hard News	143	61
Editorial	20	9
Special Report	13	6
Opinion/Analysis	37	16
Interview	2	1
Letters to the Editor	15	7
Total	230	100

Out of 230 news items, 61% were hard news. 93 % of the news items [editorials, opinions, analyses and letters] were written as a reaction to the publication of corruption-related hard news. Only 7 % [special reports and interviews] were proactive. This implies that, during the period under study, the Nation newspaper was very reactive in their reporting. This means that the newspaper under study did not contribute proactively to the war against graft in Kenya. This is clearly shown by the 93% of news items written in the newspaper during the period under study as a reaction to either a report or otherwise from outside the media house. Additionally, this means that the media house did not do a lot (in its newspaper) to proactively investigate and prompt debate and punishment of offenders in the fight against corruption.

Figure 4.1 Nature of Stories

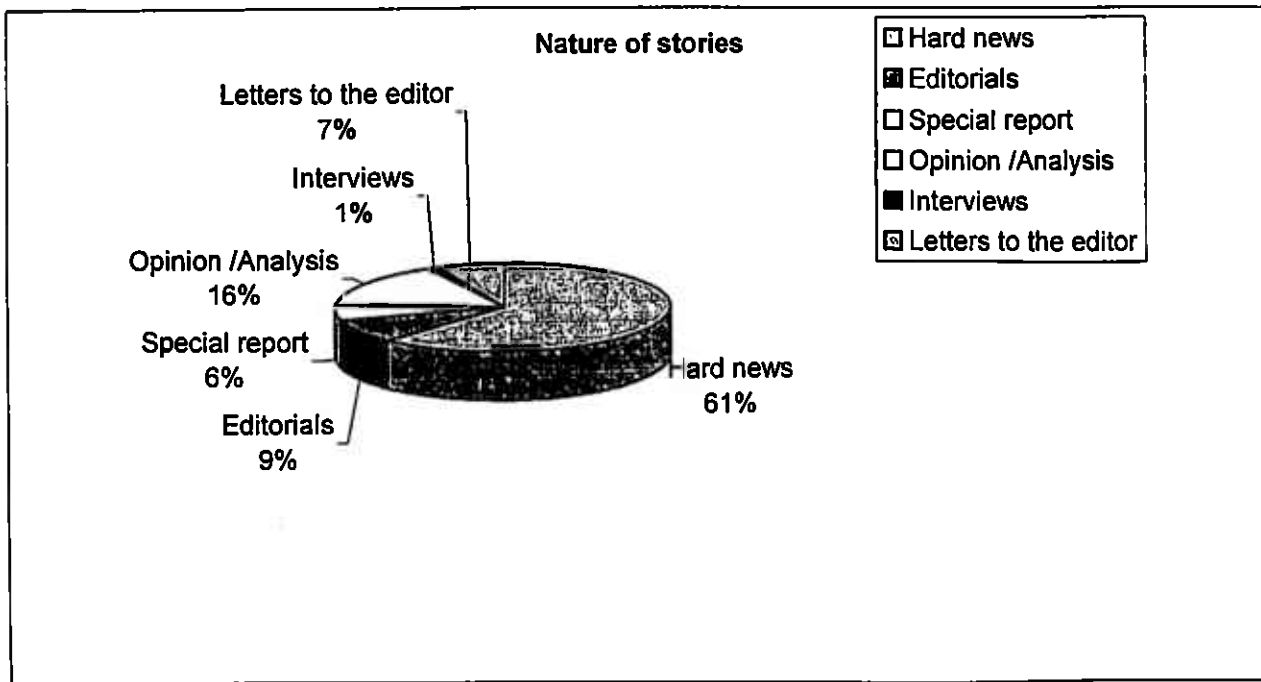


Table 4.2 Editorial Placement

Editorial Placement	Number	Percentage
Splash	45	22
Lead	57	27
Second lead	51	25
Anchor	35	17
Filler	19	9
Total	207	100

Working from the assumption that placing a story as either a splash, lead, second lead or anchor meant the story was treated as important, we concluded that the Nation newspaper reported corruption-related stories as important 90.2% of the time, and regarded such stories as unimportant only 9.8% of the time.

Figure 4.2 Placement of Stories

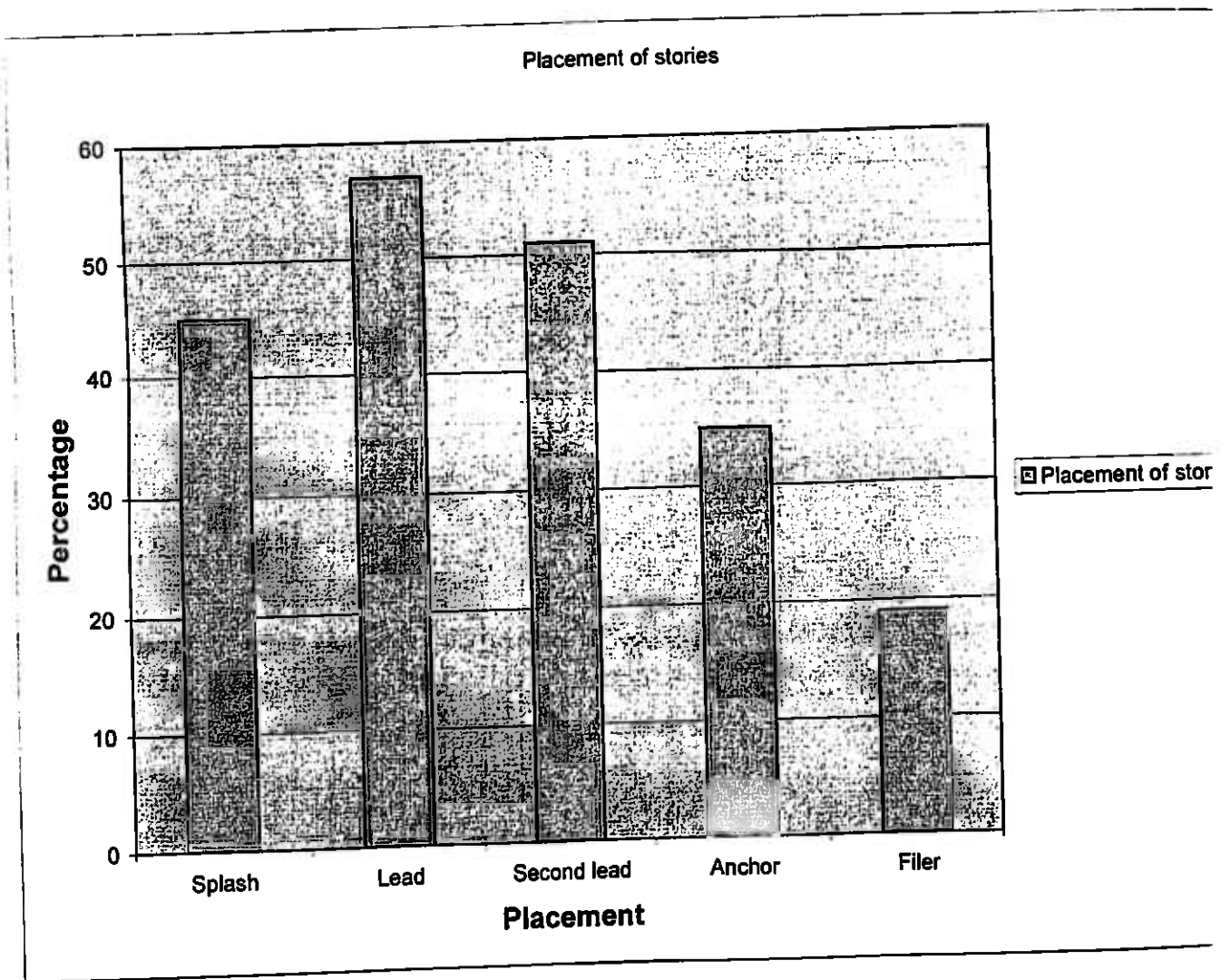


Table 4.3 Most recurrent Stories

Story	Frequency	Percentage
Anglo leasing	32	44
Mr. Money Bags	10	14
Corruption at Kenya Ports Authority	6	8
Looted [NSSF] Billions	7	10
Resignation of TI Director Gladwell Otieno	5	7
Allegations of corruption against KNH boss	5	7
Govt appointments –nepotistic	3	4
Ndwiga’s land duty waiver	2	3
MPs appointed relatives and political allies to CDF committees	2	3
Total number of stories	72	100

The most recurring story on corruption during the selected period was the Anglo-Leasing scandal, followed by “Mr Moneybags” and alleged corruption at KPA, respectively. Of the tabulated stories, only two-“Mr Moneybags” and corrupt appointment of CDF committee members- were written on the initiative of reporters. However, it is significant that “Mr Moneybags” attracted such huge media and public attention, implying that more proactive stories would probably attract more attention.

Table 4.4 Initiative in reporting stories

Initiative	Number
Proactive	15
Reactive	213
Total	228

This research (data) established that there were fewer proactive stories [7%] compared to reactive stories [93%]. This means the media is not actively involved in doing its work as a whistle blower. The media has taken a back seat in the fight against graft and relies a lot on other sources for stories on corruption.

Figure 5.4 Initiative of reporting stories

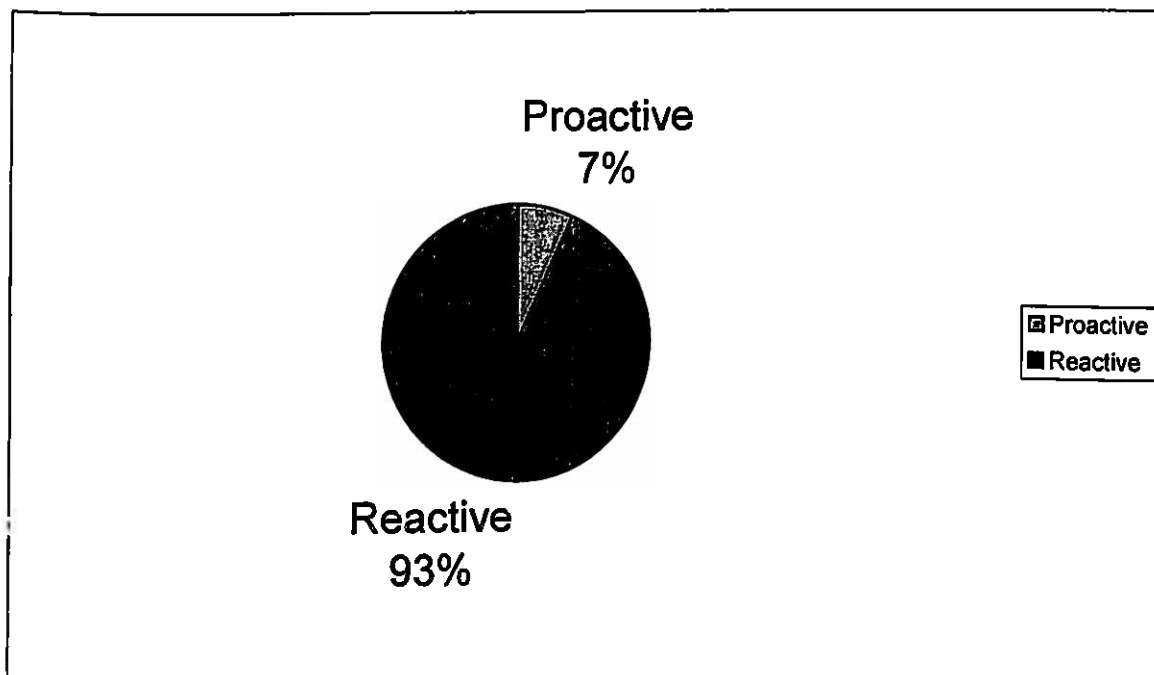


Table 4.5 Corruption-related Editorials

Title	Proactive	Reactive
Stamp out this corruption		√
Narc wont cow the Press		√
Is Minister Murungi serious?		√
Housing: Give all a chance		√
This Scandal wont go away		√
Appointments must be on merit		√
This is pure corruption		√
Clarify KNH graft claims		√
On the media, heed Wangari		√
Graft: is there no remedy?		√
We want our country back		√
Shun insults and fight graft		√
Its another blow to Kibaki		√
KUJ must redeem its image		√
Revisit wealth declaration		√
Yes, open up procurement		√
New laws wont end graft		√

Lets all fight graft or perish		√
Another set back in graft?		√
Stamp out this corruption		√
Alarm by parents timely		√

All the editorials written during the sample period were reactive. This implies that the media house never published any story from its own investigation. They largely relied on stories from other sources like audit reports and court cases. This in itself did not augur well for the war against graft.

This also means that the media house did not take the war against corruption seriously enough to editorialise on it frequently, and has not embraced its watchdog role in society. This therefore means that the newspaper needs to improve a lot only on its reportage, time and resources, but dedication and delve more on investigative journalism. This will help unravel corruption cases which exist “underground”. There is also need to follow up corruption-related cases in court and establish courts’ judgement on the same. This would help sensitise the public to steer clear of the vice that has become entrenched in Kenya.

Table 4.6 Corruption-related police/court case stories

Case	What triggered action		Outcome
	Media report	State	
Arrest of Kenya ports Authority [KPA] chief Brown Ondego		✓	Released and cleared
Two NGO staff members seized and charged in court over fraud [stealing Shs51 million]		✓	Released on bail
Businessman Ketan Somaia and former Kenya National Bank manager Wellington charged and found guilty of stealing Ksh 112 million		✓	Jailed for two years [later released after successfully appealing against the sentence]
Kanu MP charged with conspiracy to defraud Telkom Kenya of Ksh 2.2 Million		✓	Released on bail [final outcome could not be ascertained]
Two former PS and four government surveyors charged with abuse of office in contract deals worth over Sh 62 Million		✓	Released on a bond of sh 1 million plus a surety of same amount Hearing of case from April 14 th
Corruption at KPA		✓	Case going on as per January

Significantly, our study revealed that all cases that had been forwarded to the courts/police had initially been revealed to the media by either state officials or parliamentary watchdog committees [for instance, PAC].

CHAPTER FIVE

5. O Summary, conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study findings reveal that there is more reactive reporting on corruption as compared to very limited proactive coverage. However, in tandem with the research hypothesis, it was established that whenever the media publishes corruption-related stories, they are more likely to give them prominence in terms of editorial placement.

Judging from the wide coverage given to the “Mr Moneybags” story, it was concluded that more proactive reporting in the newspapers would increase public awareness about graft, thus elevating the issue to the level of discussion, a situation which would further boost the war against graft. The study also established that editorials are more often than not, written reactively. They are hardly ever written proactively. This again, helped to hinder efforts in the war against graft.

The study shows that major corruption scandals, whenever revealed, attract extensive media coverage, as the Anglo leasing scandal story documented. The research also revealed that all cases that had been forwarded to the courts/police had initially been revealed to the media by state officials, parliamentary and other anti-graft watchdog agencies, and even foreign envoys. This means that most of the stories were classified as reactive because the content showed that many of the stories originated such agencies and the media took over from such revelations and reported or commented on the same.

The fact that hardly any corruption-related case in the courts was revealed through proactive efforts of the media indicates that the media are yet to have any major impact on the anti-graft war.

This implies that the media are key players in the fight against corruption, and thus should be at the forefront in more aggressive investigative journalism, other than just waiting for reports from other sources. The media should also spearhead in advocating for policies to be put in place if the war against graft is to be won.

5.2 Recommendations

Corruption thrives best in the 'dark'. Exposure discredits culprits and discourages those with intentions to indulge in graft. The media must become more active in its watchdog role to ensure that the Government, as well as other sectors continue to be subjected to intense public scrutiny.

Cases of harassing investigative reporters are an obstacle to the achievement of this goal. Constitutional approaches are necessary to protect both the journalists and whistle blowers so that they can have freedom to seek and disseminate information without fear.

Media houses need to make deliberate efforts to improve the practice of investigative journalism in the country. Such efforts include training investigative journalists and availing adequate resources to reporters involved in proactive reporting, among others. This can only be possible if the media houses recognise their social responsibility, even as they seek to maximise profits.

Scoring newspaper content

Scoring content was guided by several factors. These included placement of stories, their frequency, whether the story was reactive or proactive, source of story and nature of story.

A story appearing frequently signified its importance, and therefore its effects on the fight against corruption.

The placement of a story determined its importance. A story that was considered important was placed on the front page, which spilled onto the inside pages. Also, it became the main subject in the editorial, and very often in the analyses section.

Proactive stories were considered very important, in that they elicited a lot of attention in the media. An example is the story Mr. Money bags, which even though was not splashed by the Nation, was later carried by Nation.

GLOSSARY

Story-Any news text

Hard news- news story written after some event/disclosure

Special report- An investigative story revealing some corruption scandal

News analysis- An in-depth and detailed story written as a follow up to a corruption story

Editorial- Story collectively carrying the publication's position on the issue of corruption

Opinion/Commentary- Story carrying writer's [reporter or any other contributor] position on the issue of graft

Interview-Question and Answer story initiated by reporter

Splash- The main story on page one carried by the banner headline

Lead- Any leading story on any page other than page one

Second lead- Story at either right or left flank of a page

Anchor- Story at the base of a page-the second most important story

Filler-The least important story in terms of both size and content

Reactive-Story written as a reaction to some disclosure, event, etc

Proactive-Story written on the initiative of the editor/reporter

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