

**PRIMING OF ROAD SAFETY INFORMATION BY
PRINT MEDIA IN KENYA: A STUDY OF THE
NATION NEWSPAPER**

By

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DECLARATION

This study is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University or institution.

Sign: Date:

This study has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving family, in particular my dear wife Veronica, my daughters Rehema, Zawadi and Sifa for their love and support during my busy and tight schedule of producing this work. To my mother Elizabeth for her humility and courage of seeing me through education and making me what I am today. To my brothers Haron, Ken, Silvanos and Joram whom we've traveled a long journey full of ups and down together.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role played by the media in disseminating road safety information. Literatures on how media report road safety issues plus other materials on the same were reviewed. It focused on print media and more specifically the nation newspaper published in the period between January 1st 2013 and June 31st 2013.

To establish which stories fall into road safety and related categories, the researcher identified keywords that were found in the story. These were *road safety, traffic, accident, crash* and *road carnage*. In order to understand how Nation newspaper prime road safety information. The study looked at article placement, frequency, article size, theme of article and article prominence. It also looked at photos and graphics use.

The research found that the nation newspaper had most of articles on road safety published in the inner pages leaving prime pages for other news especially politics. Major road safety stories found their space on cover page only when there was a major crash involving many deaths. For the articles published, many were reduced to briefs. There were also very few photos and graphics to support these articles.

The research also found out that advertising plays a major role in determining the space allocated to editorial content. This has a direct impact on the size of stories in terms of length. Many stories are edited to fit in the little space provided, thus losing out some of the important story elements.

It was also found that much of road safety information was published in the month of May and June. This could be attributed to hype that came with the March 4th elections. In the period preceding the elections and after, many media houses focused and reported on politics thus paying little attention to other important issues such as reporting on road safety.

It was established that, NMG editorial policy plays a key role in dictating what kind of material is published. Any material considered not aligning with this policy is either edited to conform or discarded altogether. This could compromise or distort the content thus failing to convey the intended message.

In conclusion, though, nation newspaper has tried to play a role in passing road safety information to the public, a lot still needs to be done to address an obvious gap. Print media should improve its priming of road safety information. More space need to be allocated to road safety issues. All stakeholders should be encouraged to share their information and opinions regarding road safety.

Information on road safety need to be published in prime pages regularly and not only when reporting on road carnage incidents.

The study recommends further research on the role played by media in addressing road safety information in Kenya.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ED- Emergency Department

CCK – Communication Commission of Kenya

CSR – community social responsibility

DN – *Daily Nation*

SAT N – *Saturday Nation*

SN – *Sunday Nation*

KUJ – Kenya Union of Journalists

MCK – Media Council of Kenya

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MISC – Media Industry Steering Committee

MOA – Media Owners’ Association

NGOs – non-governmental organisations

NMG – Nation Media Group

WHO – World Health Organisation

Chapter One:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Road carnage is a major contributor to deaths of many productive Kenyans. Road crashes cause direct impact on the social and physical environment. Injuries and deaths resulting from Road crashes have seen many families suffer economically, thus posing a great threat to dreams and aspirations of Kenyans targeting to achieve Vision 2030.

In Kenya, a number of key underlying factors can be pin-pointed as the major contributors to high rate of road carnage. These include; poor state of roads, corruption, breaching of traffic rules, laxity in enforcing the law by police, driving under influence of drugs and alcohol, over speeding, un road-worthy vehicles among others.

According to a *Global Status Report on Road safety 2013* by WHO¹, approximately 1.24 million people die every year on the world's roads, and another 20 to 50 million sustain nonfatal injuries as a result of road traffic crashes. Road crashes are in fact the leading cause of death for young people aged 15–29 years, and as a result take a heavy toll on those entering their most productive years.

¹ World Health Organisation

The report farther notes that, road traffic injuries are increasing, notably in low and middle-income countries, where rates are twice those in high-income countries. This is partly attributable to the rapid rate of motorization in many developing countries that has occurred without a concomitant investment in road safety strategies and land use planning. In Africa, 38% of all road traffic deaths occur among pedestrians. This is attributed to a much higher proportion of road users who are pedestrians, cyclists² and users of motorized two or three-wheeled vehicles.

In 2003, in a bid to arrest rising cases of road carnage, the Kenyan government introduced strict traffic rules (popularly referred to as Michuki rules). All public transport vehicles are supposed to be fitted with safety gadgets including speed governors and seat belts. Drivers and touts are required to wear uniforms and a photo of the driver clearly displayed at front. It is also mandatory for operators to be cleared by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and issued with a certificate of good conduct. This to a larger extent helped in restoring order on our roads. However, due to laxity by policy makers and implementers, all the gains made were soon eroded and the sanity of public transport sector slid back into old.

There is a clear indication that policy makers and implementers ought to work in unison if any success is to be realized. Police as enforcers of the law must

² The term cyclist refers to users of two- or three-wheeled pedal cycles, but does not include those riding motorcycles or Engine bikes

see to it that any and every piece of legislation passed must be upheld and obeyed. In a bid to empower the youth and reduce unemployment, the government scrapped duty on motorbikes so as to make acquisition of motorbike easy. As a result, the *Boda boda*³ industry is thriving and even posing a threat to *matatu*⁴ sector. Today people prefer using motorbikes to other forms of transport due to their efficiency in terms of time and ability to weave through traffic. The question we need to ask is who are the riders of these bikes and are they qualified.

Most of deaths and injuries reported are caused by ignorance, lack of training on the riders as well as lack of proper safety gear for both the rider and passenger. Most of the riders do not have any formal training and therefore are not competent. According to Dr. Isaac Birech of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Eldoret, the hospital receives at least three cases involving motorcycle crashes on a daily basis; in fact a special ward has been designated for such cases. The injuries are mostly on the head, a clear indication that most of victims don't wear helmets (personal conversation).

Police statistics from the traffic department indicate that in the period between January-September 2012, about 2192 lives were lost on Kenyan roads. The report farther shows that a total of 1892 fatal crashes cases were reported

³ Public transport involving motorcycles and other two-wheeled vehicles

⁴ Term used to refer to public transport vehicles such as mini buses and small 14 sitter vans.

during the same period. The tables on next page give a breakdown of these statistics;

2012 Accident Victims⁵			
	Fatal	Serious	Slight
January	247	545	395
February	266	732	446
March	287	704	393
April	290	565	333
May	256	563	440
June	225	553	315
July	263	577	368
August	266	646	579
September	92	308	195
Total	2192	5193	3464

2012 No. of crashes			
	Fatal	Serious	Slight
January	228	309	86
February	206	315	84
March	238	303	102
April	236	265	49
May	197	258	54
June	198	257	51
July	222	271	67
August	230	307	71
September	74	120	29
Total	1892	2405	593

Pedestrians have been blamed for faulting traffic rules. This is reflected by the high fatalities involving those walking on foot as reported by WHO's *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013*, which put the figure at 38% in Sub-Saharan

⁵ Kenya Police Traffic Department

Africa. This is attributed to a much higher proportion of road users who are pedestrians, cyclists⁶ and users of motorized two- or three-wheeled vehicles.

With these worrying trends of high road fatalities, the government amended section 12 of Cap 403 of the laws of Kenya, which saw new and drastic traffic rules put in place. On 6th November 2012, the then President Mwai Kibaki signed the amendments paving way for punitive consequences for all traffic offenders.

With most of the causes of road crashes known, it remains unclear on the role played by media in the coverage of road safety issues. The priming of this information is vital in creating public awareness. The content, focus and prominence of the articles on road safety remain an important determinant of how the audience receive process and act on information from media.

Chartier and Gabler (2001), observes that journalists are not educators, or at least, that is not their primary role. This has seen journalists tilting their stories in favour of reporting crashes over providing information and education.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As the country continues to grapple with high rate of road carnage, focus remain on the role played media in educating the masses about road safety issues.

⁶ The term cyclist refers to users of two- or three-wheeled pedal cycles, but does not include those riding motorcycles or Engine bikes

According to the 2013 Economic survey, road crashes led to 4,457 deaths countrywide with Nairobi recording the highest number. On the roads, crashes killed 797 people in Nairobi followed by 721 in Central. North Eastern, which has fewer roads and a smaller population, had 44 traffic deaths. Central and Nyanza recorded 721 and 707 deaths respectively while North Eastern province reported the least number of road accident deaths at 44.

Kenya Roads Board observes that, the numbers of reported accidents have been showing an increasing trend from 10,300 in 1990 to 16,800 in 2000 and 17,400 in 2009.

Though there have been significant efforts and measures put in place to help address Road crashes and carnage, there seems to be an obvious gap in public awareness and sensitization. This leads to the question whether local media plays any role in raising awareness and whether there are deliberated efforts by the media to sensitize the public on road safety issues. This study investigated the coverage of road safety issues in the local print media specifically the *Nation* Newspapers which is the leading daily.

1.2 Rationale and Justification of the Study

Road carnage continues to claim more and more lives of productive Kenyans. Access to information on road safety is critical to the wellbeing of any given society. It is not enough to just report fatal crashes but more importantly information on the extent of non-fatal injuries which is essential in assessing the

type of medical care needed.

With high rate of road crashes, the government amended section 12 of Cap 403 of the laws of Kenya, which saw new and punitive traffic rules take effect. The president signed the amendments on 6th Nov 2012 paving way to punitive action against traffic offenders.

Mass media provides a crucial platform from where all information, education and communication on road safety issues can be addressed. The *Nation* being one of the leading newspapers and one that enjoys wider readership provides this platform. This is reflected in the circulation figures of February 2013 which was as follows; *Daily Nation* 190,908 copies, *Friday Nation* 199,325, *Saturday Nation* 185,392 and *Sunday Nation* 231,632. This gives a total of 807,257 copies sold during this period⁷. Nation Media Group has invested in the state of the art press that churns out thousands of copies within a few minutes. This has seen the *Nation* reach the streets in good time. Subsequently, different editions are printed specifically with stories unique to different regions i.e. Coast edition, Western edition, Mountain edition and Nairobi or Final edition.

The nation otherwise known as the family newspaper caters for every reader. Within its mother paper, the *Nation* carries different inserts targeting specific audience on any particular day. This makes it more appealing to a wider audience, thus making it an important vehicle of carrying the message on road

⁷ Nation Media Group Circulation Department

safety. Unlike other forms of media, a newspaper is detailed on the information it carries. It allows an in depth analysis of issues and opinions. There are also columns from where opinion leaders give the views on topical issues. The newspaper allows one carry it around easily and is also easy keep for future reference

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of this study is to investigate how the print media prime information about road safety in Kenya with Nation newspaper as a case study.

1.3.2 Specific objectives of the study

- i. To establish the placement of road safety stories and information in the nation newspapers.
- ii. To establish the prominence of road safety stories as published in the Nation.
- iii. To investigate the focus of road safety stories as covered in the nation newspapers.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. Where does Nation newspaper publish road safety articles?
- ii. How does the Nation project road safety information?
- iii. What is the focus of road safety stories published in the Nation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research looked at whether there is a smooth flow of information through print media to the audience. In seeking this answer, the study focused on analyzing the *Nation* newspaper. It provided an insight into the inherent shortcomings facing the packaging and dissemination of road safety information as well as remedies for ensuring that this information reaches the target audience.

This Research provided valuable information on how best the *Nation* could boost the impact of road safety information to its audience who are in this case Kenyans. Also, the findings are aimed at equipping the general public, policy makers and implementers with road safety information that could help reduce road carnage. The study shows how important it is to work together with an aim of achieving particular goals and objectives.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the Study

This study was concerned with investigating how print media package and disseminate information on road safety in Kenya. The research analyzed the

Nation newspaper for a period of six months i.e. from January 1st, 2013 to June 31st 2013. This was an electioneering period and was deliberately picked with an intention of establishing how media treat road safety information amid other equally weighty issues. An in-depth inquest into stories and articles published during this period was carried out.

The research also looked at how and where these articles are placed within the newspaper. Placement of stories is vital when it comes to capturing reader's attention. Stories buried deep inside the newspaper may pass unnoticed. The research focused mainly on the packaging of road safety stories as well as frequency, prominence, size, treatment and focus of articles published within this six month period. Photo and graphic use was also examined.

The study looked at photography and how pictures were used in trying to pass the message across. Stories supported with photos and graphics tend to carry more weight compared to those without.

Although, the research acknowledges the role played by other mass media, it only focused on the print and more specifically the *Nation* newspaper which enjoy wider circulation and readership in Kenya.

Definition of terms

Agenda-setting - Issues that are kept alive in the media by regular publication

Editorial Policy - A set of rules and regulations that govern publication of certain materials.

Info-graphics- Information graphics

Op-ed - This is the editorial section of the papers where opinions and personal views are published.

Placement - The exact position of the article in the newspaper in relation to page number

Priming - These are issues that are made accessible to the audience by media

Prominence - Is the size of the article in relation to other articles on the page

Road safety Information - This is all the information on road use, policy including crashes.

Section front - The first page of section within a newspaper for instance, the first business page

Splash- A lead story on the front page of a newspaper

Stand-alone photo - A picture that does not accompany a story

Theme - Is the nerve centre of the story and brings out the focus of the story

Matatu - Public transport vehicles

Audience - Final consumers of the newspaper content

Chapter Two:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically examined the available literature and studies that have been previously carried out with regard to road safety issues. It looked at literature in the local context i.e. Kenya, as well as studies done from other countries in Africa and the world as a whole. In this chapter, communication theories guiding the study were also discussed.

2.1 Review of theoretical literature

An accident, by definition, is an unpredictable event beyond the control of the individual. Public health professionals are concerned that such an approach, which has been typical in western news media, fails to convey important safety coverage and potentially builds barriers which may block or inhibit the adoption of road safety countermeasures. Road crashes are a staple of our news media but they contain little contextual information that would provide the community with a better appreciation of road safety issues and the measures available to improve personal and community safety (Jiggins, 2008).

As noted by the World Health Organisation, although road traffic crashes kill more than 1.2 million people a year around the world, they are largely neglected as a health issue, perhaps because they are still viewed by many as events which are beyond our control. Some of the risks are known: Some of the

causes and risks on Road crashes are known; speeding, alcohol, non-use of helmets, seat belts and other restraints, poor road design, poor enforcement of road safety regulations, unsafe vehicle design, and poor emergency health services (WHO, 2004).

Records review of all patients who visited emergency department (ED) of Provincial General Hospital in Nyanza, Kenya from January 2002 through December 2003, show that a total of 15365 patients visited the Emergency Department, of which 41% (6319/15395) were injury cases. The leading causes of injury were assault (42%), road traffic crashes (RTC) (28%), unspecified soft tissue injury (STI) (11%)⁸. This indicates an alarming trend in matters road safety.

The news reports about road crashes, somewhat of a staple in terms of frequency, typically present crashes as ‘crashes’ with a human tragedy storyline which does little to educate the community about the issues and promote known safety measures. In the USA, Canada, Great Britain and France, road crashes generally do not meet reporting thresholds for news. They are so common they are not regarded as being sufficiently newsworthy to make it into the paper or news bulletin. The US is typical. Despite the fact that over 40,000 people are killed in road crashes each year, very few of these deaths are reported in the national news media (Jiggins, 2008).

⁸ Ogendi JO & Ayisi JA. Causes of injuries resulting in a visit to the emergency department of a Provincial General Hospital, Nyanza, western Kenya. *African Health Science*, 2011 June; 11(2): 255-61

According to Jiggins (2008), due to pressures in the newsroom to maintain audiences in a highly competitive environment, the capacity of newsrooms to research complex issues, and to provide context, is likely to get even worse. For road safety authorities these developments are of concern which requires a rethink about traditional approaches for dealing with the media and communicating with target audiences. Authorities need to understand the pressures faced by journalists and to work within these new realities. This may mean putting more effort into packaging information for consumption by the media and embracing new tools like *FaceBook*, *YouTube* and *Twitter* to communicate directly with target audiences – particularly young people.

As suggested by the results of study of television news in the US (Rosenstiel et, al. 2007) media professionals need to rethink the way they view audiences. Professor Labasse, from the National Centre for the Advancement of News Publishing in Lyon, argues that for effective communication to take place, audiences need to be made to care and to be encouraged to think about the issue. Currently, it could be said that too much emphasis goes into exhortations to “obey the road rules” rather than explaining to the public why the rules exist. We can do a lot better. The key is for those that are responsible for improving the safety of our road system to take more responsibility for conveying appropriate information to the public.

2.2 Road Crashes News Content

In addition to concerns about terminology, there are wider concerns about the content of news stories about road crashes. Media Framing provides a basis for examining newspaper content in terms of what the media typically include in their coverage of certain issues and, equally importantly, what they choose to ignore. In the case of road trauma, stories tend to be framed around which driver is at fault and the tragic stories of those that have been killed. We hear little of the broader factors impacting on crash rates and the significant burden borne by families and the wider community in relation to those that are seriously injured.

(Coleman and Perlmutter, 2005), suggest that coverage generally focuses on the individual 'act' rather than issues of cause and prevention. Other commentators (Connor and Wesolowski2004) have noted that newspapers presented fatal crashes as dramas with a victim/villain storyline; in keeping with this narrative strategy, papers were most likely to cover stories where a driver survived to take the blame. By highlighting crashes that diverge from the norm, focusing on the assignment of blame to a single party, and failing to convey the message that preventive practices like seatbelt use increase odds for survival, newspapers remove crashes from a public health context and positioned them as individual issues.

Hatley (2006) examined the public health model of reporting which posits that causes that lead to injury and death are thought to be preventable instead of inevitable by investigating the connection among the victims, the agent, and the

environment. Under this model public health experts endeavor to pinpoint risk factors, then design and assess methods to prevent problems that impact on public health. The model's principal aim is to change the underlying conditions in society that lead to and prolong such problems, Hatley notes that for years, public health experts have recognized the power of the news media to alter the conditions that cause public health problems.

Many communication experts argue the news media's focus on stories of individual suffering and struggle has resulted in the public blaming individuals for their health problems as opposed to holding society, government or other institutions responsible when appropriate. An alternative approach involves viewing health problems and conditions as part of a broader context. (Jiggins 2008)

Hatley (2206) notes this approach has a long history within the field of public health. In the 1960s, public health experts recommended adding safety features to cars, wearing seatbelts, and not drinking and driving to decrease the number of automobile deaths and injuries. As she points out, until the 1960s, society blamed "the nut behind the wheel" for traffic crashes. Prevention strategies were limited to requesting people to drive more safely. As researchers started recognizing societal and environmental risk factors and their roles in auto crashes, public health advocates sought to change the coverage of these events by presenting the findings to the news media. News stories started including the type of cars involved in crashes, as well as hazardous road and weather

conditions. She argues this led to a change in the public's views about the reasons for auto deaths and injuries, and the public passed social policies to discourage drunk driving, build safer roads, and compel car manufacturers to design safety features into cars.

The challenge then is to encourage the news media to move away from current media frames to a public health model of reporting as they transfer this application to road safety communication measures.

As Hatley (2006) notes, reporters believe that telling the story through the experience of a single individual increases readership or viewers by drawing people into the story. Local news especially operates on the concept that audience members must be able to relate the story to their own lives. They believe the audience is looking for a "what's in it for me" story with personal relevance. She cautions that public health experts must understand how journalists operate and use it to their advantage. Journalists are not likely to abandon the sort of episodic framing outlined in the section on *Road Crash News Content* because that is the type of frame that generates personal relevance in audiences.

Wilson (2001) reports on the outcomes arising from a UK Conference that examined police/media relations and there are a range of insights that are relevant to the interface between the media and road safety professionals. The Conference observed that stories that arouse fear sell papers, and journalists exploit this – for example:

Fatal high-speed crash 'worst' ever

POLICE are investigating a crash in which two young men died in Sydney early this morning as the "worst" they've ever seen.

Two men aged in their 20s died on impact when a late model Alfa Romeo sedan slammed in to a power pole on Epping Road at Marsfield around 3am (Daily Telegraph, April 21, 2009).

The Daily Telegraph story focuses on the horror of the crash scene, a frame supported by the comments of emergency service personnel – in this case the police:

"In my 34 years in the police, it is the worst I've ever seen," Superintendent Peter Marcon from Eastwood police said.

"It's like the vehicle exploded on impact."

"It was quite horrific and pretty disappointing."

Journalist in their media reports are encouraged to move away from these sorts of coverage, comments and focus on providing contextual information to the public. For example, a crash involving a novice driver and a carload of passengers could be used to make the following points:

- Novice drivers are over-represented in crash data by a ratio of at least 3:1.
- Young drivers generally use less safe older vehicles because they are more affordable, hence injury risk in a crash is higher.

- Young driver crash rates are elevated sharply when they drive late at night and during early morning hours and when carrying two or more passengers; and
- That is why road safety authorities are examining curfews and passenger restrictions for this group (*National Road Safety Action Plan 2007 and 2008*).

These comments do not go to the causal factors of the particular crash but highlight a broader pattern and set an agenda in terms of possible counter-measures. Similarly, a crash involving a motorcycle could point to the following messages:

- Motorcyclists face a fatal crash risk about 20 times higher than drivers; their relative risk of serious injury is even higher.
- Over 40 per cent of fatal motorcycle crashes are single-vehicle crashes.
- The severity of injuries faced by motorcyclists is higher than for other road user groups.
- Potential riders should consider carefully the purchase of a motorcycle particularly if the decision is lifestyle based
- Riders should undertake specialist courses to mitigate the higher risks they face.
- Promote to riders the safety advantages of ABS and linked braking systems in motorcycles.

The UK Conference posed the question whether newspapers underestimate the curiosity and intelligence of the public and whether stories did

need to be written to the lowest common denominator. Certainly in the case of the United States the study of television news content (Rosenstiel et, al. 2007) strongly suggests that media professionals need to rethink the way they view audiences. The traditional 'audiences are dumb' approach needs to be replaced with an 'audiences are savvy' particularly in the area of health where audiences want more data to back up the conflicting claims made in medical stories (2007).

(Chartier and Gabler 2001) noted that journalists are not educators, or at least, that is not their primary role. From this perspective, it is not surprising that media coverage seldom results in more than cursory coverage of an issue, contributing little if anything to the more complicated process of working through the problems. According to Yankelovich (1991), news coverage that presents positions as adversarial often actually retards progress towards dealing meaningfully with issues.

Chartier and Gabler (2001) also observe that drama seems to be the mainstay of media coverage. The media tend to highlight existing concerns, uncertainties and conflicts, rarely question the legitimacy of any source, and present all sources on an equal footing – these observations were reflected by the majority of road safety researchers I spoke to. Information is provided to the public with little or no analysis of its technical accuracy. This scenario presents major challenges for road safety professionals in trying to communicate alternative, 'expert', views to the public. The key, according to Professor Labasse in France, and Wally Dean in the US, was to make road safety stories interesting

to the media to take them beyond the mundane by providing data, trends and patterns. The media have neither the time nor the skills to do this- the obligation is on the road safety authorities.

2.3 Causes of Road Crashes

Many researchers have come out with the causes, effects and recommendations to vehicular crashes in Kenya and elsewhere. The numerous crashes on road networks have been linked to various causes which include over speeding, drink driving, wrong over taking, poor road network and the rickety vehicles which ply on the roads. Following a study that was done in Ghana by the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) it identified over twenty causes of Road crashes in Ghana which include unnecessary speeding, lack of proper judgment of drivers, inadequate experience, carelessness, wrong overtaking, recklessness, intoxication, over loading, machine failure, dazzling and defective light, boredom, unwillingness to alight from motion objects (vehicles, motor cycles, human being and uncontrolled animals), skid and road surface defect, level crossing and obstruction. Other factors are inadequate enforcement of road laws and traffic regulations, use of mobile phones when driving, failure to buckle the seat belt and corruption, (National Road Safety Commission, 2007).

In spite of all these factors, Ocansey (2011) observed that poor vision of drivers could also be a major contributory factor to Road crashes. It was obvious that the actual factors which may be influencing the traffic crashes in Kenya have

not been identified since most of the factors stated above have not yet been tested with any mathematical and statistical tool to ascertain the truth or otherwise of their contributions. Elsewhere, the causes of Road crashes have also been linked to one or combination of the following four factors, equipment failure, road design, driver's behavior and poor road maintenance. However, studies have shown that over 95% of all road crashes are caused by the behavior of the driver and the combination of one or more of the other three factors, (Driving guidelines).

Synovate poll on road safety released on October 19, 2012, showed that majority of Kenyans do not take personal responsibility for their own safety on the road, leaving the role to the police. 64% of those interviewed indicated that police have the responsibility of ensuring road safety by enforcing the law. 44% indicated motorists whereas 22% indicated that pedestrians have a role to play.

According to the country report on Road Safety in Cambodia, road accident is caused by human factors (road users), road defects and vehicle defects. It was found in the report that road accident in Cambodia was increased by 50% in five years while the fatality rate was doubled. To help reduce the rate of road accident it was suggested that Road crashes Safety Committee be set up, accident data system was established, accident evaluation policy and driver training measures were to be put in place, Ung Chun (2007).

An interesting study that was done in Ghana shows that Ghanaians still associate some of the Road crashes in Ghana to superstitions, witchcraft and evil

forces, are crashes caused by witches or irresponsible government policies? It is therefore believed that as a result of these spiritual activities, most people die in Road crashes so that more blood would be obtained by the witches, wizards and the evil forces for their spiritual activities, (Okyere, 2006).

Some researchers have also attributed the escalating number of road carnage especially in sub Saharan Africa to bribery and corruption. In a study conducted in Russia to find out the contribution of corruption to road toll, it was found out that people were paying as much as US800.00 to obtain driving license without going through any form of driving school ("Russia" Today,2010).

There is enough evidence in South Africa that the government uses over R500 million annually from the Road Safety Fund to fight fraud, bribery and corruption (Arrive Alive, n.d) According to Chitere and Kibua (2004) the transport industry of Kenya is so much fragmented with the transport ministry, office of the president and other agencies playing conflicting roles which create bureaucracy, bribery and corruption in the industry since security personnel (police) fail to check and introduce transport laws.

Also research by Khayesi (1,997) and Lamba et al (1,986) showed that most workers of public transports are employed on the bases of relational ties. This practice has not given room to qualify and competent people to work in the transport industry leading to rampant Road crashes in Kenya.

There is substantial evidence to prove that the higher the number of Road crashes which occur in given time period, the higher the number of casualties

who die in the accident. According to Afukaar et al (2009) in their report presented to the National Road Safety Commission in Ghana, there was a total of 11,320 road accident which killed 1,779 people in 2005. The number of Road crashes increased to 12038 in 2007 and killed 2024 people. At the end of 2009, there were 12,299 Road crashes in the country and 2237 lives were lost.

Interestingly, in a study conducted in South Delhi by Kumar et al (2008), it was found out that most fatal crashes occurred on Saturday but in a study at Nepal, the highest number of Road crashes occurred on Sunday and the least number on Monday, Jha and Agrawal (2004). Coincidentally, it was found in a study at South Africa that most people died through Road crashes which occurred on Saturday (20.8%) followed by Sunday with 17.1%, (Injury Mortality Surveillance System, 2005)

Kumar et al (2008) identified November as the month with the highest number of fatal crashes in Delhi, 11.04% of all fatal crashes in Delhi occurred in November. This finding contradicted the result obtained in Nepal by Jha and Agrawal (2004) who suggested that July was the month in which most fatal crashes occurred in Nepal. In a research conducted in Delhi by Mehta (1968) and Ghosh (1992) found that most people were killed in Road crashes which occurred in January but National Crime Record Bureau (2005) reported higher incidence of Road crashes with much victims in May and March in India. These varying results from various researchers in different countries indicate that it will be

difficult to use what prevail in one country to estimate for another country since conditions associated with Road crashes may vary from country to country.

2.4 Priming of Road crashes related stories in the Media.

Competition from the electronic media has resulted in newspapers moving towards the editorial and opinion business and away from the reporting business quite simply it is cheaper. Some commentators argue this trend has also led to a numbing down of media product and a move away from the journalism of verification to a journalism of assertion.

Media organisations are also becoming more business orientated (Kirk 2006) and the search for profit has impacted on the more costly forms of journalism such as investigative reporting with a significant decline in this area. We are also witnessing the impact of the Internet as an information source and the emergence of other forms of information technology, like mobile phones, where images and voice 'grabs' can be captured by anyone, published on the Internet or sent to media outlets.

The news media in Kenya has a tendency to over-report crash events as opposed to analyses of the factors that lead to crashes, remedies, trends or issues. Knowing that journalists are under enormous pressure means that the packaged story, with relevant footage, spokespersons and background material, has a much higher probability of getting positive media coverage.

News values related to impact, proximity, prominence, relevance, and human interest are all important in determining how much significance a news story is accorded by particular media (Morrison, 2006). In the case of traffic the impact value is determined by the perceived magnitude and consequences of the accident, namely, the number of cars wrecked and the number of 'innocent' people injured, killed or maimed. The more people affected, the bigger the impact of the story. The proximity value is realized through reader association, namely, the closer the target reading audience is to the event, the greater its news value.

The proximity value influences which page the story will be printed on. In terms of the prominence value the media assume that the public cares more about celebrities than they do about people they do not know. Similarly it is surmised that public transport commuters are more likely to be concerned about taxi-related crashes. So, for example, when celebrities die in a car accident their death is likely to be reported on the front page, just as taxi related crashes are likely to be widely reported on. The relevance value is signified when events such as traffic crashes affect the majority of South Africans, albeit directly or indirectly. Lastly, an event is deemed to be newsworthy when it is associated with human interest. Even though a story itself may be weakly related to the other news values, it may be defined as news when, for instance, it gets people talking about the magnitude and serious consequences of crashes on South Africa's roads (Morrison, 2006).

The print media deploy these influential values alongside well-crafted headlines to maintain an edge in a fiercely competitive environment. Headlines are the newspapers' tools to attract prospective buyers and imprint their individuality on what is otherwise a mass-produced product. Newspapers make use of certain linguistic features such as puns and emotive vocabulary within headlines in an attempt to imprint certain key messages and perspectives on the readers' mind. Headlines, which provide an indication of how an article may portray an accident, are used to convey the first and sometimes the most significant message to the news reading public. For those who do not purchase or read newspapers headlines on billboards may be the most important and only source of information about traffic crashes. Headlines also draw part of their influence and meaning from what is assumed to be the readers' shared cultural, political and general knowledge. So, although headlines may sometimes seem deeply ambiguous, the surface differences may be a disguise for articulating deeper meanings and associations (Develotte & Rechniewski, 2002).

In a study done by Alsop & Langley (2001) where they examined the influence of the road user type on the reporting rate of the concerning crash in South Africa, Crashes with motorcyclists or moped riders showed a lower reporting rate than crashes with other vehicle drivers (60% vs. 70%). James (2001) reported a generally higher level of reporting for car/van crashes compared with motorcycle crashes. Elvik & Mysen (1999) found similar results in their meta-analysis: the highest reporting levels for car occupants, generally slightly lower

for pedestrians, still lower for motorcyclists and the lowest for bicyclists. However, the analysis by Amoros et al. (2006) did not confirm the lower reporting rate for crashes with motorcyclists in multiple-vehicle crashes, the case that is applicable to the data in the present study. They found a reporting rate that was very similar to that of car occupants (in fact somewhat higher, but not significantly).

A discourse analysis report that analyzed 52 selected newspaper reports as text to understand how specific South Africa print media constructed traffic crashes during peak holiday periods. Public and media focus on traffic crashes and road deaths tend to peak during the holiday period (Harris, Sukhai, & Matzopoulos, 2004), when migrant workers travel home to spend time with their families and there is increased pedestrian, private vehicle, and taxi-related traffic on certain national roads carrying people to their holiday destinations.

From this report that examined South Africa reports on road accidents, Peak season crashes are attributed mainly to driver fatigue, speeding, poor vehicle conditions, and callous driver behaviours (Ministry of Transport, 2002). It may be instructive to note that South Africa is uncommon among emerging economies in that it has fairly good urban road infrastructure, but an under-developed public transport system. South Africa's transport system is associated with a poor supply of public transport, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, an increased use of private vehicles, and a mix of public transport vehicles such as taxis and buses (Road Accident Fund Commission, 2002).

The discourse analysis report suggests that well-crafted headline messages and multiple discourses, predicated by a range of news-values and specific framing modalities, are interwoven to project the dominant view that over the holiday season South African roads are war-zones. Irresponsible and reckless drivers, in particular taxi drivers, are typecast as 'unworthy' citizens and habitual perpetrators of the 'carnage' on the roads. Motorists and occupants of public transport vehicles feature prominently as the primary victims of traffic deaths.

Pedestrians and motorcyclists are among the less frequently mentioned victims. In contrast to the villains of the road, traffic safety officers are presented as the protectors of law-abiding citizens and emergency care workers, characterized as altruistic and angelic, are described as the rescuers who heal the wounded. Whereas the no dominant discourse alerts the reader to pedestrian vulnerability, certain contextual determinants of traffic deaths, some successes in traffic safety promotion, and the dominant discourses suggest that the panacea for traffic safety is primarily rooted in proper road behavior and law-enforcement. The analysis points to silences related to societal, institutional, and corporate responsibility in road safety and highlights the need to engage the print media toward assuring evidence-led reporting of traffic crashes.

Chartier and Gabler (2001) also observe that drama seems to be the mainstay of media coverage. The media tend to highlight existing concerns, uncertainties and conflicts, rarely question the legitimacy of any source, and

present all sources on an equal footing – these observations were reflected by the majority of road safety researchers I spoke to. Information is provided to the public with little or no analysis of its technical accuracy. This scenario presents major challenges for road safety professionals in trying to communicate alternative, ‘expert’, views to the public. The key, according to Professor Labasse in France, and Wally Dean in the US, was to make road safety stories interesting to the media to take them beyond the mundane by providing data, trends and patterns. The media have neither the time nor the skills to do this – the obligation is on the road safety authorities.

2.5 Mass Media Road safety campaigns

Transportation is closely associated to the everyday activities occurring in a community, including work, education, social businesses, leisure, etc. Though, as travelling of people occurs on the transportation infrastructure with the use of the provided transportation modes, risks arise, owing to failures, damages, errors, crashes or any other incidents which could be considered intended or unintended events.

Road safety concerns the vehicle, the infrastructure, the user and the environment, and assures elimination of danger for road users and the surroundings, i.e. property and environment. The ultimate aim for communities should be the absence of any risks, crashes, fatalities and injuries during

transportation. This is rather an optimistic scenario for the current situation of the European transport, since many safety issues still need to be addressed.

Most of the countries in the Asian and Pacific region employ road safety publicity techniques based upon posters, leaflets, billboards, newspapers, and often radio and television. However, few of these campaigns appear to be planned in the systematic manner necessary to ensure success. The key components that need to be considered in this sector are discussed below. Road safety publicity can be used to achieve various aims and objectives. In general, the aims of such publicity are to change the road users' behavior, attitude or knowledge in order to increase road safety. However, usually, "road safety campaigns can succeed if advertising is only one of the elements in the campaign and usually not the key element" (Elliott, 1989).

According to Elliott, mass media campaigns can achieve the following: increase awareness of a problem or a behaviour; raise the level of information about a topic or issue; help form beliefs, especially where they are not firmly held; make a topic more salient and sensitize the audience to other forms of communication; stimulate interpersonal influences via conversations with others (e.g. Police, teachers, or parents); generate information seeking by individuals; and reinforce existing beliefs and behaviors.

One of the problems in using publicity measures is that people, on the whole, are resistant to change, especially when there is no apparent personal gain for them to do so. A driver who has operated a vehicle after drinking

alcohol on many occasions without incident does not perceive the reasons why he/she should not drink and drive as urged by a poster or TV commercial. An additional difficulty to be overcome is that there is not usually the opportunity for face-to-face interaction.

Phillips and Torquato (2009) acknowledge the increasing use of websites to deliver road safety messages, particularly to reach younger target audiences. Websites are often central in campaigns that focus on 'edutainment', incorporating information, games and videos in a way that is not possible through other media. Billboards, posters and television are then used to promote the website. Many of the reviewed campaigns used multiple forms of media to promote their message amongst the target group (e.g. Think! anti-speeding campaign, Angle et al., 2009). While websites provide new and creative ways of reaching the target audience, evaluations of its effectiveness are not widely available.

A successful road safety advocacy programme would create awareness and behaviour change, and thus lead to reduction in deaths and injuries. Proper research in this area, particularly on the Media exposure, is very important as the selection of the right media would influence the outcome of the intervention. A better understanding on the right media for the right target audience would lead toward greater effectiveness in message delivery. In addition, it will optimize the advertising expenditure due to the effectiveness in reaching intended audience. Prior to this research, little evidence were available in guiding media

planning. There is also lack of understanding on road user which pertains to factors that influence their behavior on the road. In short, this initiative through communication campaigns would be more effective when backed by evidence rather than gut feeling or experience, at best. This suggests that social marketing, through road safety communication campaign, once again proves valuable in changing road user behavior. (Angle et al, 2009)

Towards this direction, road safety has a significant role in the strategic plans of the European Commission (EC), i.e. the White Paper of 2001, which adopted the ambitious target to reduce the number of persons killed on the roads by 50% by the year 2010. Among other measures, the White Paper [1] supported the realization of pan-European road safety campaigns, and in addition, the development of powerful and innovative tools for the evaluation of campaigns, in order to be able to improve the next ones. Road safety campaigns, and, more specifically, road safety communication campaigns, are considered as an efficient strategy to approach the wide audience, aiming at the reduction of the number and severity of road crashes, by influencing road users' behavior.

Two main types of road safety communication campaigns are identified, thus, public communication campaigns, which inform the public about new or modified laws, improve knowledge, raise awareness of risk and influence behavior, and combined campaigns and integrated programs that refer to communication campaigns implemented with other activities, i.e. education, enforcement, etc., and cooperation among several organizations for the

improvement of road safety, respectively outcome in terms of casualty on the road is not necessarily determine solely through the success or failure of the communication campaign alone, but also enforcement factor, which is not part of scope of this study. This is in line with Woolley (2001) who suggested in order for a campaign to produce large behavioral change; it cannot be carried out in isolation, but must be accompanied with enforcement.

Mass media campaigns are generally more successful in conveying information and changing attitudes rather than altering driver behavior. Behavior change might occur over a number of years or decades but such longer-term effects are not easily measured. Mass media campaigns are also useful for agenda setting or changing social norms, that is, they can have a societal value. Noar (2006) commented that in the last decade health mass media campaign designers have increasingly adhered to principles of effective campaign design, rather than discovering new principles. While this comment was based on health literature, it is also applicable, to some extent, to road safety mass media campaigns. The following list of key elements to enhance campaign effectiveness has several recommendations that have appeared on such lists for over a decade.

When doing a road campaign design and development the following factors have to be considered; Use systematic data driven processes to identify the target behaviour and the target audience; Segment the target audience then tailor the message to the motivation and needs of these subgroups. There is increasing evidence that one style of message may work for one audience but not

another; Use a psychological theory as a conceptual base for the campaign; theoretically guided campaigns have a greater chance of success; Clearly define the campaign objectives and select appropriate variables that can measure whether these objectives were achieved. Integrate mass media with other activities such as enforcement/legislation/education; Technological advances offer innovative new ways to convey messages (e.g. social networking on the Internet, SMS's). Messages might be communicated more effectively when the mode of communication matches campaign goals and the target group preferences. Different types of media should be combined to reach as many as possible in the target group; Industry standards suggest three exposures are needed to achieve minimum effective frequency (i.e. convey a campaign message) although there are suggestions that a single exposure might be enough in some situations. In the absence of any new knowledge from road safety campaigns, it is recommended that industry standards not be exceeded.

2.6 Publicity of Road safety issues over the Media.

Mass media has a profound effect on the daily lives, health, and well-being of people, and effective publicity can influence road user behavior and raise awareness of road safety issues. Well-planned publicity can influence both short-term behavior and long-term attitudes. For instance, publicity might deter drunk-driving because of the risk of being caught by police, but may also

influence the long-term way a society thinks about and accepts the need to deter such unsocial behavior.

Publicity has the potential for being highly cost-effective in that it can address the safety of large numbers of people using media and materials. However, it can also lead to wasted resources if it is not handled in a manner that is carefully planned. Publicity campaigns and selection of target groups should be based on analysis of road accident data. In the absence of detailed data, awareness-raising campaigns can be undertaken to highlight the worsening situation. Suitable publicity should accompany, or prepare for, the following: new legislation, new standards, enforcement initiatives, new safety products, and new highway features. Such publicity should be appropriate to local conditions and should focus on a single concise message

Governments and authorities at different levels invest a great deal of money and effort in changing the behavior of road users. Road safety publicity campaigns are recognized by many as one of the most important ways of persuading road users to adopt safe behaviors. Together with enforcement and road engineering, they are an important tool considered for use by those managing safety on the roads. Without rigorous evaluation and reporting it is very difficult for us to learn the lessons that will help us design better campaigns in the future. Proper evaluations can also tell us about whether it is worth investing in campaigns, which may in turn affect future funding possibilities

Road safety publicity campaigns are considered as an efficient strategy to approach the wide audience and influence road users towards a safe behavior, with main aim to lead to the reduction of the number and the severity of Road crashes. When designing the implementation of a campaign, it is important to plan at the same time its evaluation, so that to enable the assessment of its effectiveness. For the achievement of high reliability and the development of “clear” conclusions, the campaign evaluation should be carefully organized, following a feasible scientific design.

Road safety mass media campaigns play a valuable role in improving road safety by promoting safe behaviors. Given the costs associated with mass media advertising, it is important to understand what elements make a road safety mass media campaign effective and how future campaigns might be made more effective. In some countries, statistics show that Road crashes are constantly increasing from year to year. Inevitably, there are quite a number of newspaper reports on Road crashes in these countries. It seems that it has come to a terrifying point and obviously, something must be done.

All road users, authorities and the government must cooperate to bring this problem into a resolution so that injuries and deaths will be reduced to the optimum. So, when you drive, walk on the road or riding on a motorbike, bear in mind always to abide the road safety measures. Mass media and journalists could play a key role to raise awareness on road safety, in particular, they can disseminate preventive messages and promote safe behaviors; increase

people's knowledge and understanding of the gravity of the problem and advocate for safer roads and systems with governments. Unfortunately, it happens often that journalists write on traffic and safety related issues only when they have to report on a crash. /n these cases, reporters tend to have little time to explore a variety of angles for their stories, or to understand why crashes happen or why some of them are fatal or what the consequences are for the families, communities and society at large. The result is that most traffic related news limit to the *What, Who, Where, When and Why* and to inform readers about what happened. Yet, it is by analyzing the causes and consequences of road. Kapoor (2012).

The mass media can also play a role in solving this predicament. Television and radio stations can broadcast some advertisements on road safety. Newspapers and magazines too can bring awareness to readers about road safety. Besides that, posters too should also be placed in public areas. Together with all these, some slogans which can trigger people to abide road safety should be highlighted repeatedly.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Communication theories offer the basis for evaluating communication effects on the audience. This study was grounded on two Communication theories; priming theory and Agenda Setting theory.

2.7.1 Priming Theory

The concept of priming comes from cognitive psychology and means a cognitive situation, in which a prior stimulus modifies the propriety and ease of recognition or processing of a later stimulus. It was introduced in political communication at the end of the 1980s in a now classic work by Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder

Priming was defined as communication criteria and standards used by recipients to evaluate political reality, which are issues most accessible in the media (most often and intensively reported). The study was based on experiments concerning the consequences of watching news television programmes and making some aspects and issues more accessible by the media in the minds of viewers, with the use of priming as the key concept. The result was a visible priming effect, based on the idea that news programmes defined the criteria of evaluating issues and political figures.

Analyzing relations between media and politics, the authors came to a conclusion that television news matters in the perception and judgment of political reality and although through a historical perspective, this was not a revealing conclusion, it ultimately proved what this meaning-influence depended on. Priming is based on the assumption that the frequency or features of the (cognitive) stimulus activate previously registered meaning and influence, interpreting in particular information which was perceived as unclear and

ambiguous. Priming thus means activating information stored in long-term memory, which takes place after being exposed to a stimulus.

For example, if the recipient reads a press article about a new computer virus, that destroyed data stored on government computers, and a few minutes later has a conversation about “viruses” (if it is not already clear, what type of virus the conversations concerns), then he will first think of computer viruses, rather than a microscopic organism. Figuratively speaking, new gained information is placed at the top of the pyramid, and the older stored below. That is why new (often, intensively and regularly collected) information is more accessible and strongly influences perceiving reality

Priming can produce a variety of judgmental effects, but research conducted by political communication scholars has focused almost exclusively on what are known as accessibility effects (omitting the applicability effect). Accessibility can be defined as the potential that knowledge stored in memory will be activated for potential use in a judgmental task. Two basic factors have crucial meaning for the occurrence of priming: the accessibility effect – the mentioned access to information, and the applicability effect – the adherence of information and needs accessible in memory to evaluate a given political issue (associations, links between the available cognitive construct and new information, the decision situation, in which stored information could be used to make a decision or have an attitude) In other words, when a citizen has to formulate their opinion, express their attitude, make a political decision, he or

she searches in memory such easily accessible information, which fit the current situation and supply the most adequate (in his opinion) data to make that decision.

Joanne M. Miller and Jon A. Krosnick believe that priming occurs when media attention to an issue causes people to place special weight on it when constructing evaluations of political leaders, e.g. presidential job performance. Perceiving the priming effect in the context of election communication and its consequences for making election decisions is a particularly important line of thought. In this aspect, priming gains its largest explanatory value, which is not always appreciated. There are also opinions undermining the point of singling out the effect, as its presence is a particular case – thus in certain circumstances it is rather a tendency or a phenomena. Most often it depends on the source of information and its credibility and context, along with the level of political orientation, which is why contradictory results on the effect are sometimes observed.

McQuail .D. (2005) explains priming as exaggerating certain issues. According to the author, priming has been long known as a political strive to give issues associated with certain politician's significant weight. Based on promoting favorable judgmental criteria, it can be used as a way of controlling or influencing what information is used and becomes important for the public. McQuail also includes among exaggerations political attempts to reveal certain information – passing them on to the media in such a way and time so as to

distract public attention from other issues, at a disadvantage for certain political players. These cases can be seen as an attempt to achieve the priming effect, however, ultimately its presence depends on how the media and other audiences react to “excessive” availability of an issue in a given time.

The priming effect is well-established, but its causes are unclear. Priming (and its ancestor agenda setting) was built upon accessibility. By increasing the accessibility of certain issues (agenda setting) or considerations (priming), their relative weight increased (Druckman, Kuklinski, & Sigelman, 2009, p. 495). The focus on accessibility was based on the psychological literature at that time (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). While Iyengar and Kinder were correct in their assessment of psychological literature at that time, Druckman and colleagues (2009) point to the evolution in the debate within psychology that occurred after this assessment. Althaus and Kim’s (2006) paper offers a similar argument. Priming as it was used in political science continued to build on the underlying assumption of increased accessibility. Meanwhile, psychology debated whether priming occurred through increased accessibility or increased applicability.

Priming would occur because the primed information is 'fresh' in memory (Higgins, 1996). In this scenario, the time gap between exposure and decision is crucial. The more time passes before the decision is actually made, the greater the possibility that the primed material fades to long term memory, nullifying the priming effect. For example, when a voter is watching a television report on the state of the economy, the hypothesis is that if

2.7.2 Agenda setting theory

According to the agenda-setting hypothesis, the media influence public opinion by emphasizing certain issues over others. The amount of media attention, or the media salience, devoted to certain issues influences the degree of public concern for these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The roots of this approach can be found in Lippman's (1922) argument that the world around us is too complicated and out of reach, and that consequently we must rely on the media to understand it. Not all the world is out of reach, however, and agenda-setting studies too often ignore instances where people do have direct experiences with real-world events (Behr & Iyengar, 1985). Therefore, Behr and Iyengar argued that "it is imperative that indicators of national conditions be brought to bear on the relationship between news coverage and issue salience" (1985).

One of the key aspects of agenda-setting theory is the ability of the media to highlight certain topics or aspects of issues through the processes of agenda-setting (Hayes, 2007). By calling attention to some issues over others during the election cycle the news media, theoretically at least, form the public's opinion about the most important issues facing the country (Hayes, 2007).

The hypothesis describes a process that is an extension of agenda setting. First, by emphasizing certain issues over others, the media influence the hierarchies of issues that the public recognizes as important or otherwise.

This is done by making these certain salient issues more accessible in an individual's memory (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). This is the agenda-setting part. Second, individuals use those issues, which are most salient and accessible in their memory, to evaluate the performance of political actors. That is, by priming a certain issue the media affect the criteria people use to evaluate political actors (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). If, for example, the issue of foreign affairs was primed, then people would judge the president's performance by mostly evaluating his performance in the area of foreign affairs; whereas if economy were primed, it would become the basis for evaluating the president's performance (Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Pan & Kosicki, 1997)

Furthermore, agenda setting theory clearly does not exist in isolation therefore as the theory developed other aspects of agenda setting theory were explored. After McCombs and Shaw had laid the foundation of agenda setting research, phase 2 of agenda setting theory covered probable conditions - hereunder demographic variables such as age, income, and education, that would either increase or decrease agenda setting effects. Phase 3 explored psychological aspects. In example, does people's level of political interest influence the effects of agenda setting? Results from this type of research have varied from time to time. These developments within the agenda setting process still occurred within the framework of McCombs original agenda setting model.

During their studies, McCombs and Donald Shaw regard Watergate as a perfect example of the agenda-setting function of the mass media. They were not surprised that the Watergate issue caught fire after months on the front page of the Washington Post. McCornbs and Shaw believe that the "mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agendas to the public agenda."

McCombs and Shaw believe that the hypothesized agenda-setting function of the media is responsible for the almost perfect correlation they found between the media and public ordering of priorities. This ordering posits that Media Agenda influences Voters' Agenda .But as critics of cultivation theory remind us, correlation is not causation. It's possible that newspaper and television coverage simply reflects public concerns that already exist.

The results of the Chapel Hill study could be interpreted as providing support for the notion that the media are just as market-driven in their news coverage as they are in programming entertainment. By themselves, McCombs and Shaw's findings were impressive, but equivocal. A true test of the agenda-setting hypothesis must be able to show that public priorities lag behind the media agenda. I'll briefly describe three research studies that provide evidence that the media agenda is, in fact, the cause, while the public agenda is its somewhat delayed effect.

During the 1976 presidential campaign that led to Jimmy Carter's election, McCombs and three other researchers systematically surveyed public opinion at

three locations across the country. Between February and December, they interviewed voters in Lebanon, New Hampshire; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Evanston, Illinois, on nine occasions. During the same period, they also monitored election coverage over the three major TV networks and in the local newspapers. A correlation timelag analysis showed that the public agenda reliably trailed the media agenda by about four to six weeks. The correlation was highest during the primary season, but media priorities were later reflected in voters' priorities throughout the campaign

Chapter Three:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Methodology refers to the procedures that have been used in conducting a study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003, p.41). The techniques of obtaining data were formulated and subsequently followed by collection of actual data. This section focused on the following key areas; research design, data collection methods, population of study, criteria of selecting the sample, data collection instruments and procedures of analyzing the data. Creswell (2009:4) observes that any successful research exercises is dependent on proper planning, good procedures of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher undertook a content analysis as a method for examining the priming of road safety information by the Nation newspaper. This technique involves analyzing the content of documented materials including books, magazines, and newspapers and of other verbal materials that are either spoken or printed (Kontari 2004:110). Content analysis was first used by Harold Laswell to analyse the content of Nazi propaganda to find out why the propaganda had such great impact on those who heard it Lowery and DeFleur, 1995).

The researcher focused on all the nation newspapers i.e. *Daily Nation*, *Saturday Nation* and the *Sunday Nation* published between 1st January and 31st June 2013. Each and every article carrying road safety information was reviewed. A careful analysis of key words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters and sentences within sets of data collected was carried out, in order to quantify the role played by the *Nation* newspapers in priming road safety information in Kenya.

The study looked at placement, frequency, treatment, and size of articles. It also looked at use of photo captioning and graphics in seeking to establish whether Nation Newspaper takes into account the use of vital elements when reporting about road safety in Kenya.

3.2 Sampling

The researcher considered all the nation papers published in the Nation newspapers in the period between January 1st and June 31st 2013. Under this approach, each and every item or unit constituting the universe was selected for data collection. In this case, all newspapers that carried stories, articles and information on road safety were considered. A total of 180 papers published in this period were considered for data collection. This was the most convenient approach for this study since in the six months period, not every paper carried the story on road safety.

From the 180 papers, 58 newspapers were found to have carried information on road safety. The study then focused on the articles contained in the 58 papers and collected a total of 62 articles on road safety, thus forming the units of analysis for this research.

3.3 Data collection method

Document analysis was employed as the key method of collecting data. Key words aided the researcher in locating and identifying articles on road safety. They include words such as crash, road safety, carnage, accident and traffic. All Nation newspapers published in the period between January 1st 2013 and June 31st 2013 were considered for this research. Materials and articles on road safety were organized under unique banners for easy analysis. The data was organized based on the news elements such as frequency of articles, placement of articles, and size, focus, treatment, graphic and photo usage.

The stories and articles were then segmented into different themes. For instance, news articles, opinions, analysis, commentary and features.

3.4 Data analysis

The research critically looked at all the materials published during the period under study, specifically on issues about road safety. The focus was on how the nation newspaper primed articles addressing road safety information in the period between January 2013 and June 2013. This was measured as outlined

in the study objective. Information presented in the code sheet aided in establishing the number and frequency of articles and stories, size and placement of the articles as well as use of photos and graphics on road safety information. Each article was coded and variations made with aid of a computer statistical program (SPSS⁹). This information was then summarized and presented graphically in tables and charts.

3.5 Ethics

Consent from all participants in this research was obtained about and all were informed why their participation was necessary and the purposes for which the study was carried out. The study respected and spelt out the rights of participants to withdraw from the research at their convenience as well as protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

3.6 Research Instrument

To aid data collection, the researcher used key words in locating relevant information on road safety, they include; crash, road safety, carnage, accident and traffic. A code sheet for analyzing the priming of road safety information by the Nation newspaper in Kenya, between 1st January 2013 and 31st June 2013 was prepared. **See appendix 1**

⁹ Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Chapter Four:

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the nation newspaper covering a period of six months i.e. January 1st 2013 to June 31st 2013. The data collected was specifically relating to priming of road safety information by nation newspaper.

The study analyzed a total of 62 articles in the *Nation* newspapers published during this period, with an aim of establishing, the placement, size, frequency, treatment and focus of road safety articles published.

4.1 Frequency of road safety articles

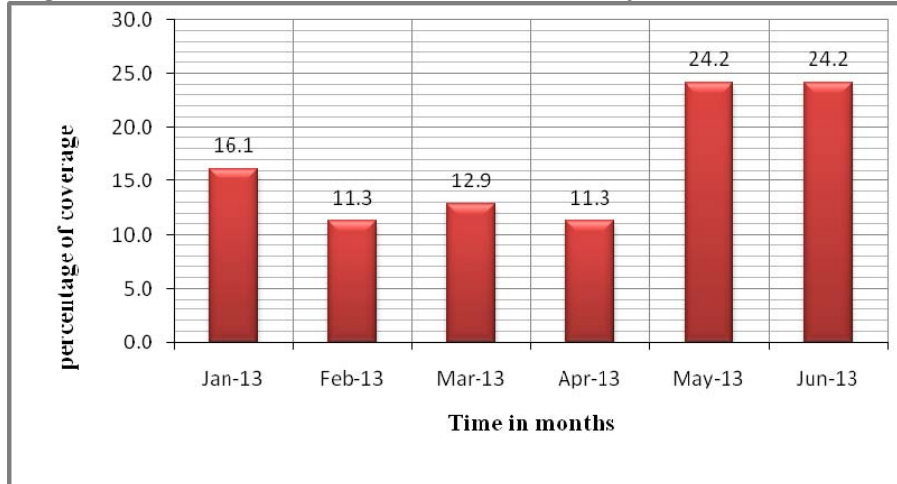
To have a clear insight on how the cases were distribute across the six months as reported by nation newspaper. The information was summarized and presented as shown below.

Table I: frequency of publishing Road crashes articles by the Nation paper.

Months of the year	n	%
Jan-13	10	16.1
Feb-13	7	11.3
Mar-13	8	12.9
Apr-13	7	11.3
May-13	15	24.2
Jun-13	15	24.2

Source: Nation

Figure I: Nation publication of Road Safety articles over time



Source: Nation

During the period under study, highest numbers of articles touching on road safety information were published in the months of May and June with each accounting for 24.2% of the cases. The lowest cases were reported during the month of February and April, all tying at 11.3%. This could be attributed to the fact that, January, February and March was the peak of 2013 general elections and therefore most media houses had their cameras focused on the election events. This shows that critical issues affecting Kenyans lives were either ignored or given very little attention. In this case, media's role of setting the agenda did little to keep issues on road safety alive in the minds of the public.

4.2 The packaging of road safety articles

In order to bring out clearly, how the nation newspaper package road safety information, the data collected was organized into different banners such as

prominence, size, theme/focus, placement and treatment for easy analysis. Photo and graphic usage was also examined.

4.2.1 Placement of articles

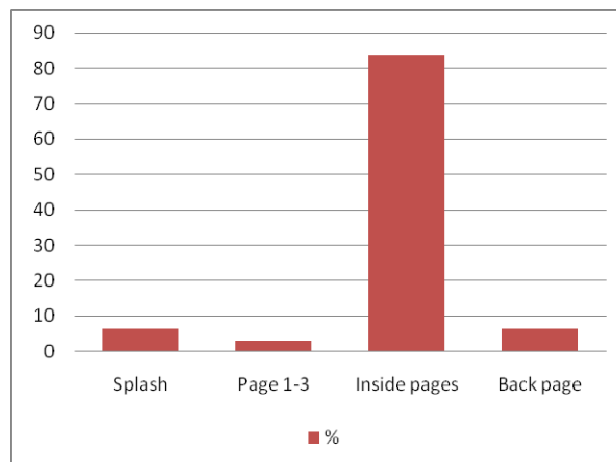
This was concerned with sections of the newspaper where the articles were published. In order to manage this, the newspaper was divided into four major sections namely Splash, page 1-3, inside pages, section fronts and back page. Pages 1-3 and back page of the newspaper are usually considered prime. This is because information published on these pages is easily accessible to readers.

Table 2: Placement of articles on road safety by Nation

Placement	N	%
Splash	4	6.5
Page 1-3	2	3.2
Inside pages	52	83.9
Back page	4	6.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

Figure 2: Placement of articles on Road safety by Nation



Source: Nation

According to figure 2 on page 50, many articles with road safety information were published in the inside pages of the nation newspaper. This accounts for 84% with splash, page 1-3 and back page taking 7%, 3%, and 6% respectively. This is a clear pointer that many articles on road safety published by the nation newspaper are mostly confined to inside pages. Only those reporting on fatal crashes only make it to page1. This impact negatively on accessibility of information on road safety, since most of the information is swallowed by other stories and may not come to the attention of the reader.

4.2.2 Size of articles

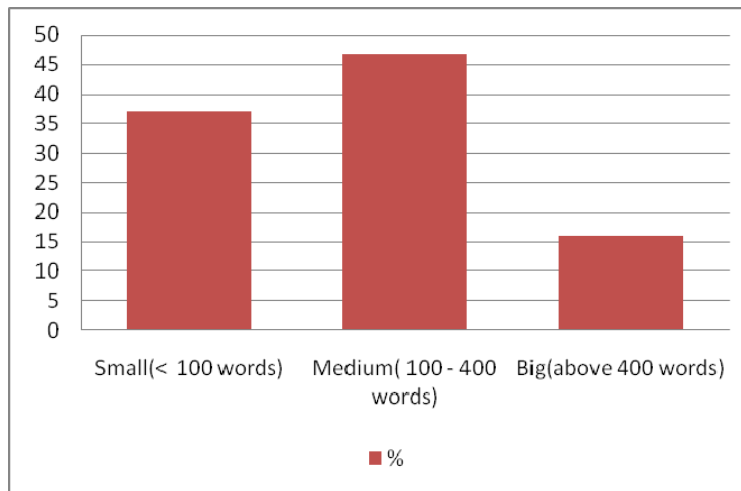
The sizes of the articles were categorized as small, medium and big depending on their length. Size of articles reflected the amount of space given to an item. Definitions were below 100 words, small, 100-400 words, medium and above 400 words, big.

Table 3: Size of articles on road safety

Size	n	%
Small(< 100 words)	23	37.1
Medium(100 - 400 words)	29	46.8
Big(above 400 words)	10	16.1
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

Figure 3: Size of articles on road safety



Source: Nation

According to figure 3 above, majority of articles on crashes or reporting about road safety in the nation newspaper were categorized as medium, at 47%. They were followed by small at 37% and big at 16%.

The research found out that road safety was not treated with the magnitude of seriousness by the nation newspapers in terms of space allocation. Small and medium size articles accounted for the largest segment of the newspaper space with a combined percentage of 84% leaving only 16% for big stories.

In competing for space with other stories, road safety articles are edited to fit within the little space available. In the end, a lot of information which would otherwise be useful to the audience is lost. This also impact negatively who may feel their efforts are wasted by way of mutilating their stories and reducing them to mere briefs.

4.2.3 Prominence of articles

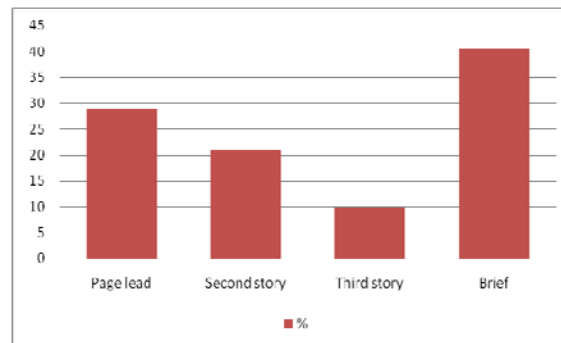
This is the strength of articles in terms of their presence on the page. This was determined by looking at different levels of headlines guided by font size. For the purpose of this research, stories were grouped into four categories; page lead, second story, third story and brief.

Table 4: Prominence of the articles on road safety

Prominence	N	%
Page lead	18	29.0
Second story	13	21.0
Third story	6	9.7
Brief	25	40.3
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

Figure 4: Prominence of the articles on road safety



Source: Nation

In Figure 4 above, it is clear that majority of articles on road safety were relegated to briefs, having accounted for 40%. Page lead came in at 29% with second story taking 21% and 10% for third story. Stories or articles that are published as page lead are easily noticed and picked out by a reader. Prominence tends to diminish as headline font size reduces. A story that is published as a brief does not project itself clearly from the page and are therefore easily

bypassed by a reader. From this data, it is clear that *Nation* put little emphasis on road safety information, having treated most of the stories as briefs and second stories. This may have compromised the effectiveness of stories capturing reader’s attention. Articles published as briefs do not reflect the seriousness of the subject. In this case a reader is likely to ignore these stories and focus on those that are treated with big and bold headlines.

4.2.4 Type of articles

Articles published in the newspaper were classified into different types. This research classified articles into; news, editorials, analysis, commentary and feature.

Table 5: Type of articles

Type	n	%
News	52	83.9
Editorial/Op-eds	1	1.6
Analysis	1	1.6
Commentary	7	11.3
Feature	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

According to table 4 above, of the 62 articles analyzed, 83% were news items. This was very high compared to others 11.3% of commentary and the remaining percentage shared among editorials, feature and analysis. *Nation* reported on road safety issues mostly after there were reported cases of crashes and especially fatal. This proves to be a worrying trend that media is only

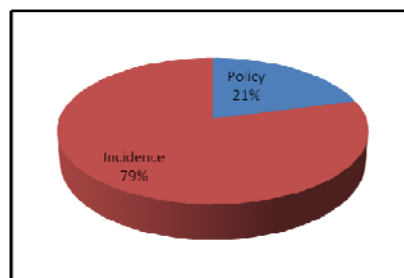
interested in what is perceived to be newsworthy. If it doesn't happen, it is not reported. There is lack of balance in how media treat road safety information. Publication of commentaries, features, opinions and editorials help engage the audience directly. Through these fora, consumers of media products are able to give feedback, thus help the audience understand road safety better.

Treatment of road safety information is skewed in favor of news. This is likely to affect information flow to the audience. Media should strive to keep road safety information alive in peoples' mind through regular publishing, thus helping set the agenda.

4.2.5 Focus of articles.

This is the center or heart of an article. Different stories carry different themes. For the purpose of this research, the articles were grouped into two themes; policy and incidents. Policy articles are those that focus on rules and regulations as well as legislations. On the other hand, incidents concerns with reporting happenings and especially Road crashes

Figure 5: Focus of road safety articles



Source: Nation

Nation hinged its reporting on incidents of road carnage during the period under study. Figure 5 indicate that of the 62 articles analyzed, 79% accounted for incidents with remaining 21% going for articles on policy. Research findings show that a lot of energies are directed towards reporting road incidents thus turning a blind on an equally important aspect of reporting on issues of policy.

Issues on policy are fundamental in fighting road carnage. The masses need to be enlightened on proper ways and available mechanisms of dealing with Road crashes. Over reliance on incident reporting fails to help the audience and the general public in understanding critical information on road safety, since when there is no accident, then nothing on road safety is published.

4.2.6 Photos on road safety published in the nation newspaper

Under the banner photos, the researcher divided photos published during this period into; Photos with story, standalone photos and no photos.

Table 6: Table of Photos on articles about road safety

Photos	N	%
With story	12	19.4
Stand alone	13	21.0
No photos	37	59.7
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

The finding showed that out of the 62 articles published in the period between January 1st 2013 and June 31st 2013, 59.7% of the articles were not supported by photos. Only 19.4% of the articles carried photos with remaining 21% going for standalone photos. For any story to have visual impact, it must be

supported by a photo. Photos and other visual aid device capture and draw attention of the reader into the newspaper page. Fairly a sizeable percentage went for standalone photos. Though this is also considered a practical way of communicating a message across, standalone photos tend to summarize otherwise detailed information into short captions, thus leaving out critical elements of the story.

4.2.7 Graphics

The graphics were organized into Colour graphics, Black/White and no graphics as per the 62 articles examined.

Table 7: Distribution of articles in relation to the graphics

Graphics	n	%
Colour	8	12.9
Black and white	1	1.6
No graphics	53	85.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

It was established that very few articles had graphic elements. Table 7 above, shows that, over 85% of the articles had no supporting graphics. About 14% of the graphics were published during this period where colour graphics took about 12.9% with B/W benefiting from 1.6% of the space. Information broken down into simple graphics is easily digested and easy to understand compared to a mass of grey text which may prove boring for readers. Articles with graphic presentations enable readers to navigate through stories with lots of

ease. Less and less use of graphic in nation newspaper could hinder the effectiveness of road safety information.

4.2.8 Story Source

In order to establish the sources of the stories, the research examined various sources used. Three main categories were used: *wire sources, reporters and readers*

Table 8: Sources

Source	n	%
Other	4	6.48
Reporters	50	80.62
Readers	8	12.90
Total	62	100.0

Source: Nation

A high percentage of stories in nation newspapers were from reporters, accounting for about 80.62%. Readers contributed to 12.9% of the stories while other sources contribute 6.48%. This shows that less input from the readers, opinion leaders and the general public was very minimal. The audience relied mostly on information from reporters thus lack of diverse views and opinions on road safety information.

4.3 What influence the selection and placement of stories in the Nation newspaper

Nation Media Group's policy 2009 lays down clear rules and guidelines on what kind of material can be published. This policy ensures sober and

accountable journalism, taking into account the interests of the public. Under this policy, materials that are considered defamatory, those exposing the minors and those that do not respect the morals of the society are prohibited from finding space into the nation newspaper.

It is also against the NMG's editorial policy to publish graphic images of dead bodies and sometimes the injured. More often than note, the Nation has only depicted an accident scene by publishing images of wreckage and some personal effects strewn at the scene. The editorial policy in itself dictates what kind of images, story and tone that finally reaches the audience.

The magnitude of the story also determines its size, placement and prominence. In the case of road safety, stories with high number of casualty find its way to news pages and which make it a national story. Sometimes small stories are placed in the county pages unique to respective regions.

Availability of space as provided by advertising also influences the size of stories. In order to fit within the space provided, a lot of information is cut from the story as well as dropping some photos which would otherwise be of great importance in passing the message across.

Chapter Five:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the key findings, recommendations and conclusion of the whole study.

5.1 Key findings

The study established that prominence of articles on road safety was subdued in many ways than one. Nation newspaper had most of articles on road safety published in the inside pages. Many articles were reduced to small stories and briefs. Information on road safety only made it to the prime pages when there was a major accident.

The frequency of articles published during the period under study also pointed at a unique trend. In the months of February, March and April, fewer articles on road safety were published in the Nation. This could be attributed to media focusing more on election events.

The focus of articles was skewed in favor of reporting incidents of Road crashes other than information on policy. Nation reported more on crash events as opposed to analyses of the factors that lead to crashes, remedies, trends or issues. This finding fits into what was pointed out in the literature review, where

Wilson (2001), observes that stories that arouse fear sell papers and journalists exploit this.

The study also found out that, majority of the articles did not have supporting images either as photos or graphics. Very few photos were published either accompanying stories or as standalones.

5.2 Conclusions

The study tried to bring up issues that affect how news is packaged and disseminated to the audience by print. The study used Nation newspaper as a case study to give examples of how media prime road safety information.

Guided by the research objectives, the study established that Nation newspaper does not give priority to road safety issues. Most of the articles on road safety were buried inside the newspaper as either second lead stories or as briefs. This study was hinged on two theories; Agenda-setting theory and Priming theory. In this case, nation did not effectively play its role of setting the agenda. It down played its capacity to influence public opinion by failing to emphasize issues on road safety.

Priming theory is about making certain issues most accessible in the media. Playing road safety issues small by publishing articles as briefs and hidden in the inside pages do not help. Information must stand out and scream for attention. Therefore proper attention ought to be given to the treatment of this information.

The study also established that the focus of articles was directed at reporting on accident occurrences than on issues on policy and educating the public. (Morrison 2006) observes that news values related to impact, proximity, prominence, relevance and human interest are all important in determining how much significance a news story is accorded by a particular media. In the case of road safety, journalists and reporters tend to favour stories with perceived high magnitude and consequences in terms of deaths and serious injuries. This was confirmed by this study where only stories on fatal crashes were carried as splash.

Advertising occupied most of the space leaving a small percentage for editorial content. Media organizations are becoming more business oriented (Kirk 2006). Advertising acts as source of revenue and profits for running media organizations. Search for profits has impacted on the more costly form of journalism such as investigative reporting.

In striving to remain within the editorial policy, much information remains within the walls of newsroom and therefore does not reach the audience. Some of this information could be of significance important in addressing road safety issues if it gets to the stake-holders.

I recommend a more holistic research encompassing more media platforms to be done on how media prime road safety information in Kenyan.

5.3 Recommendations

A more holistic research encompassing more media platforms needs to be done on the priming of road safety issues in Kenya. Of particular concern would be the space allocated to road safety information. Editorial and advertising compete for space and in most cases the latter prevails. This research suggests that equilibrium must be struck between public and business interest. Many informative stories have missed out in the paper due to unavailability of space. The advertising department, who determine the newspaper size in terms of pagination, should always up-page so as to accommodate more articles in need-to-need basis.

Safety is paramount to the welfare on any given society. The finding showed a deficiency in projecting road safety information on prime pages of the Nation paper. Most of the stories were buried on the inner pages. Fairly a bigger percentage of the stories were published as briefs. A way should be found of carrying these articles big and on the prime pages so as to motivate journalists who otherwise feel demotivated when their stories are chopped for the simple reason of lack of space.

More and more space should be allocated for photos and graphics. Media should also seek to publish more articles touching on policy as opposed to focusing on road carnage incidents only.

The media should strive to keep road safety debates alive by constantly and regularly publishing this information i.e. setting the agenda for the public. In

fact, it should come up with campaign solely to educate Kenyans on causes and consequences of road carnage and how to prevent it. Policy makers and implementers must take advantage of the vibrant media to educate the masses on the need of observing traffic rules and regulations.

Being a market leader, Nation newspaper should take advantage of this position to disseminate road safety information to its audience. It must stamp its position by providing information as well educating the people on ways of ensuring road carnage cases are reduced.

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Appendix 1

Code Sheet for road safety news priming by the Nation Newspaper

Month /Year		Date of publication										Totals
Article Placement	Splash											
	Page1-3											
	Inside Pages											
	Section front											
	Back page											
Size (No. of Words)	Small (<100 words)											
	Medium (100 - 400 words)											
	Big (> 400 words)											
Type	News											
	Op-ed/Editorial											
	Analysis											
	Commentary											
	Feature											
Prominence on Page	Page lead											
	Second lead											
	3rd Story											
	Brief											
Theme/ Focus	Incidents											
	Policy											
Graphics	Colour											
	Black /White											
	None											
Photos	With story											
	Stand-alone											
	None											
Story Source	Reporter											
	Reader											
	Other											