The Impact of Citizen Journalism on Gate keeping Process: A Case Study of Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Television

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K50/72266/2011

This Research Project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Communication Studies in the

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi.

November, 2013.

DECLARATION

I, Mary Atieno Onyango hereby declare that this Research Project is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree award to any other university or anywhere else for academic purposes.

Signed…………..……….………   **Date……….……….………**

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This Research Project has been submitted for examination purposes with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signed…………..……….………   **Date……….……….………**

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DEDICATION

This Research Project is dedicated to my husband, Callisto; sons: Steve, Eric, Martin and daughters: Lilian, Liz and Irene, for their invaluable support and encouragement to finish this project. This Project is also dedicated to Elizabeth Kirkby, IAWRT member Australia, whose determination to pursue a PhD at the age of 80 inspired me to set foot in a classroom again.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBC   -   British Broadcast Corporation

CCK   -   Communications Commission of Kenya

CJA   -   Citizen Journalism in Africa

CNN   -   Cable News Network

ICT   -   Information and Communication Technology

KBC   -   Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

KTN   -   Kenya Television Network

NACJ -   National Association of Citizen Journalists

NTV   -   Nation Television

SMS   -   Short Message Services

SPSS -   Statistical Package for Social Scientists

USA   -   United States of America

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping process using the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Television as a case study. The Information Super Highway has created a new order of information overload where the citizen as a non-profession is making contributions to media content. Traditionally, a journalist is the professionally trained person with the skills to decipher the information the audience should receive. However this trend is changing in the wake of online journalism. This research project may lay a foundation on the extent communication revolution has weathered any measures or controls on gate keeping process. The research was therefore founded on the gate keeping theory as a mass communication theory that describes the process by which news and information is gathered and filtered to audiences. This study was also informed by the normative theory concerned with examining how media ought to operate given the watchdog role in society. The research employed a descriptive survey, purposive and stratified sampling techniques to collect data on the elements of citizen journalism practices and how these are appropriated in news and information programmes. Data was analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 17 technique for descriptive statistics. From the findings most of the respondents were aware of citizen journalism. Short Messages Services (SMS) were the main aspects of citizen journalism contained in Good Morning, followed by opinion polls while twitter was the least element observed. The main challenges facing citizen journalism were reported to include inaccurate and difficult to verify reports, poor quality pictures and most reports lacked objectivity. Most of the respondents supported introduction of guidelines that adhere to the editorial policy in citizen journalism.

Key words: citizen journalism, new media, mainstream media, gatekeeping

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study. It describes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, scope of the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study and the definition to key terms used in the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

This chapter presents a background to the study on a media station's response to the challenges of participatory journalism on structured media obligations including gate keeping. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), established in 1959 by the colonial government and nationalized in 1964, (Githaiga, 2010) is the case study. The chapter also looks at the objectives, research questions to direct the study, and why this research is important.

The field of communication is in a state of dramatic flux. As new media technologies give more control to the user, the very concept of mass communication is undergoing challenge (Severin and Tankard, 2000, 17). One result of the changes in technology is that it is no longer possible to think of channels like television as a uniform or monolithic system, transmitting essentially the same message to everyone.

The sixth information revolution, the Information Super Highway (Fang, 1997) constructed out of the convergence of computer, broadcasting, satellite and visual technologies has brought about the decline of the "mass" society (McQuail, 2005, 136) in which media organizations performed the normative role of informing, educating and entertaining audiences. The new media is characterized by abundance of supply of culture and information made available at low cost; more real choice and diversity; restored control to the receiver/user; decentralization, interactivity rather than one-way communication. This communication revolution has led to what mass media technologists (Albaran, 2009); Baran and Davis, 2006); McQuail, 2005) have referred to as participatory media or alternative media where the power to govern the public sphere

no longer belongs solely to the media (Nguyen, 2006). A combination of many technological and social developments in the past few years has resulted in a shift of news/information production from an institutionalized industry into a mode of popular expression (Nguyen, 2006). Media institutions today engage/involve citizens to contribute to information. For instance, *iReport* which is unique to Cable News Network (CNN) is a typical example (Channel, 2010). It allows the public to share and submit "unfiltered" content. Vetted submissions that are deemed newsworthy can then be broadcasted across networks and published on CNN.com. In conflict/crisis areas, marginalized voices use the internet to pen their grievances. Websites such as www.groundsview.org in Sri Lanka, www.citizeneye.com in Pakistan, contain views directly from citizens. These are contacted by mainstream newspapers and television channels in respective countries wanting to use those contributions as sources (Meyer, 1995).

In contributing to the Arab Revolutions of 2011, Radsch wrote that "throughout the Arab World, citizen journalists have emerged as the vanguard of new social movements dedicated to promoting human rights and democratic values" (Radsch, 2011). The wave of citizen journalism was already sweeping through as stated by Hamady (2008) that citizens of the Arab world had harnessed blogging technologies to produce and disseminate their journalism and opinions faster than governments could control, censor or regulate. By 2005, media professionals realized that they were being confronted with unknown bloggers who were changing the Arab media landscape. They could no longer ignore the challenge and began instead to incorporate their tips in their coverage, chase the same stories (Hamady, 2008).

In Britain it is noted, citizens use websites such as YouTube, MySpace and Wikipedia as platforms for so-called usergenerated content where they publish online their own comments, photos and videos (Thurman and Hermida, 2008). During the London bombings of July 2005, Thurman adds, the British Broadcasting Corporation, (BBC) received 22,000 emails and text messages, and 300 photos from citizens. The dramatic stills and videos dominated BBC TV newscasts. It was the first time that such material had been considered more newsworthy (Thurman et. al, 2008).

The spread of user-generated content has not been felt in America, Europe, Asia and the Arab world only, but in African media as well. TomiOladepo (2011) in her article, "*Citizen Journalism in Africa: Is it the Messiah?",* argues that citizen journalism can contribute a lot to democracy in terms of encouraging citizen participation in a manner that the power they wield would hold the government accountable to a large degree. Most African countries she further argues, are choking with concubines like corruption, election rigging and disregard for the rule of law amongst others (www.cp-africa.com). With the intensification of public awareness of democratization (Banda, 2010), citizens in African countries with draconian press laws to bar flow of information to the public, engage in citizen journalism as an alternative source of news/information. Mohammed Ademo (2011), a human rights activist from Oromo region of Ethiopia, is the founder/editor of Opride website which he says he started to be a voice for the voiceless Ethiopians who are suffering under one of the most repressive regimes in Africa www.community.paper.li/2011; www.opride.com.

In Zimbabwe citizens have used the Kubabana web blogs to blog for democracy by publishing civic and human rights information. This was particularly used during the presidential election run-off campaign April-June 2008 (Moyo, 2011). According to Moyo (2011), the incapacitation and subsequent decapitation of the mainstream media as watchdogs and custodians of the public good and active citizenship, culminated in the development of alternative online media platforms where citizens produced and disseminated news and told stories about the harsh realities of Zimbabwean life and politics.

The Citizen Journalism in Africa (CJA) programme, located in Johannesburg, South Africa, presents a form of institutionalized citizen journalism (Banda, 2010). Funded by European Developing Countries (Hivos) South Africa, its overall objective is to increase outreach in local media of balanced, objective and informative reporting on the marginalized groups (Banda, 2010).The programme is implemented in six countries: South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Uganda and targets 120 civil society and media organizations working for the rights of women, children, youth,

and people living with HIV and AIDS (Banda, 2010). Sometimes the organizations are requested by the media to comment or write an article on a specific issue.

The influence of social media and citizen journalists has grown in East Africa (Banda, 2010, 44). In Uganda, village women exchange information on blogs using local languages. In Kenya, various media houses have websites where they engage in internet journalism and blogging (Oriare. 2010). Kenya had over 600 blogs during the 2007 elections (Oriare, 2010, 17). These contained explicit visuals which mainstream media did not have. It was during this period Kenya's top bloggers, OryOkolloh, Erik Hersman, Juliana Rotich and David Kobia, developed the citizen-journalistic platform, "Ushahidi", which means "testimony" in Swahili, to allow the public to share their stories via text messages, Twitter, Facebook and blogs (Banda, 2010, 43). There are cases of video footage that have been captured by amateurs and used by mainstream media, such as the 1998 Nairobi terrorist bomb attack. Daily road traffic updates on FM radios are citizen-processed. A relatively new development is the use of convergent polls to be submitted and voted on. The poll converges on the most broadly accepted editorials and opinions. Other than polls, media organizations are also known to use the internet through their Facebook and Twitter accounts to direct viewers to information that they may be interested in. In the words of John Kelly (2009), "we live in the network age now, where the many can talk to the many, bypassing the one completely".

This study attempted to examine to what extent Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television uptakes citizen journalism given its normative role as a public broadcaster with an obligation to reinforce traditional practices.

Concept of citizen journalism

The concept of citizen journalism also known as "public", "participating", "democratic", "guerilla", or "street journalism", is based upon public citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, and analyzing news and information (Nguyen, 2006). Another scholar Courtney C. Radsch (2011), defines citizen journalism as "an alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a repose to shortcoming in the professional journalistic field

that uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals and relies on alternative sources of legitimacy than traditional or mainstream journalism. And in the words of Jay Rosen (2008), citizen journalism is simply, "when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another".

The idea that average citizens can engage in the act of journalism has a long history in the United States. The modern citizen journalist movement emerged after journalists themselves began to question the predictability of their coverage of such events as the 1988 United States presidential election. Those journalists became part of the public or civic journalism movement, a count or measure against the eroding trust in the news media and widespread public disillusionment with politics and civic affairs (Merritt, 2004; Dvorkin, 2005; Meyer, 1995).

Citizen journalism has been theorized as a specific form of both citizen media and user - generated content. Its use has been advanced by the proponents. A foremost proponent of citizen journalism Dan Gillmore, former technology columnist with the San Jose Mercury news, founded the nonprofit Center for Citizen Media (http://citmedia.org) to help promote it. Jay Rosen, (2006) a journalist professor at the New York University was also one of public journalism earliest proponents who as mentioned earlier, views citizen journalism as an empowerment of audiences to inform them using the press tools in their possession.

Singer (2006) asserts, "the internet defies the whole notion of a "gate" which according to proponents of gate keeping theory (Lewin, 1947; White 1950; shoemaker, 2001; Reese and Ballinger, 2001), meant that journalists can and should limit what passes through them (Channel, 2010) before being disseminated to the receiver. But given the digital age and widespread use of the internet, publishers and editors are increasingly shifting their operational focus to the Web. The transition is shaking up newspapers' paper-first paradigm and presenting new and vexing challenges to journalistic norms and values (Lewis, Kaufhold, Lasorsa, 2009). In online communication, the end-user is engaged in control over content, thus blurring traditional boundaries and roles of news producers and

news consumers (Bruns, 2005), and threatening to undermine the gate keeping process so central and longstanding to the professional purpose of the press. By publishing online, the newspapers have opened the "gates", embracing user-generated content such as comments, photos, videos, reader blogs, and reader assembled news articles (Lewis, Kaufhold, Lasorsa, 2009). On the other hand, it is said citizens use websites such as YouTube, MySpace and Wikipedia as platforms for user-generated content (Thurman, 2008). Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation (now defunct), bought MySpace in 2006 (Thurman, 2008) for its user-generated content. Mention has already been given on the CNN based *iReport* which gathers user-generated content and posts what is deemed to be newsworthy on CNN.com. This practice can be usefully described as what Bruns (2005) calls "gate-watching", because news users engage in organizing and curating the flood of available news stories and newsworthy information now available from a multitude of channels without the ability to keep or control the gates of any of the channels.

Neil Thurman and Alfred Hermida, (2008), identified nine generic formats that British newspaper websites have put in place to encourage contributions from the public: polls, message boards, have your say, comments, questions and answers, blogs, your media, and your story. In another example, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's French language TV network has also organized a weekly public affairs programme called "5 sur 5" which has been organizing and promoting citizen-based journalism since 2001. On the programme, viewers submit questions on a wide variety of topics and they, accompanied by staff journalists, get to interview experts to obtain answers to their questions (http://citimedia.org).

In the context of African region, the growth of citizen journalism can be attributed to the process of liberalization from Cape to Cairo in the 1990s (Banda, 2010, 8), with corresponding deregulatory policy and legislative changes. The liberal economy structures also led to the liberalization of airwaves and the emergence of multiplicity of privately owned commercial broadcast and print media channels (Banda, 2010), all competing for sources of information. Coupled with technological advancements, there was hitherto greater opportunity for citizens marginalized from mainstream media to own media and counter the effects of years of concentration of media ownership. However,

media independence is not, for example, uniform to all regions of the Maghreb, like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The Arab Revolutions of 2011 that began in Tunisia were as a result of Arab Spring citizen journalism that played a role in the uprisings (Radsch, 2011). The internet with its ubiquitous structures had opened uncontrolled channels easily accessible by citizens in search of alternative information to promote human right and democratic values.

The context of citizen journalism in Kenya stems from the ethnic violence fuelled by the irregularities of the December 2007 election (Banda, 2010). According to Krigler Report (2008), "there was existence of conflict between profit-making and adherence to the ethics of journalism; media owners who influenced content; and partisan vernacular stations". Against this conflicting background to provide the right and useful information to audiences, the emergence of citizen journalism was inevitable to dispel rumours and also fill the information gap for Kenyans in the diaspora (Banda, 2010), who were desparate. This was also the emergence of bloggers and the crowd-sourcing platform "Ushahidi" mentioned earlier. During the crisis, people used cell phones to record short videos and take photos which were shared online. Banda (2010), adds that in East Africa, a number of professional journalists have their own blogs where they share information that is not governed by editorial policies, giving rise to a form of non-institutional citizen journalism. Further, the rise in blogging and feedback has encouraged many newspapers in East Africa to set up websites with interactive features.

The use of the internet as a communication technology is undoubtedly affecting the traditional basis upon which Mr. Gates, a newspaper wire editor rejected a wire story because the news item was not interesting. In essence he was building on the affirmation of Bruns (2005), a proponent of gate keeping theory, that gate keeping is the fundamental of journalism and that gate keeping is still a necessary process in new publishing formats. He asserts that, gate keeping is necessary for error checking, clarity and grammar mistakes, structural errors, and checking content for any potentially slanderous or libelous issues or insensitivity to people named in stories. Gate keeping also involves putting a story into a context and this may involve linking a story to a similar one published before or to comments on similar issues or to some background information

(Bruns, 2005). In his support for traditional media and the practice of gate keeping to maintain accuracy, balance of fairness and sensitivity, Orihuelar, (2003) agrees that Bruns' three stages of gate keeping of input, output, and audience responses, (see page 30) only apply to traditional print and electronic media but not to new digital media like the World Wide Web where all the three gates kept by news organizations can now be bypassed.

This study seeks to understand how the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation established news/information and talk show programmes are responding to the emergence of user-generated content given the traditional gate keeping role of a public broadcaster. Talk show pogrammes may have call-ins during a live broadcast, that allow viewers to call and ask guests questions. In news there are news polls where viewers are asked to respond to questions on topical issues. There is the KBC website perhaps linked to Facebook/twitter accounts, where audiences are invited to make comments; how do all these affect gate keeping?

1.2 Problem Statement

The information Super Highway (Fang, 1997) constructed out of the convergence of computer, broadcasting, satellite and visual technologies has created a new order of information overload where the citizen as a non-profession is making contributions to media content. This is presenting new and vexing challenges to journalistic norms and values.

Studies carried out in Kenya indicate that some forms of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) are used and these impact on traditional media functions to a small extent (Gathii, 2010). Other studiesindicate that social media phenomenon will continue evolving and impacting on the traditional news formats (Ombati, 2012).However, little has been done to analyze whether there are any measures or controls being applied on the elements of citizen journalism employed on news and information programmes. It is only through such analysis that gate keeping as a function of traditional media can be firmly understood before being dubbed gate

watching, which implies the traditional journalist has lost grip on gate keeping in distributing news and information content to audiences.

Given that citizen journalism is an inevitable and acceptable infiltration in communication, this study did attempt to establishthe endorsement of conventional decision rules on citizen journalism by traditional journalists: reporters, editors, producers, presenters, and camera persons as gate keepers, and the eventual impact on gate keeping process.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to determine the impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping process. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine what elements of citizen journalism are applied in news and information dissemination at Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television.

2. To identify challenges presented by citizen journalism to KBC editors and reporters as gatekeepers with normative responsibility.

3. To investigate the effect of citizen reporting on gate keeping process on KBC news and talk show programmes.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to address three main questions:

RQ1: What elements of citizen journalism are applied in news and information dissemination at KBC?

RQ2: What are the challenges presented by citizen journalism to KBC editors and reporters as gatekeepers?

RQ3: What are the effects of citizen reports/contributions on gate keeping of KBC news and talk show programmes?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study findings generated from this research may be of significance to the following parties:

Communication Scholars– they may use this study to develop new theoretical frameworks to view gate keeping function given that the mass diffusion model is being challenged by receivers who are no longer passive spectators but active contributors to news reporting and current affairs programmes.

Managers/editors of media organizations – given the complexities of digital media, managers/editors may use this study to maintain a balancing act on gatekeeping. They can re-design editorial policies to reflect, sorting, interpreting and lending credibility to news on behalf of the public.

News organizations – They may use this study to work out collaborative links with citizen journalism organizations as sources of news.

Media Owners Association – may use this study to think of business models which can institutionalize citizen journalists (e.g. CNN's *iReport*) for credible news.

Ministry of Information and Technology – the Ministry may use this study to critically reflect on the factors which have led many of the people formerly known as the audience to create their own alternatives to mainstream news, and develop media strategies (governing laws on ICT and information dissemination) to effectively address the challenges of gate keeping .

Communications Commission of Kenya – may use this study to establish the need to license citizen journalists under umbrella online news providers who will be tasked with social responsibility.

Media Council of Kenya – As regulator of ethical standards in journalism, the Council may use this study to re-define who should be called a journalist given new media challenges such as proliferation of information through the internet. The Council may

also use the study to collaborate with Media Owners in authenticating sources of news as a social responsibility.

Journalism Schools/educators – may use this study to find new guidelines on journalism training, and to more directly address citizen journalism as an area of study that requires well developed journalistic skills.

Professional journalists – may use this study to re-imagine their audience and re-invent professional practices that will enable the journalist and the industry to develop a proactive and perhaps a more cooperative model for dealing with citizen journalists. In Nguyen's (2006) suggestion, future journalists will need to be trained to not only become critical gate keepers but also act as listeners, discussion and forum leaders/mediators in an intimate interaction with their audiences.

Citizen journalist – content producers, for example bloggers as sources for mainstream media, may use this study as a benchmark to attain journalistic standards of objectivity and impartiality required by mainstream media. This they can achieve by developing approaches and systems that help the public negotiate and regulate the flow of awareness information, facilitating the collection and transmission of new content on the practice of journalism.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) television station as one of the oldest broadcasting stations, or what can be referred to as traditional media, dating back to 1964 with a unique characteristic of a public service mandated to perform normative roles of educating, informing and entertaining audiences. The study covered news and talk show programmes likely to contain aspects of user-generated content influencing the process of gate keeping. Although the station has a nationwide reach, the study took place in Nairobi due to time and financial constraints likely to be experienced during data collection. The respondents such as the editorial managers of television news who formed part of the interview process are based in Nairobi. This study was also limited to the impact of citizen journalism because it is a complex communication

phenomenon which, according to its infiltration, appears to be undermining gate keeping control over content, raising concern as to whether journalism can still uphold its laid down policies as a profession.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the following theories:

(a) Gate keeping Theory

(b) Normative Theory

(a) Gate keeping Theory

The proponents of the Gate keeping Theory (Lewin, 1947; White, 1949-1950; Shoemaker, 2001; Reese and Ballinger, 2001), define gate keeping as the process of filtering and determining which information the public can access through various channels of communication. Fourie (2001) defines gate keeping as the process through which information undergoes rigorous checking through various checkpoints before it can be deemed as acceptable news material. The Gate keeping theory, therefore, is an ideological movement which advocates that media organizations use "gate" keepers to standardize, filter and determine which information should be accessed by audiences through the available channels of communication: radio, television, print or the internet. This trend is changing in the wake of online journalism which is enabling users to participate/contribute to news and talk show programmes; making some scholars (Williams and Carpini, 2004); Bruns (2005), refer to gate keeping as "gate watching" due to the ubiquitous nature of the internet and unlimited information flow available for everyone's use. (Livingstone and Benett, 2003); Singer (2008), argue that technological advances within institutions have not changed the core gate keeping practice of officiating news through official sources. Based on these arguments, gate keeping remains a compelling logic through which to examine the impact of citizen journalism.

(b) Normative Theory

This theory is concerned with examining or prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained (McQuail, 2005). This theory is important because it plays a part in shaping and legitimating media institutions. A society's normative theories concerning its own media are usually found in laws, regulations, media policies, and codes of ethics (McQuail, 2005). Such media most often face widespread restrictions politically instigated by governments wishing to have checks and balances on society's morals and cultures. These restrictions are applicable to media regarded as national and are obligated to responsibly provide diverse information, opinion and culture.

In his exploratory study of citizen journalism in Africa, Banda (2010) argues that citizen journalists work without rigid system of certification under which trained journalists execute their duties. A citizen journalist is not bound by the concept of normative rules or appropriate behavior (Banda, 2010) much needed to maintain institutional mandate.

This theory is applicable in this study attempting to find out how KBC as a public service media station, mandated to disseminate information to audiences in public interest, and also operating under government instigated legislations and procedures, is responding to the emergence of citizen journalism which is online communication regarded by some scholars (Singer, 2006; Rosen, 2006; Williams and Carpini, 2004; Bruns, 2005; Hamady, 2008, Shoemaker, 2008; DeFleur and Dennis, 2002; MacQuail 2005; Singer,2013) as a threat to traditional media structures such as gate keeping .

1.8 Definition of terms

A number of terms are key in this study to help communication researchers and scholars find explanatory references to the study. Key among them are:

Citizen journalism, gate keeping, KBC, professionalism, traditional media, new media, mainstream media, mass audience.

Citizen journalism – Citizen journalism is a new concept in communication which scholars define variedly in an attempt to explain the contributions of citizens to news and information using the new media technologies (the internet, world-wide web [WWW], mobile phones, among others). Dan Gillmore (2004) defines the concept as "journalism by the people for the people", and he gives some of the technologies which have come to characterize citizen journalism:

Mail lists – discussion forums organized by topic and distributed to subscribers through email (person-to-person contact via the internet), newsgroups (publicly accessible discussion forums organized by topic which are similar in form to email but do not require email subscriptions).

Chatrooms – multi-user 'channels' or rooms in which people gather in small numbers to discuss topics both general and specific.

Weblogs (*blogs*) – posts laid out in negative chronological order, authored by one or more individuals, often associated with a set of interests or opinions, frequently including links to external websites.

Wikis– server programmes that allow users to collaborate in forming the content of a website.

SMS – (short message services) a service offered by network providers which allows customers to send text messages over the cell phones.

Mobile-connected cameras – every-day digital cameras used by individuals to download, store, edit, and transmit pictures anytime, anywhere. Added on to this list is the tablet with similar multi functions.

Internet 'broadcasting' – enables ordinary people to record and upload anything on to the Internet, as well as distribute it. This involves video and audio streaming.

Peer- to – peer (*P2P*) - sharing of files.

RSS (*Really Simple Syndication*) – allows readers of blogs and other sites to have their computers and other devices automatically retrieve the content that interests them.

Thurman (2005), refers to citizen journalism as "participatory journalism", or "user-generated" content, in which, according to Kelly (2009), "users don't have to be users anymore they can be producers".

Banda (2010) says the US based National Association of Citizen Journalists (NACJ) makes a distinction between accidental journalists; advocacy citizen journalists (advocating viewpoints on behalf of social, political, business or religious purpose); and citizen journalists (independent, freelancing reporters). NACJ advances the argument that one does not become a citizen journalist simply because they used a cell phone camera to photograph an incident and then uploads it in Facebook, for example. These should be called accidental journalists. Banda (2010) further states that citizen journalism can be *non-institutional*, where an individual is at the core of the practice but does not answer to any specific authority; and *institutional* in which media institutions seem to be moving into the space created by non-institutional citizen journalists.Jay Rosen's (2006) definition: "when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another", explains the reverse communication model where the receiver is the source/producer.

Public/civic journalism – Channel (2010), defines public journalism as an attempt to engage citizens in both the news making and in the news consumption process. The professional journalists maintain their traditional role as gate keepers, in framing and presentation.

Gate keeping-defined as the process by which the many messages in the world are reduced by news decision makers and shared with the public (Shoemaker, 1991). Gate-keeping dates back to 1947 when psychologist Kurt Lewin noted that information (in reference to news) flows through the gate and that individuals control what flows through the gate (Lewin, 1947). Today the term has a "wider potential application since it can apply to the work of literary television" (McQuail, 2005, 308). Barzilai (2009), refers to these controls as: selection, addition, withholding, display, channeling, shaping,

manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard and deletion of information. But in the wake of internet communication, some scholars have referred to gate keeping as "gate watching" (Bruns, 2005), given the fact that news users engaged in organizing available news stories from a multitude of channels, have no ability to control the gates of any of the channels. However, Singer (2013), argues users are now secondary gate keepers of the content published on media websites which digital news editors assess leading to selective-re-dissemination of that content (Singer, 2013).

KBC-Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. The oldest broadcasting station in Kenya started in 1928 (radio); (television) 1964. It has a unique characteristic of a national broadcaster mandated to perform normative role of informing, educating and entertaining (Githaiga, 2011, 11). KBC, like other media in Kenya, is today facing the challenges of online communication (internet, etc.), in as far as gate keeping process is concerned.

Professionalism – Banda (2010) explains it as an exclusive practice, reserved for those who would be admitted into it upon completion of a form of training or educational programme (Banda, 2010, 25). Typical traits of professionalism (Anderson, 2008) are public service, objectivity, autonomy immediacy, and ethics (Deuze, 2005). A journalist, therefore, is expected to drive the ethical standards as demanded by the field of journalism. According to Singer (2003), professional journalists derive much of their control of information in their various roles as watchdog, gate-keeper and guardian of society.

Traditional media- Refers to mass media channels of communication: print, radio, film, and television (McQuail, 2005). Also referred to as 'old' media, McQuail says, these represent traditional mass communication culture which was essentially one-directional – from the source (journalist, presenter, producer, entertainer etc), to receiver as mass audience.

Mass audience – this refers to the 'many' that the mass media was intended to reach. According to McQuail," they are potential audiences viewed as large aggregates of more or less anonymous consumers" (McQuail, 2005, 55).

New Media –McQuail (2005) states that mass media have changed, "certainly from one way, one-directional and undifferentiated flow to undifferentiated mass" (McQuail, 2005, 130). Mass society is now characterized by complex interactive networks of communication, which Lievrouw and Livingstone (2009) refer to in the *Handbook of New Media*, as computer mediated communication which is fundamentally social. It presents such features as email used for person- to- person contact, chat spaces, mailing lists, newsgroups, blogs on the World Wide Web among others. New media represents what is commonly known as "global village" to use the words of McLuhan, (1964).

Mainstream Media – media characterized by largest distribution channels likely to be encountered by the majority of media consumers. Mainstream denotes media generally reflective of the prevailing currents of thought, influence or activity (Chomsky, 1997). Mainstream includes large news conglomerates such as newspapers and broadcast media. (New York Times, Observer, BBC, CNN, The Nation, The Standard, Royal Media Services, and KBC among others. Chomsky (1997) asserts that these are institutionalized and relate with institutionalized major powers-the government and other Corporations. Most are private and are owned by wealthy people who only want certain things to reach the public. Mainstream still regard audience as "spectators" not "participants" (Chomsky, 1997). However, in the wake of new media, Markos Moulitsas (2007) and founder of the Democratic blog Daily Kos, argues that by calling old media mainstream, new media is inherently marginalized and thus prefers to use the term traditional media instead.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the literature available related to the objectives of the study. The study describes evidence from other studies on citizen journalism concept and effects and its relationship with the professional journalism. Theoretical framework of the study is also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Overview

The chapter contains an analysis of information that has been written on citizen journalism practices in relation to gate keeping as one of the obligations of traditional media, especially on television news and information. The chapter begins with an analysis of the concept of citizen journalism as viewed by various scholars and how digital technology, including the internet, has enabled the infiltration of citizen journalism alongside what critics of the phenomenon contend. The chapter also assesses the process of gate keeping clouded with citizen journalism practices and how these press challenges on norms of media obligations.

2.2 Citizen Journalism Concept

Various scholars have attempted to define citizen journalism in different terms to explain the contributions of citizens to news and information. In his contribution to journalism studies, Chris Atton, (2009), draws a distinction between public communication and alternative media. Quoting from Raymond Williams, (1980), he asserts public communication could only be rigorously understood by considering the process of "skills, capitalization and controls" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 265), and to apply this principle to alternative media, with reference to James Hamilton (2000), then we need to talk of de-professionalization, and deinstitutionalization (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009; p. 265). Meaning, ordinary people who contribute to media, lack professional training, have no excessive capital, and are not an institution since

contributions to media are at an individual level. According to Hamilton's observation, citizens are ordinary people not relying on the mass media for information, but use the tools of the press within their possession to participate in media production as amateurs. Given this dichotomy on the concept of citizen journalism, Atton (2009), argues amateur media practices are always embedded in everyday life practices; they are therefore already located in broader political, economic, social and cultural contexts (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). And it is for this reason that he would rather use the terms "alternative media" and "alternative journalism" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009; p. 267) to describe citizen practices. Atton's argument adds a voice to the long-term concern by communication scholars seeking facts on whether journalism is a trade or a profession given that non-professionals can become media producers contributing to content that is transmittable on mainstream media.

Professionalization has led to the creation of codes of ethics which journalists use to gate keep as they practice their responsibility role to disseminate what they deem as relevant socio-economic, socio-political and cultural information to the audiences. On the other hand, there is the argument that non-professionals tend to produce media content in search of social change when the normative role of responsibility fails (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). The likely failure, is also the basis of legitimacy for the citizen participation tradition that the media belong to the people, with an emancipator, expressive, and critical purpose (Christians, et al., (2009). A more complex scenario is being presented with advancement in technology.

The power to govern the public sphere no longer belongs solely to the media (Nguyen, 2006). Technology, computers, and the Internet have facilitated an undeniable media shift in the way news is gathered (Channel, 2010). There is participatory news (Singer, 2006; Kelly, 2009), or participatory journalism (Channel, 2010) in which news users take an active part in the news gathering process, working with journalism professionals to distribute the content. According to Channel (2010), users create the content independently, but the outlet (media organization) provides the platform to publish it. This is contrary to Bruns (2005) that hostilities between media establishment and the new generation of citizen journalists continue to flare up from time to time. Studies show that

mainstream media have adopted practices of participatory journalism (Hermida and Thurman, 2008) in which users of information contribute to news on social networks or talk show programmes hosting a live forum. Nguyen is right to argue that the media does not own the sole power to govern the public sphere given the fact that participatory media production can be thought of as providing the constituents of an alternative public sphere. The available channels easily accessed through the Internet use, have made it possible for individuals to network and contribute or respond to issues through emails, social media (Facebook or Twitter) in real-time. As mentioned later in this chapter on citizen journalism practices, some breaking stories are said to have been reported by citizen journalists and carried on mainstream media. This is the undeniable media shift compelling media organizations to accept use-generated content.

Various scholars, (Nguyen, 2006; Gillmore, 2006; Rosen, 2006; Banda, 2010) view the concept of citizen journalism variedly. Dan Gillmore (2004), one of the foremost proponents of citizen journalism, defines the concept as "journalism by the people for the people", made possible by technologies such as mail lists, chat rooms, blogs, SMS and mobile-connected cameras. These new channels of communication have enabled swift responses from the user who is now what Bruns (2008), refers to as an "active audience", than traditionally thought about.

Thurman, 2005, refers to citizen journalism as "participatory journalism", or "user-generated" content, which according to Kelly (2009), means, non journalists do the things that only journalists used to do: witnessing, reporting, capturing, writing and disseminating. He further argues that journalists must accept that the dynamic has changed. They must see the public as more than an inert, monolithic audience. "In essence this is making reference to the mass media diffusion model, (see figure 2 below) being challenged by the emergence of citizen journalism. Banda (2010),refers to citizen journalists as independent, freelancing reporters who should be referred to as accidental journalists who merely used a cell phone camera, for example, to photograph an incident and uploads the same in Facebook. He further categorizes this as non-institutional. This echoes James Hamilton's (2000) argument that such practices constitute de-professionalization. But Banda (2010), also makes reference to the institutional type in

which media institutions seem to be moving into the space created by non-institutional citizen journalists. The wave of technological change is inevitably forcing mainstream media to embrace citizen journalism given definite examples such as CNN *iReport* documented by Amani Channel. Jay Rosen (2008), one of the earliest proponents of public journalism, where professional journalists maintain their traditional role as gatekeeper, refers to citizen journalism as, when people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another. As mentioned earlier, the audience is now sharing the same platform, that of a public sphere, with the media.

This trend in journalism is one of the challenges most media institutions have to grapple with to find a balance in accepting new forms of delivering information to audiences while maintaining the traditional roles such as gate keeping. The concept of citizen journalism presents a reverse communication model of receiver being the source of information, not as Shannon envisaged in 1948.
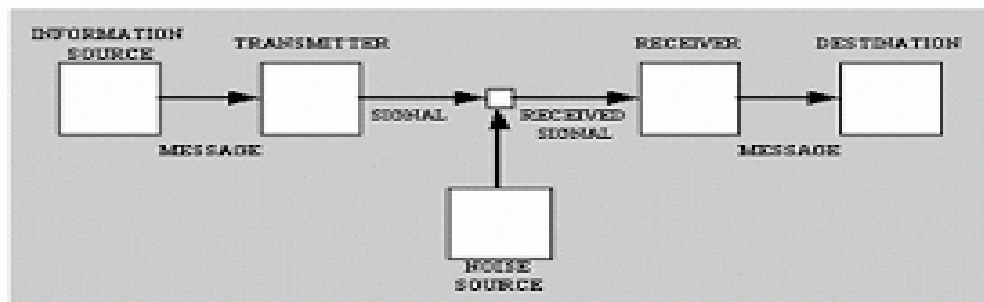

Figure 2.1: Shannon's (1948) model

This research project is not attempting to analyze the various terms used to describe participatory news gathering, but rather will examine how a mainstream public broadcasting television network gathers, selects and integrates user-generated news into

the broadcast news programmes, its news site, and interactivity in talk show programmes while still carrying out professional functions such as gate keeping.

2.3 The Internet and citizen journalism practices

Several studies have laid groundwork for this current study. David (2013), argues that, technology has made citizen journalism more accessible to people worldwide. Due to technology, citizens are able to report important news quicker than traditional media reports. The study by Channel (2010), on CNN's *iReport*, a citizen journalism online news adoption by the news network, offers a direction to research on how institutions originally regarded as traditional media are responding to the challenges presented by online communication. Is gate keeping still possible based on traditional practices of journalism? Although in his introduction, Channel (2010), asserts, research suggests that traditional gate keeping is being challenged by digital/new media, this study is incomplete without further research on a traditional media regarded as public and practicing public journalism under stringent communication protocols. By examining how such media embraces participatory journalism, in terms of instituted measures and controls in gate keeping, such further research will help researchers, as he concludes, possibly develop new models and hypotheses related to gate keeping theory.

Social media enable online community to produce and disseminate messages for public viewing (Gathii, 2010). Sites such as YouTube can be used for uploading and sharing video content. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and MySpace, provide people with personal information at a social or professional level. In her study on the impact of social media on traditional mass media functions, Gathii (2010) says that Royal Media Services uses some forms of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter and concludes that social media impacts traditional media functions to a small extent. As mainstream media embrace internet technology, and incorporate citizen journalism practices, traditional media functions are more likely to be disrupted even to a larger extent, given Brun's (2008) argument, that most of the industry has yet to develop strategies for addressing gate keeping challenges effectively. This research study will be a pointer to that direction.

Digitalization has changed the way broadcast news and talk show programmes are produced. Online news media have become a key part of social, economic and cultural life in many societies (Mitchelstein; Boczkowski, 2009). With today's technology (weblogs, chat rooms, message boards, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, and mobile telephony, among others), the citizen journalist movement has found new life as the average person can capture news and distribute it globally. Use of mobile telephones provides low-cost options for people to set up news operations. The telephones have the potential to transform reporting in the hands of the public.

Online communication dates back to eleven years ago in 1999 when the Indymedia movement began. Activists in Seattle protested against the World Trade Organization meeting that was taking place then (Meyer, 1995). These activists understood the only way they could get into the corporate media was blocking the streets. But a realization that a scant 60 seconds of coverage would show them being condoned off by the police but without any context to explain why they were protesting, made them create an alternative media model. That was the beginning of the Indy media movement (or Independent Media). Its growth has led to the creation of independent media centers in about 150 cities all over the world (Rabble, 2006; Holmes, 2009). Simultaneously, "journalism by the people" (Meyer, 1995) began to flourish enabled by emerging internet and networking technologies such as weblogs (blogs), chat rooms, message boards, wikis, and mobile computing.

In South Korea, Ohmy News, founded by Oh Yeon-ho in 2000, became popular and commercially successful with the motto, "Every Citizen is a Reporter" (Walker, 2004; Sutton, 2006; Hamilton and Kim, 2006). The staffs of 40 or more traditional reporters and editors write about 20 per cent of the content, with the rest coming from other freelance contributors who are mostly ordinary citizens. Ohmy News has an estimated 50,000 contributors (Walker, 2004), out of which 37,000 are registered (Banda, 2010). The independent media has been credited with transforming South Korea's Conservative Political environment.

During the 2004 United States presidential election, both the Democratic and Republican parties issued press credentials to citizen bloggers covering the Convention, marking a new level of influence and credibility for non-traditional journalists (Walker, 2004).

Other notable events accredited to citizen journalism include:

- Abraham Zapruder, who filmed the assassination of John F. Kennedy with a home-movie camera. Abraham is sometimes presented as an ancestor to citizen journalists.

- Egyptian citizen, Wael Abbas was awarded several international reporting prizes for his blog *Misr Digital* (Digital Egypt) and a video he publicized of two policemen beating a bus driver. This helped lead to their conviction. (http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2007/11/two-egyptian-po/)

- During September, 2011, many eyewitness accounts of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center came from citizen journalists. Images and stories offered content that played a major role in coverage of the disaster (Allan, 2001).

- In 2004, the 9.1 magnitude underwater earthquake that caused a huge tsunami in Banda Aceh Indonesia and across the Indian Ocean, was covered in real-time by a weblog-based virtual network of previously unrelated bloggers emergency. This became the vital source for the traditional media (Dameron, Kirk, 2007).

Other recent trends in citizen journalism record emergence of what blogger Jeff Jarvis terms *hyperlocal journalism* in which online news sites invite contributors from local residents of their subscription areas, who often report on topics that conventional newspapers tend to ignore (Walker, 2004).

The Star Newspaper in Kenya is cited as a mainstream paper which has tapped into citizen journalism (Economic Commission for Africa report; uneca.africa-devnet.org/news). This has been made possible by influx of mobile phones. According to the Communications Commission of Kenya quarterly report of 2012/2013, the total

number of mobile subscribers rose to 30.7 million (CCK, 2013). This growth has brought with it mobile phone brands that are affordable and can access internet easily, allowing people to engage more in social media platforms. Thurman and Hermida, while making an observation on British newspapers, noted a similar trend of mainstream news media adopting practices of participatory journalism (Thurman and Hermida, 2008). The Star newspaper reporter, Dickens Olewe, in the article, *Newspaper taps into citizen journalism,* says, "the mobile phones have empowered citizens to record videos, take pictures and type their own stories which they are willing to share with traditional media or post in blogs and social media" platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Through the Star Report project, the newspaper now partners with the public. The platform allows the user to create their story and share it with people in Kenya.

The use of mobile devices has also contributed to the growth of YouTube use. There are quite a number of YouTube sites where international and local mainstream media upload selected video clips. CCN had, for example, by March 22nd, 2013 uploaded 46,290 stories on Kenya (www.youtube.com). Nation Television (NTV) had uploaded 21,874 videos by 14th May, 2013 (www.youtube.com); Kenya Television Network (KTN) uploaded 19,975 videos by 19th December, 2012 (www.youtube.com); and Abn Digital uploaded 16,249 videos by 7th March, 2013 (www.youtube.com). Other sites include: Jewish News One, Chikorital News and Sabahi Online (www.youtube.com) among others.

Tumbo (2010), while referring to social media in Kenya, argues there is influx of social platforms on mainstream media. Media personalities are on Twitter and Facebook and ask people to like them on their Facebook pages and follow them on Twitter. Some television stations have a presence on YouTube in order to build their communities online. He further argues that building an online community is becoming an essential aspect of mainstream media as an outlet for them (Tumbo, 2010).

The following examples show case what proponents of citizen journalism have noted as advantages amidst criticisms of scholars who view the phenomenon as disadvantageous:

- Through blogs citizen journalists have broken stories about political corruption, police brutality and other issues of concern to local and national communities

(www.educause.edu/eli). Some citizen journalists are making it a point to generate quality content given mainstream media collaboration. For example, the Bloggers Association of Kenya (www.Kenyanbestforum.com), is a community organization that represents a group of Kenyan online content creators and seeks to empower online content creation and improve the quality of content created on the web. Christians et al., (2009) argue that bloggers cannot be ignored as their opinions contribute to the radical role of the media in participatory democracy. It is this radicalism which turns some professional journalists into bloggers, a justification of freedom of publication which perhaps they cannot exercise given media organization editorial policies, and existing regulatory laws. Atton, (2009), argues the blog has become both an alternative and a mainstream practice; and that this demonstrates the contested nature of media power (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009).

- Embedded reporting – citizen journalists are on the scene.

- Regular journalists often can't access a crisis/conflict scene immediately or at all due to danger.

- On the ground perspective, rather than traditional reporting which reports at arms length.

- Personal, raw, revealing-compelling reportage.

- Easy access to other witnesses.

- Event reported as it happens immediately (e.g. London bombings 2011; Sept. 11 US terrorist attack; Pakistan Floods, 2010; Tsunamis 2009; Nairobi bomb blast 1998; Ethiopian hijacked Airline crash off the coast of Comoros, 1993).

Criticism of citizen journalism

Although citizen journalism is an inevitable and acceptable infiltration in communication, new technologies have been noted as threats (DeFleur and Dennis, 2002, Mcquail 2005,

Singer 2013). Social media scholars like Mathilda (2004), Katz (2006), Mcquail (2005), Pateno and Burnett (2006), allege that the new social media can push the old media into oblivion. They contend that journalism as a profession seems to be threatened as the public allegedly adopts the role of journalists, bridging the professional sphere with those of amateurs. According to Banda (2010), this has been perpetuated by the fact the traditional media are recognizing the potential of cyberspace. Many broadcasters now invite ordinary people to become ireporter and encourage them to send video images which the broadcaster transmits. This is a threat to professionalism knowing citizens have not acquired journalistic skills, hence referring to them as amateurs is justifiable. Banda (2010) argues, citizen journalism has raised many questions on public legitimacy, among them: who authorizes and legitimizes citizen journalism? How are citizen journalists to be held accountable to the public good? Is there enough justification for some form of institutional constraint upon citizen journalism? Some of these questions are relevant in this study seeking to establish the impact of citizen journalism on some of the traditional roles of a journalist such as gate keeping.

Mary Lou Fulton, the publisher of the Northwest voice in Bakersfield, California critics that "instead of being the gate keeper, telling people that what is important to them isn't news, we are just opening up the gates and letting people come on in" (Glacer, 2004). This argument reflects on what Bruns (2008) refers to as "gate-watching". Bruns maybe making reference to the traditional gate keepers of news or current affairs programme producers publicizing information rather than publishing it. In his criticism of gate keeping, Bruns argues the community of bloggers, citizen journalists, commentators, activists and others, provide an alternative interpretation of the day's events and provide further related (and often contradicting) information (Bruns, 2008). He further argues this is not a matter of gate keeping in any traditional sense of the word. Based on Bruns argument, Atton asserts that alternative media construct a reality that appears to oppose the conventions and representations of the mainstream media (Atton, 2009).

In essence society and its institutions are dynamic and media is therefore not exceptional. Social change is inevitable with the emergence of disruptive technology, such as the mobile telephone, *ipads* and tablets, among others at the disposal of citizens. Hence, their

participation in the media represent social change. Atton argues, participatory, amateur media production contests the concentration of institutional and professional media power and challenges the media monopoly.

The media is today faced with challenges created by technology and proliferation of media as opposed to *de facto* media structures existing before the advent of the internet and computers. And such challenges to professional practices as gate keeping, present ways of re-imagining professional journalism. Atton does not view citizen journalism as a threat, he instead sees values of what he calls cultural journalism such as we find in bloggers and fans who contribute to events. He finds a valuable correlation between what mainstream media do when sourcing for views of ordinary people through vox pop interviews as expert sources, and what citizens do on their own as alternative media (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). To include the voices of the people, he contends, is an ethical decision that considers the local community as important. Citizen journalism practices as cited in the examples of CNN's *iReport, The Star News Paper Report* of Kenya, *Ohmy NEWS* of South Korea, among other contributions, exemplify giving a voice to the community, and also indicate the nature of the challenges that alternative journalism presents to the mainstream media given the variety of sources of news provided by citizens as breaking news long before mainstream media can report it.

The phenomenon of citizen journalism continues to generate debate among scholars as it challenges the rules and routines of normalized and professionalized practices such as gate keeping; a welcome point of entry for the study of participatory media work as it evolves at news organizations large and small alike.

Gate keeping in the digital age

Gate keeping is traditionally the process by which the many messages in the world are reduced by news decision makers and shared with the public (Shoemaker, 1991). Their job of selecting and shaping the small amount of information that becomes news would be impossible without gate keeping. It is the process of selecting, writing, editing, shaping, manipulation, repetition, localization, disregard and channeling of information (Nahan, 2009). Gate keeping dates back to 1947 when psychologist Kurt Lewin noted

that information (in reference to news) flows through the "gate" and that individuals control what flows through the "gate" (Lewin, 1947). In 1950, David White Manning propounded on the idea when he questioned an editor's decision to reject an article that had been submitted for publication. Consequently, he developed it into a journalistic theory. The Gate keeping theory, therefore, advocates that media organizations use "gate" keepers to standardize, filter and determine which information should be accessed by audiences through the available channels of communication: radio, television, print and the internet.

Shoemaker et al (1991), contend gate keepers take many forms, for example: people (who can be producers, sub-editors, reporters, managing editors, among others), professional codes of conduct (including media ethics), company policies, and computer algorithms (sets of formula that translate the company's gate keeping policies into computer instructions) to select news items for readers of the news Web page for example, news.google.com (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, (2009). Shoemaker et al (1991), add that algorithms are the product of many decisions from the level of management to code writers. Hence, Google News represents a seemingly objective information for readers. Similarly, gate keeping by the media personnel in mainstream channels denotes some level of influence from management that sets up policies as guidelines of operation and these become like a rule of thumb that journalists subconsciously apply on news items. The symbiotic relationship between the professional journalistic codes of ethics (objectivity, fairness, accuracy and balance), and organizational policies, contribute to the subjectivity of the gate keeper who operates through these direct means to ensure that only news and information consistent with organizational policy gets to audiences.
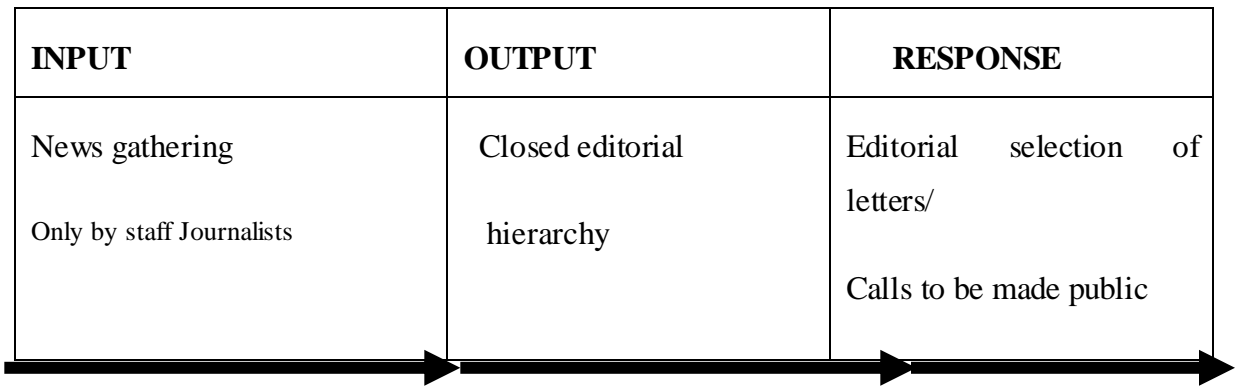
INPUT	OUTPUT	RESPONSE
News gathering Only by staff Journalists	Closed editorial hierarchy	Editorial selection of letters/ Calls to be made public

Figure 2.2.Traditional News Process

Source: Bruns (2008)

It is deemed that is done in public interest and therefore represents what the community shall hear as a fact given the acceptance by the community that the newsman is a representative of its culture. (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009).

According to Bruns (2005), there are three 'gates'. The *input* stage where news and information allowed into the news production process. The second stage is the *output* where news reports emerge into the media; and the last and third stage, *Response,* occurring after the publication of initial news reports (audience responses e.g. letters to the editor) are accepted or rejected for publication. Each of these bottlenecks, Bruns (2005) adds, exist in journalistic tradition. The content that is disseminated is tightly policed to be relevant for the intended audience. This process of selection is what he refers to as gate keeping, not applicable to new media.

Under the new media phenomenon, gate keeping has taken on new references. It is no longer understood as solely a matter of selection at the levels of an individual, the routines or practices of journalism, the organization, the extra-media (journalists have to keep monitoring what competitors have), and the social system (the socio-economic, political and cultural set-ups); (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). Today the term gate keeping has a "wider potential application since it can apply to the work of literary agents and publishers, and to many kinds of editorial and production work in print and television. It applies to decisions about distribution and marketing of existing media products (for instance films). In a wider sense it refers to the power to give or withhold

access to different voices in society" (McQuail, 2005, 308). The citizen in this case, represents the inferred voices that traditional media has in the history of communication designated to the receiving end.

In the wake of internet communication, scholars have developed diverse views on gate keeping and exposed its weaknesses of implying there being only one initial gate, a selection criteria of an individual journalist and the tendency to individualize decision-making. In subsequent research, many factors have been established as part of influences to the initial concept of gate keeping. Shoemaker (1991), draws attention to the role of advertisers, public relations, pressure groups, and varied sources of news (*my own suggestion*, such as citizen journalism) that contribute to the process. These forces limit the autonomy of individual gate keepers. In addition to the greater dependence on advertising likely to contribute to more positive coverage (and less negative) coverage of business (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009), the proprietor demand scan also influence gate keeping, given the decisions of the media owner on a particular message to be disseminated. Singer (2006), wrote that the proliferation of information on the internet has diminished the power of journalism's gatekeepers, but journalists can still serve a role in sorting, interpreting, and lending credibility to news on behalf of the public. According to Bruns (2005), this is impractical and he instead refers to gate keeping as "gate watching", given the fact that news users engaged in organizing available news stories from a multitude of channels, have no ability to control the gates of any of the channels. The gates have multiplied beyond all control. However, Singer argues users are now secondary gatekeepers of the content published on media websites which digital news editors assess leading to selective-re-dissemination of that content (Singer, 2013).

This latest finding somewhat dispels the use of the term "gate watching", given that vetting of news materials is still being done by online editors. The extent to which this is being done is the essence of this study. Although Channel (2010) indicates that CNN *iReport* allows the public to share and submit "unfiltered" content, and only vetted submissions that are deemed newsworthy can then be broadcasted across networks, and published on CNN.com; he is not categorical about what Singer (2013) is referring to as secondary gate keeping ; a new finding giving direction on gate keeping theory.

Domingo et al., (2008), conclude that gate keeping is in two categories. The first is weblogs produced by the public outside media companies, and the second are those produced by professional staff journalists. These to a certain extent resemble news journalism. Meaning, such bloggers will automatically apply the journalistic skills on the blogs.

In what Christians, et al (2009) refers to as civic democracy, a citizen has a right to contribute to democracy through content of choice. This means the media, away from the norm of providing higher quality information and news, has to open their channels to more voices, to listen to the concerns of citizens and reflect them. In essence the public too can demand the relevant content to be provided by the media. Hence citizen journalism could just be fulfilling that salient role.

Normative Theory

This theory is concerned with examining or prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained (McQuail, 2005). This theory is important because it plays a part in shaping and legitimating media institutions. The starting point for considering the aspect of legitimacy is the quality of what is being published and the many possible consequences of publication. Legitimate media performance is therefore founded on non inclusion of reputational harm, breach of property rights, offence to decency, and violation of privacy or confidentiality. According to Christians et al, (2009), other presumably unintended harmful effects often attributed to the media include violence and sexual morality. A society's normative theories concerning its own media are usually found in laws, regulations, media policies, and codes of ethics (McQuail, 2005). Such media most often face widespread restrictions politically instigated by governments wishing to have checks and balances on society's morals and cultures. These restrictions are applicable to media regarded as national and are obligated to responsibly provide diverse information, opinion and culture. This is the basis upon which the then Voice of Kenya, now KBC-the subject of study-was founded; making this theory applicable to the study.

Philosophical debates have raged on among scholars on ways in which public communication should be carried out. The result has been the evolution of four traditions: corporatist, libertarian, social responsibility, and citizen participation (Christians, et al., 2009), referred to as the normative theories of the media. The corporatist tradition expects the media to be cooperative in matters of national interest and in relation to other social institutions such as religion, education, and the family. A corporatist worldview expects a media that is more respectful of authority and less critical of economic enterprise and socio-political structures. Such media are likely to face high degree of centralized control, mainly the government. In the libertarian tradition, the media is expected to uphold freedom of expression (Christians et al., 2009). This tradition has its foundation on the values and norms of the entrepreneurial class during the Renaissance period, who believed individuals could freely own and owners could use the media freely for whatever purpose they wished within the law. They believed the claim to liberty is paramount and absolute. This tradition is embedded in the free market concept which does not expect any controls and therefore gives no room for external accountability.

The enemy of liberty was therefore, government and state given the laws and regulations instituted upon the media operations. This lack of accountability can be argued distracts the masses from serious scrutiny of a system which exploits and oppresses them (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). The press needed to be free to deliver credible information to audiences. The wave of democratization of the 1990s saw the collapse of state socialism and the consolidation of capitalism worldwide (Banda, 2010). This was also the spread of the free market concept particularly in African systems where governments were changing from authoritarian to liberal forms of democracy. Institutions such as media as "fourth estate" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009), had to play a "watchdog role" by providing a check on excesses of state power. This realization is what evolved into social responsibility.

The social responsibility tradition retains freedom as the basic principle for organizing public communication, but views the public or community as having some rights and legitimate expectations of adequate service (Christians et al., 2009).In other words, it was freedom with responsibility to monitor the provision of services (education, health,

transport, among others), promised by national governments. In so doing, the media themselves are expected to develop self-regulatory mechanisms of accountability in response to demands from the public or the government. Hence professionalism, said to play a key part in the process, embracing press laws, and the founding of publicly owned media, especially public service broadcasting, are measures of accountability. Given freedoms of the press and expression, the need to balance these freedoms came to light during this tradition. The media industries have responded by employing professional staff who have knowledge on the codes of ethics as guidelines on how to operate as well as instituting regulating bodies to keep checks and balances on responsible freedom. However, this has remained a hurdle to find a balance between freedom and control, self-regulation and public regulation.

As mentioned earlier, media operations, particularly gate keeping, face external influences such as advertisers who influence what information should be disseminated to the audiences to the detriment of self-regulation. In Kenya, for example, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) which is a regulatory body, handles complaints from the public citing lack of ethical standards on certain transmissions having no respect for both national culture and cultural diversity. The social responsibility theory holds that everyone who has something to say should be allowed a forum and that if the media do not assume their obligation, somebody must see to it that they do. As the fourth estate, therefore, the media is controlled, among other controls, by community opinion. This normative theory addresses the problem of this study on control measures likely to be instituted on news and information, given widespread citizen participation in the media, and the choice of a public service broadcasting media (KBC) obligated to uphold social responsibility requirements mentioned above.

The citizen participation tradition can be traced to the alternative presses and the free radio of the 1960s and 1970s which were grassroots activist media (Christians et al., 2009). This tradition mainly focuses on the local community. It gave rise to what is today commonly referred to as community radio. The basis of legitimacy for this tradition, is the idea that the media belong to the people. Even large scale media can have a concerned and responsive attitude to their audiences and encourage feedback and

interactivity. They can employ participatory formats and engage in surveys and debates that are genuinely intended to involve citizens (Christians, et al., 2009). The community concept has now been enhanced due to technological advancement, giving citizens free airwaves to contribute to content and have their voices heard in what has been variedly termed as citizen participation or citizen journalism.

In his exploratory study of citizen journalism in Africa, Banda (2010) argues that citizen journalists work without rigid system of certification under which trained journalists execute their duties. A citizen journalist is not bound by the concept of normative rules or appropriate behavior (Banda, 2010) much needed to maintain institutional mandate. This means the press is not free to do as it wills; it is obligated to respond to society's needs. The government may involve itself in media operations by issuing regulations if public interest is not being adequately addressed. The media therefore, has a responsibility to preserve democracy by properly informing the public. He further states that mass media institutions are associated with institutionalized practices of journalism; and that "citizen journalism would thus rightly fit into a frame of practice that would conflict with the historically grounded ways of practicing journalism" (Banda, 2010, 22).

With the proliferation of the internet, it is becoming difficult for the media to choose or avoid roles in society as they wish given citizens' participation in what Christians et al., (2009) refer to as alternative media. In a democracy one of the roles the media is supposed to play is the watchdog role to keep the government accountable on its promises to citizens, failure to which the media should presume the radical role. This role is a clear departure from collaboration with authority and the media should provide a platform for views and voices that are critical of authority and the established order. Participatory democracy is only possible if freedom of publication exists. Any attempt to suppress this leads to formation of alternative means of expression or what has been referred to earlier as alternative media. Advancement in technology and internet use has therefore enhanced citizen participation as part of civic democracy.

The social responsibility theory, one of the normative theories of the media, is applicable in this study attempting to find out how KBC as a public service media station, mandated

to disseminate information to audiences in public interest, and also operating under government instigated legislations and procedures, is responding to the emergence of citizen journalism which is online communication regarded by some scholars (Singer, 2006; Rosen, 2006; Williams and Carpini, 2004; Bruns, 2005; Hamady, 2008, Shoemaker, 2008; DeFleur and Dennis, 2002; MacQuail 2005; Singer,2013) as a threat to traditional media structures such as gate keeping. Before explaining the research methods that will be used in this study, a brief background of KBC is important.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation is what can be referred to as a traditional mass media with radio stations and a television channel to disseminate information to the public. According to Chomsky (1997) argument it can also be mainstream (see definition of terms). The then Voice of Kenya at independence, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) had its name transformed through the KBC Act 1989, when the pressure to liberalize the economy was brought to bear (Oriare, 2010). Liberalizations of the airwaves began in the 1990s. However, KBC's mandate remained government mouthpiece providing information, education and entertainment (Githaiga, 2010) to the public. The Kenya Broadcasting station is the only broadcaster in Kenya with a nationwide network for both radio and television, including services to remote rural areas (Githaiga, 2010). KBC runs two national public radio services, *Idhaa ya Taifa* (Kiswahili service)and KBC English service. *Channel One* is the public service television station. The broadcaster also broadcasts in 19 languages run as regional services. These services are governed by legislation stipulated in the KBC Act that KBC is established to assume the Government functions of producing and broadcasting programmes or parts of programmes by sound or television.

The Corporation is to provide the audience with innovative high quality programmes, as well as promote the universal access to information for all through provision of free to air services (www.kbc.co.ke). In 2008, the KBC board adopted a Journalistic Standards and Practices Guideline (Editorial Policy), which affirms the broadcaster's commitment to upholding the highest editorial and ethical standards in the provision of news and

programmes for radio and television (Githaiga, 2010). As a mainstream media, and a public service broadcaster in a competitive liberalized economy, it is necessary to find out how KBC television is responding to elements of citizen journalism, such as Twitter, Facebook, amateur videos taken using mobile phone cameras as sources of news in their news and current affairs programmes. Gate keeping and normative theoretical frameworks will inform my study to determine if the existence of the editorial policy is enabling effective gate keeping based on traditional practices.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that the researcher used to collect data from the population on study. The chapter discusses the research design to be adopted, target population for the study, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection methods, data validity and reliability, data collection procedures, procedures for data analysis and ethical issues in research.

3.1 Research Design

Mugenda, (2003) asserts that it is not only the quantitative research method that can be used given the fact that for a long time researchers have relied on statistical numbers of charts and graphs which are said to be more convincing. Today qualitative method is now being used in social and human rights phenomena. According to the proponents, the method gives the respondents a chance to state their problems the way they perceive them. It also allows in-depth investigations especially if the research tools like questionnaires with open ended questions are used.

This case study was guided by qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine the impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping process. Qualitative method allowed the researcher to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively (Mugenda, 2003), since case studies are said to be in-depth investigations which seek to describe a unit in detail in context and holistically. Qualitative methods emphasize the experience of media producers and an internal approach to understanding the culture of participants and a search for the meaningfulness of production as a process (Jensen, 1991). The case study of the Kenya Broadcasting provided in-depth citizen journalism practices and how these are being treated by editors as gate keepers. An investigation on elements of citizen journalism on KBC news and a talk show programme was carried out through in-depth personal interviews of key informants and questionnaires as primary data. Secondary data was obtained from observation checklists investigating elements of citizen journalism on news and talk show programmes on the screen during transmission.

Focus group discussion with six respondents drawn from an index of all respondents selected randomly from the defined departments was used.

3.2 Research Site

The research was carried out in Nairobi at KBC newsroom and programme transmission which includes the screen (display for the programmes likely to contain elements of citizen journalism). Although KBC has the largest coverage network in Kenya, (Githaiga, 2010) and any of its sites could be representative, the sampling of Nairobi is purposive as this is the decision-making site where managers charged with editorial policies on content are to be found. Producers of talk show programmes are also based in Nairobi to provide personal interviews. All these were accessible to the researcher. KBC represents a typical traditional media with obligated norms.

3.3 Study Population

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation has 19 regional and two national radio stations, and a TV channel. The TV channel is the object of study due to the graphic and visual nature of television likely to display aspects of new media. The choice of news programme has been guided by gate keeping as the theoretical framework used in the study of news by the proponents (Lewin, 1947); White, 1950; Shoemaker, 1991). The talk show programmes are current affairs programmes where participatory journalism is likely to occur. The study population included all staff of television departments which contribute to news and programme making: technical, production, programming (previewing), design and newsroom. These have a total population of 253 people. The specific target population drawn from the overall population included previewers, reporters, news editors, camera persons, video editors, presenters, and programme producers.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The research used extreme case purposive and stratified sampling of respondents who have the knowledge on the objectives of the research and can therefore respond. These are news editors, reporters, video editors and programme producers who are directly

concerned with the selection of the content deemed important to audiences. They are also active participants in the organization under study.

3.4.1 Sample size

The population of news reporters and producers, video/news editors, programmers, camera persons is 253 in total. Fifteen per cent (40 respondents) of the target population was drawn randomly from a listing of all the professional staff representing the job descriptions of the respondents concerned with news and programme making. Fifteen per cent of the accessible population is enough for the intended descriptive study and was representative and give minimal sampling error. Personal interviews were carried out with editorial and programme managers as key informants. Further detailed data was derived from questionnaires which were distributed to the rest of the target population described in the study population. For key informants guide, six respondents representing the six departments were randomly selected from a listing of departments for equal representation.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research used questionnaires, interview schedules, observation and focus group discussion. Questions included the challenges poised by technology (internet, mobile phone among others) in determining control measures on applied citizen elements. Producers were asked what steps they carry out during a live call-in (for example) to ensure ethical standards are maintained as a mark of social responsibility.

The interviews provided factual data that is focused because the researcher was in control asking definite questions for definite answers. Skewed responses were unlikely. The questionnaires provided in-depth information upon which data was analyzed. Researcher ensured 100% distribution through e-mail and hard copy delivery with the help of a research assistant with whom the researcher ensured there was follow-up to receive at least 75% response for data analysis. The observation provided data obtained by the researcher by directly observing the screen to determine elements of citizen journalism during transmission. This was done on purposively selected programmes of news at 9 pm because this is the peak viewing time when the audience is larger and observation of

citizen journalism elements was possible. The other selected programme, the daily Good Morning Kenya at 8:00 am, represents a current affairs information programme likely to have live call-ins and other citizen journalism elements. The key informant interview had a moderator who was conversant with the topic of study and who remained objective as she guided the interview.

3.6 Data collection and Analysis

Research instruments were administered to the respondents. Raw data was collected and where necessary coded appropriately to conceal respondents' identities. An observation check list was used during a week-long collection of data on the transmission screen on elements of citizen reports/contributions. For qualitative research, data was analyzed, coded and organized into themes and concepts upon which generalizations were formulated. For quantitative results data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 17, to yield descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.7 Data Presentation and Interpretation

Data needs to be processed before it is presented. According to (Kombo and Tromp, 2006), raw data has to be put into some systematic form. The researcher sorted out raw data according to the information relevant to the challenges of citizen journalism and developed syntax to eliminate unsuitable data. The researcher eliminated unsuitable data, rejected contradictory data and ignored ambiguous answers. Data was presented in charts and tables showing percentages and frequencies of observed cases.

3.8 Ethical Issues

Kombo and Tromp (2006) assert that in data analysis and presentation, a researcher should maintain integrity. The data presented was devoid of the interests of the organization (IAWRT) that supported the researcher financially to undertake this study. IAWRT strictly empowers women by supporting their professional advancement. Hence no data interpretation was skewed towards any private interests including those of the case study. Data was honest and objective as per the findings. As a researcher, honesty was necessary in explaining any errors/biases met during data analysis. Confidentiality of

respondents was maintained as per the research instruments used and the researcher ensured data is available for analysis by other responsible parties.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The study sampled 40 respondents from the target population in which 37 of them completely filled the questionnaire hence a response rate of 92.5%. The characteristics of the study respondents are presented in the first part of this chapter. The second part involved descriptive statistics to determine the Impact of Citizen Journalism on Gate keeping Process.

4.2 Research Findings

4.2.1 Characteristics of the respondents

From the study, majority of the respondents (59.5%) were male while the remainder 40.5% were their female counterparts. Most of the study respondents (54.1%) were aged between 25-31 years. It was also observed that a good number of the respondents (27%) were over 46 years of age while the minority (2.7%) were in the age bracket of 32-38. Almost three quarters of the participants (70.3%) were diploma holders while the minority (5.4%) had pursued post graduate studies. Slightly above half of the respondents (54.1%) were from the production department while the minority of the respondents (8.1%) were from newsroom. Majority of the study respondents (51.4%) reported that production was their current duty while a few of the respondents were web editors (2.7%).

Table 4.1: Profile of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	22	59.5
Female	15	40.5
Age		
18-24	3	8.1
25-31	20	54.1
32-38	1	2.7
39-45	3	8.1
46 and above	10	27.0
Educational level		
Diploma	26	70.3
Graduate	9	24.3
Post-graduate	2	5.4
Department in which you are employed		
Technical	14	37.8
Production	20	54.1
Newsroom	3	8.1
Current Duties		
News reporter	2	5.4
Producer	19	51.4
Presenter	2	5.4
Video editor	3	8.1
News editor	6	16.2
Camera person	4	10.8
Web editor	1	2.7

4.2.2 Impact of Citizen Journalism

Respondents were asked to state whether they had ever heard of citizen journalism before and more than three quarters (89%) of them reported yes. The question further asked those that had heard of citizen journalism to explain what they understood by it. Majority of the respondents reported that citizen journalism is ordinary citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting and disseminating news and information. Some of the respondents understood citizen journalism to entail members of public (non-journalists) reporting issues happening around them. Others were of the opinion that citizen journalism is getting news from non-traditional sources like social media while others took it to be involvement of the members of public in giving their opinions to the media. In addition others explained that citizen journalism involved members of public

sending news to the media by application of the technology while others said it was the general public commenting on the broadcasting issues like programmes.

Figure 4.1: Have you heard of citizen journalism?
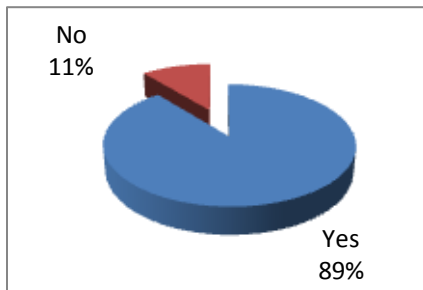
Respondents were asked to state the elements of citizen journalism that were contained in news. Majority of the respondents (87%) reported Facebook and short messages services were the main aspects of citizen journalism contained in news. News group (11%) and mail lists (16%) and wikis (16%) were the least aspects of citizen journalism in news reported.

Figure 4.2: What elements of citizen journalism are contained in news?
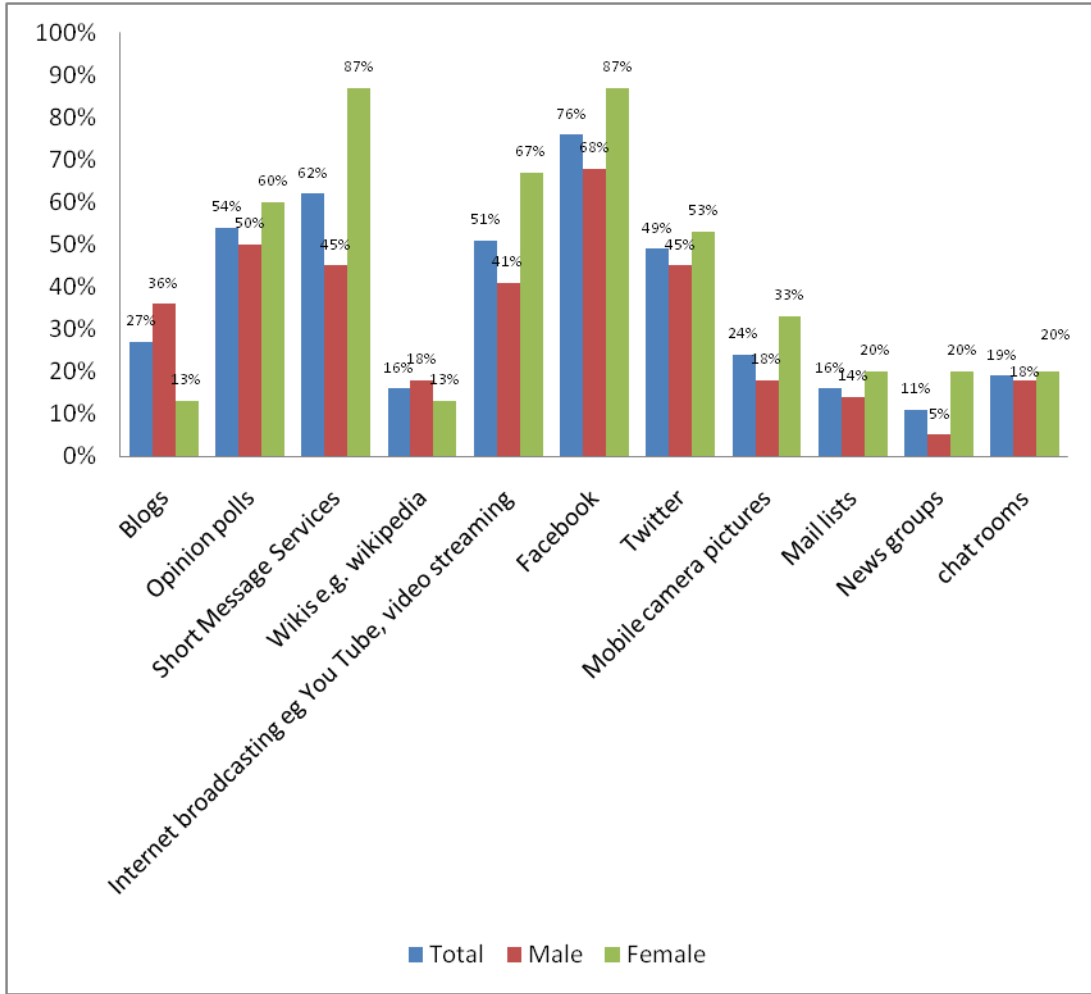
Respondents were asked to state the elements of citizen journalism contained in Good Morning Kenya programme. Majority of the respondents reported that SMS (89%) were the main aspects of citizen journalism contained in Good Morning, followed by opinion polls (66%). A few of the respondents (39%) reported twitter.

Figure 4.3: Elements of citizen journalism contained in Good Morning Kenya
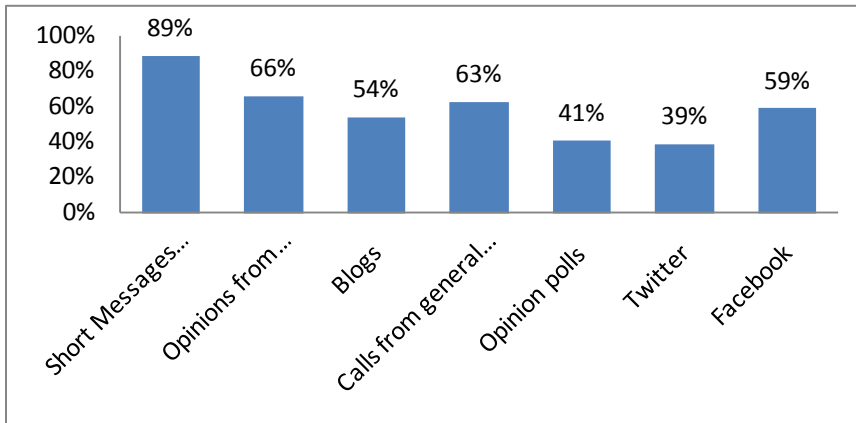
Respondents were asked to state the challenges that manifest during the dissemination of the information from citizen reports. Majority of the respondents reported that citizens reports were inaccurate and in most cases difficult to verify. Citizens' reports were also reported to have poor quality pictures due to poor quality gadgets used and lack of training in photo shooting. Some of the respondents also felt that citizen reports were expensive to disseminate and others reported lack of objectivity in the reports.

Figure 4.4: Challenges in dissemination of information from citizen reports
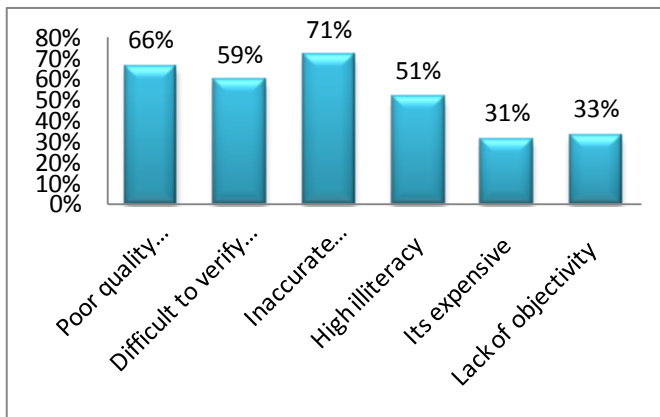
Respondents were asked to state whether it is necessary to have guidelines in handling challenges. Majority of the respondents (93%) felt that it was necessary to have guidelines in handling challenges while a few felt otherwise. Those who said yes were asked to state the nature of the guidelines. Majority of them were of the opinion that the guidelines should be in line with the editorial policy while others felt that there should be

a consensus between editors to disregard images and messages that are not clear. Other respondents proposed that media houses should not rely much on citizen news while others were of the opinion that media houses should strive to obtain the full story from the public and only post what is credible.

Figure 4.5: Are any guidelines necessary in handling challenges?
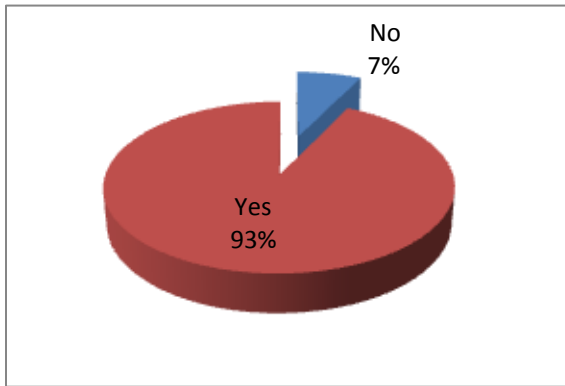
Respondents were asked to state whether KBC had guidelines on dissemination of information to the public. Majority of the respondents (89%) reported yes while a few (11%) were not aware of such guidelines in KBC. Those who reported of the presence of guidelines reported that KBC had a unit for censoring programmes while others reported that chief news editor verifies content before broadcasting. Others said that sensitive information is not given to the public while others reported there being code of ethics that is observed by journalists and media practitioners.

Figure 4.6: Does KBC have guidelines on dissemination of information to the public?
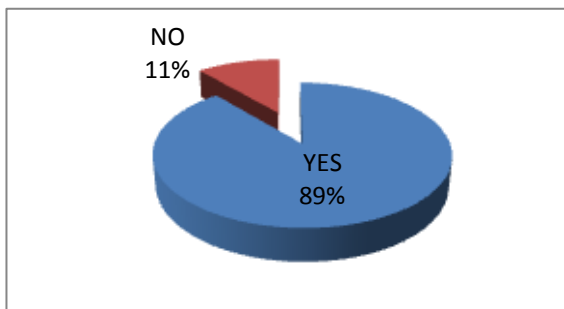
Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they think guidelines can affect dissemination of information to the public by KBC, given citizen journalism practices.

Majority of the respondents (54.1%) reported that the guidelines can affect dissemination of information to the public highly while the minority (2.7%) felt that the effect would be low. Those that reported high effects explained that guidelines are based on ethics and professionalism and thus can bar many citizens from sending the information if they do not meet the standards. Others felt that it's hard to regulate what callers will say while on air. Others felt that guidelines could help improve the quality of product emanated from the citizens while others felt that guidelines would ensure factual, accurate, balanced, respectful and objective information would be obtained from the general public.

Figure 4.7: Extent guidelines can affect dissemination of information to the public
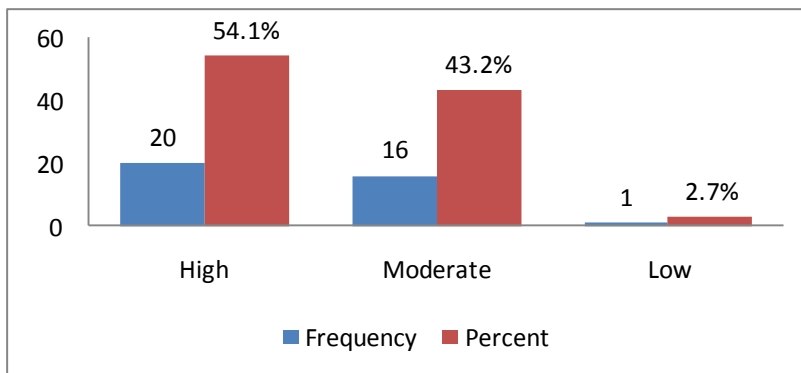
Respondents were asked to state whether citizen journalism reports/contributions should be allowed in news and current affairs programmes such as talk shows. Majority of the respondents (83.3%) said yes. Those that reported yes explained that one could weigh what is right and wrong while others felt that talk shows are more interesting and appealing when citizens are allowed to participate. Those that said no felt that citizen journalism can bring contentious issues making talk shows lack focus and objectivity.

Figure 4.8: Should citizen journalism reports/contributions be allowed in news and current affairs programmes such as talk shows?
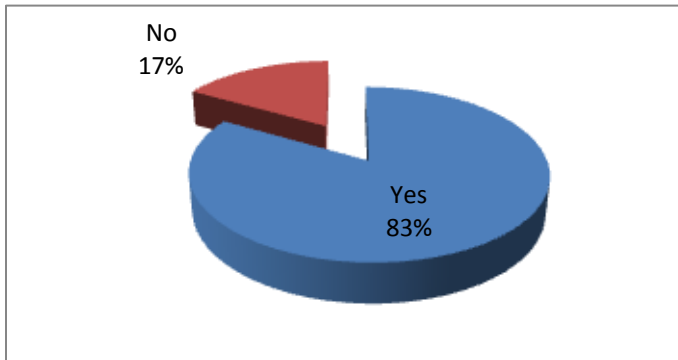
Respondents were asked whether citizen journalism should be a subject of study in journalism training schools. Majority of the respondents (84%) felt that citizen journalism should be incorporated in journalism training schools while a few (16%) felt otherwise. Those that reported yes said that the training will enable journalism students acquire skills on how to handle information from non-traditional journalist sources. In addition others felt that the training will enable journalism students to understand when and up to what level to include citizen journalism in broadcasting. Others felt the training would be necessitated by the fact that traditional media has been replaced by social media and therefore the training would help the trainees handle challenges that may arise from the citizen participants. Those who felt the training was not important explained that it would be difficult to draw the line between professional journalism and citizen journalism and the training could likely annihilate the profession.

Figure 4.9: Do you think citizen journalism should be a subject of study in journalism training schools?
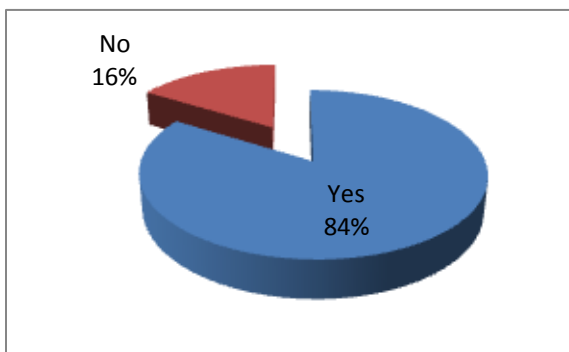
4.3 Discussion of Findings

The key findings of this study are discussed in the following subheadings.

4.3.1 Elements of Citizen Journalism at KBC

Almost all of the study respondents reported to have heard of citizen journalism. These results are in agreement with those of David (2013), who found that technology has made citizen journalism more accessible to people worldwide.

Most of the study respondents attempted to define citizen journalism. Majority of the respondents defined citizen journalism to be ordinary citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting and disseminating news and information. This definition is similar to that of Hamilton (2000) who defined citizen journalism as ordinary people not relying on the mass media for information, but using the tools of the press within their possession to participate in media production as amateurs. Some of the respondents defined citizen journalism to be ordinary people reporting issues happening around them. This definition is similar to that of Singer (2006) who defined it as participatory news or participatory journalism in which news users take an active part in the news gathering process, working with journalism professionals to distribute the content.

Facebook was the element of citizen journalism reported by most of the respondents followed by SMS. The main elements of citizen journalism contained in Good Morning Kenya programme is SMS and opinion polls from most of the respondents. Taking two steps back to look at the development of citizen journalism in a larger context, a number of interviewees agreed that technology has truly been the driving force behind citizen journalism. These findings are similar to those of Mathilda (2004), who concluded that technology is a facilitator for moving information. With that in mind, it is clear that citizen journalism is, in fact, an extension of the rise of a participatory culture enabled by new communication networks (technology). As such, citizen journalism is inevitable, a part of the evolution of media. This realization shifts the conversation about citizen

journalism from one debating its pros and cons, to one acknowledging that it is here to stay and figuring out the best way to embrace and integrate citizen journalism.

4.3.2 Challenges presented by citizen journalism

Majority of the respondents reported that citizens' reports were inaccurate and in most cases difficult to verify. Nguyen (2006) reported that journalism's first obligation is to tell the truth, which is closely linked to the third principle that the essence of journalism is a discipline of verification. The emphasis on factuality is the biggest obstacle citizen journalism faces. Without a weighty masthead or palpable finished product, they are categorically dismissed as off the-cuff commentary. Without editors, fact checkers, or multiple drafts, they can be viewed as unfounded gossip. In this instance validity can be linked to formality.

Citizens' reports were also reported to have poor quality pictures due to poor quality gadgets used and lack of training in photo shooting.

Citizen journalism was reported to face the problem of lack of confidentiality of some information. Burden (2008) defined invasion of privacy as the publishing of information regarding those aspects of an individual's personal life, sexual relationships, marriage, health, which have no demonstrable bearing on any public position they might hold, when no statutory offense has been committed. Unjustified media intrusion and exposing of intimate details of individuals in the media is unethical because there are aspects which people would want to hide because these would discredit them in the eyes of others. From this study citizen journalism was observed to contradict Davies (2008) definition of journalism which pointed out that one shouldn't be writing about anybody's private life at all unless there is some really powerful public need.

Most of the respondents argued that citizen journalism in most cases was unethical. Ethics of citizen journalism is a difficult subject area to study because different journalists, different media houses and different authors have divergent and opposing opinions on the strict observation of ethics when it comes to the actual practice of journalism. Exclusive and interesting stories are in most cases about people and their

private lives and are likely to boost citizen journalism. However, journalists interviewed and various authors cited in this study agree to the need to observe media ethics but they also agree that in some instances editors should turn a blind eye to questionable behaviour (Greenslade, 2008) and get the story published because the public have the right to know.

The other challenge facing citizen journalism is high illiteracy levels among the participants. Together with the restructuring of the news industry, it is important to increase media literacy across the nation. While the Internet has made the creation of information as easy as the click of a button, it has also caused the deciphering of information to become even more complicated. Questions of what is newsworthy and what sources to trust need to be answered. Issues surrounding appropriate "netiquette" and the misuse of the Internet need to be addressed. Incorporating media literacy classes and programs as early as elementary school will get our children to start thinking critically about the media that they consume and how they can be a part of the production process.

4.3.4 Effect of Citizen Journalism

Majority of the respondents felt that it was necessary to have guidelines in handling challenges facing citizen journalism. This could be attributed to the fact that guidelines are inhibitive and would discourage many from citizen journalism and thus denying the public first hand information. Interviewees that supported guidelines were of the opinion that the guidelines should be in line with the editorial policy while others felt that there should be a consensus between editors to disregard images and messages that are not clear. Other respondents proposed that media houses should not rely much on citizen news while others were of the opinion that media houses should strive to obtain the full story from the public and only post what is credible. Many of the respondents' concerns surrounding citizen journalism involved ethical practices. Since citizen journalists are by definition amateurs, they do not abide by the same guidelines as professionals. There are certainly questions concerning the objectiveness, accuracy, fairness and overall credibility of citizen journalism.

Most of the study interviewees argued that citizen journalism suffered from lack of objectivity. While most journalists admit that true objectiveness is impossible, it is nevertheless something for which a majority strives. However, this study reveals that striving for objectivity is not always the case for citizen journalists. Not only are many blogs and other forms of citizen media biased, they openly admit to their biases as reported by one of the respondents. While this confession may seem to pose a threat to the credibility of these sources, some argue that their openness actually establishes credibility rather than hurting it.

Many citizen journalists have been reported to embrace transparency over objectiveness, providing readers with their sources and whatever research they may perform while also making it clear that they are not objective in their writing. These findings are similar to those of Friend and Singer (2007) who observed that for some citizen journalists' transparency makes up for biased material since the writers are honest up front about it. Transparency over objectiveness is becoming more acceptable in the journalism field. The simplicity of citizen journalism is one of its advantages compared to professional. Most professional journalists interviewed agreed that transparency is a great idea, but simply they cannot achieve it due to the size of the newsroom. Transparency is much easier to achieve in the smaller, less corporative citizen sphere. Due to this, citizen journalists enjoy more freedom to voice opinions in their reporting since they can compensate for biases in other ways.

Although traditional media are now trying to incorporate more interactiveness in their reporting, such as KBC's Good Morning programme, the concept has flourished most on the Web with citizen journalists. The Web's interactive capability has been the most dominant feature of the new media landscape. It has spawned passionate, public conversations among a throng of diverse voices and perspectives and led to the return of a point-of-view style of news writing. The conversation promoted by this type of reporting allows for a wide range of differing viewpoints and opinions. Because of conversation, objectivity is not as important since most sides of the topic are still covered, even though the information might come from different sources.

Because of the 24-hour news cycle of the Internet, the need for quick, timely reporting is crucial. While quick reporting sounds like a good idea, the emphasis of being first to break a story presents yet another ethical concern because sometimes accuracy and verification is sacrificed in place of speedy reporting.

The greatest effect seemed to be on journalistic standards, particularly with the rush to publish online that encouraged shortcuts in reporting and editing and appeared to be counterintuitive to traditional journalistic standards. This presents a major problem: If online stories are directing the focus of traditional media, and those online stories prove to be inaccurate, what does that mean for journalism ethics as a whole? Releasing material that has not been vetted has long been a staple of citizen journalism, particularly with blogs. Friend and Singer (2007) wrote that: Bloggers have replaced this 'filter, then publish' standard with a 'publish, then filter' model that emphasizes individual spontaneity and the ability of the blogging community to challenge inaccurate or covertly biased writing. The 'publish, then filter' principle reflects bloggers' broadly libertarian orientation; it replaces the top-down hierarchy of the conventional newsroom with the photosphere's network of equals. With proper scrutiny, online journalism, particularly from citizens, can prove to be a valuable source for news. Without scrutiny, it may lead to inaccuracies being believed as truths.

With the speed that content moves on the Web, it is very tempting to plagiarize someone else's work and post it on another site without attribution. Unfortunately, this happens far too much in today's online world. As Stephen Quinn and Stephen Lamble (2008) write in their book about online journalism, "Conduct a simple search of the Web relating to just about any contentious topic or big news story and you will find multiple copies of the same reports and comments. Often there are so many copies that it is difficult to find". Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

Many of the respondents reported that the relationship between citizen media and mainstream media is symbiotic. This is because most information communities and weblogs discuss and extend the stories published by mainstream media. These sentiments are also buttressed by the fact that the citizen journalism also produces news, grassroots reporting, eye witness accounts, commentary analysis, watch-dogging and fact-checking which the mainstream media feed upon, developing them as a pool of tools and story ideas. Glaser (2008) referred to this style of interdependent reporting as semi-pro journalism, as it combines the ground work of average citizens or inexperienced journalists with editorial and production expertise of professional journalists.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study. The summary highlights the content of all the chapters of the report. Conclusions and recommendations of the study are as well presented in this chapter.

5.2 Summary

The field of communication is in a state of dramatic flux. As new media technologies give more control to the user, the very concept of mass communication is undergoing challenge. One result of the changes in technology is that it is no longer possible to think of channels like television as a uniform or monolithic system, transmitting essentially the same message to everyone. These developments opened up ways for the development of citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is based on the concept of the public being able to participate in spreading of information to the others. Citizen journalism enables the public to play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, and analyzing news and information.

This study aims at examining the extent to which Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television uptakes citizen journalism given its normative role as a public broadcaster with an obligation to reinforce traditional practices. The study was guided by the following objectives; to determine what elements of citizen journalism are applied in news and information dissemination at Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television; to identify challenges presented by citizen journalism to KBC editors and reporters as gate keepers with normative responsibility; to investigate the effect of citizen reporting on gate keeping process on KBC news and talk show programmes.

The theories underpinning the study include the normative theory and the gate keeping theory. Normative theory is based on examining or prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained. According to the normative theory, media most often face widespread restrictions politically instigated by

governments wishing to have checks and balances on society's morals and cultures. These restrictions are applicable to media regarded as national and are obligated to responsibly provide diverse information, opinion and culture. Gate keeping theory is an ideological movement which advocates that media organizations use "gate" keepers to standardize, filter and determine which information should be accessed by audiences through the available channels of communication: radio, television, print or the internet.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches using the KBC as the case study design. The population consisted of a total of 253news reporters and producers, video/news editors, programmers, and camera persons. Purposive stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of fifteen percent of the total population which included professionals in the media industry. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS and presented in charts and tables.

According to the findings of the study the elements used in citizen journalism included social media elements such as Facebook, twitter, blogs and short messages. However among the elements contained in the news through citizen journalism Facebook and SMS are the most preferred/used. Challenges to the dissemination of information through citizen journalism include poor quality, lack of ability to verify the content, inaccuracy, high level of illiteracy, lack of objectivity and the fact that citizen journalism is quite expensive.

Many citizen journalists have been reported to embrace transparency over objectiveness, providing readers with their sources and whatever research they may perform while also making it clear that they are not objective in their writing. The findings also indicated that the relationship between citizen media and mainstream media is symbiotic. This is because most information communities and weblogs discuss and extend the stories published by mainstream media.

The study recommends that it is worthwhile exploring further the aspect of radio-enabled citizen journalism. The participation of the people is mainly seen through radio and in particular in the debate space created in the studio. The recommendations also propose that there is a continuous need for the negotiation of power and emphasis between these

two elements (professional and citizen journalism) because they do have different epistemological foundations.

5.3 Conclusion

Despite a few ethical concerns, such as the ones discussed in previous sections, in the end the good outweighs the bad. Citizens have played an important role in journalism throughout history and their importance does not appear to be changing any time soon. With today's technology, the power that citizens have in producing news is growing like never before. Furthermore, citizen journalism appears to be returning to its historical roots with its hyperlocal reporting and audience participation. Once again, there are many voices and reporting news is not limited to mainstream media. Citizen journalism may have declined with the growth of professional journalism in the 1900s, but it is emerging stronger than ever before in the 2000s. The biggest strength that citizen journalism has is its perception among the public as a viable alternative to traditional media. Because of this perception, it draws an audience from those discontented with the traditional news or who were never contented in the first place, because traditional news may not cover as many local affairs and is often viewed as biased. But this is not to say that citizen and traditional journalism cannot coexist peacefully. Some studies actually show that the two can benefit each other.

Citizen journalism in all its manifestations and definitions is here to stay due to technological advancements. That much is certain. It is also certain that this type of content is neither a replacement nor a threat to professionally produced journalism. From a purely commercial standpoint, this type of content is extremely valuable to both print and online publications. This content offers innumerable ways for a traditional publication to interact with its readers and to promote its own professionally produced content. And, at a time when the financial aspect of the mass media market could not be more uncertain, it seems foolish not to capitalize on the ways in which citizen-journalism might benefit any publication's balance sheet. From a research standpoint, citizen journalism can offer a wealth of insight to the irreversibly changing mass media landscape.

The research reveals that citizen journalists in the project are engaging in a very interesting combination of professional-amateur journalism. Citizen journalists in Nairobi city have developed a symbiotic relationship with professional journalists in the city. Part of the practice of citizen journalists involves a very significant amount of collaboration between professional journalists and citizen journalists. The collaboration is in the production of content and in the presentation of reports, particularly on television. The research showed that citizen journalism works best alongside professional journalism and is not necessarily setting itself up as an alternative and separate practice. There are, however, a few remarkable instances when citizen journalists produce alternative content that is distinctive from mainstream journalism. This is particularly evident in the Good Morning Kenya on KBC.

Recalling Gans' statement that, perhaps, "news may be too important to leave to the journalists alone," (1980, p. 322) this study has found, both through a review of the available literature, and through interaction with the community, that the use of quality citizen journalism produces journalistic content that is multi-perspective, and has positive effects of the relative democracy of a society. By understanding the reasons citizen journalists make the effort to produce their content, specifically the individual motivations and gratifications they are seeking, mainstream news organizations can better understand how to encourage their audiences to become more participatory. Once news organizations recognize that they need to reshape their relationship with their audience, as the audience has already changed their expectations about the role of and their relationship with news organizations, then they will be in a better position to begin a mutually advantageous relationship, where both tiers of the media scape work together to provide the best journalistic content possible.

While the technology is in place for the "former audience" to interact with and produce journalistic content, fundamental changes to the relationship between mainstream media and their audiences need to occur. Namely, that the audience will no longer be a traditional audience, but instead, participants and partners. The first step in this process is developing an understanding of why citizen journalists are motivated to produce their

work so that they can be recruited, supported and encouraged to become a vital part of creating a multi perspective media scape.

5.4 Recommendation

This study has revealed that there is a lot of collaboration between professional and citizen journalists. This collaboration has great benefits for professional journalism. The citizen journalism being practiced is institutionalized (rather than alternative in the institutional sense), but there is a continuous need for the negotiation of power and emphasis between these two elements because they do have different epistemological foundations.

In Africa people tell their stories through radio and through print because the majority of the people do not necessarily have access to the internet. In the western context citizen journalism has been enabled by the web and it can be folly to expect Africa to leap frog to development like in the western context because of the internet. Citizen journalism is being enabled by new radio because of literacy problems in the community and there is just no culture of web practices such as blogging. It would therefore be worthwhile exploring further the aspect of radio-enabled citizen journalism. The participation of the people is mainly seen through radio and in particular in the debate space created in the studio.

5.5 Areas for further research

Academically, there are many directions in which to conduct further research on citizen journalism. As this study generally examined the impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping process, further research could be done on producers of content in specific mediums. As is clear from both the demographics of this study and the use of citizen journalism during events such as the recent Kenyan elections (2013), and the 9/21 Westgate attacks, citizen journalism is a global phenomenon. It would be beneficial to study how citizen journalists behave around the world, and how news organizations incorporate their content. It would also be interesting to compare motivations and gratifications between professional and citizen journalists for producing their work.

Additionally, a comparative study can be done to examine impact of citizen journalism on private stations in Kenya.

Finally, study into the technological and journalistic training of citizen journalists and their recruitment will also be necessary for a successful future for the medium.

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Appendix A

Observation Checklist Guide

A structured direct observation shall be carried out on elements of citizen journalism.

1. A Week-long observation of Channel One television to determine elements of citizen journalism (opinion polls, blogs, tweets, Facebook, SMS, among others) appearing on the screen during news at 9 pm and daily Good morning Kenya at 8.00 am, indicating specific dates of observance, and frequency of each element used.

2. Any verification method used by presenters to decipher information.

3. How the verification is being carried out.

OBSERVATION CHECK LIST

Observation period one week

Date of transmission	Time	Programme	Citizen journalism elements	Usage/incorporation/controls

Appendix B

Focus Group Interview Guide

Focus group discussion shall be carried out with six professional journalists on the effect of citizen journalism practices on professionalism with a view to obtain the participants' beliefs and perceptions. This will guide on any intervention measures/recommendations to be made on citizen journalism.

The main topic of discussion will be the effect of citizen journalism practices on professional journalism.

1. There will be a moderator to guide the interview based on objectives of the study.

2. An audio recording of the discussion shall be carried out.

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Interviews will be structured and asking the respondents (Editors, reporters, producers, presenters, among others.) similar questions to determine elements of citizen journalism applied in news and talk show programmes and any challenges on how the same affect gate keeping .

Sample questions:

1. What are the elements of citizen journalism on KBC news/talk shows?

2. What factors motivate their inclusion in the news/talk show programmes?

3. What challenges (if any) do you (News editors, Reporter, Camera person, Video editor, Producer etc) face during their use?

4. Does KBC have policy guidelines on information dissemination?

5. How do the citizen reports affect the measures and controls on policy guidelines regarding dissemination of information to the public?

APPENDIX D

Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Mary A. Onyango, a post graduate student pursuing Masters in Communication at School of Journalism, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a case study on the impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping process as the overall objective.

I am requesting your support by responding to this questionnaire. The information of this questionnaire is intended for use in the said study. The findings of this survey will be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

Mary Atieno Onyango

Appendix E

Questionnaire

This is a set of pre-determined questions formulated to give answers to the following objectives:

1. To determine what elements of citizen journalism are applied in news and information dissemination at Kenya Broadcasting Corporation television.

2. To identify challenges presented by citizen journalism to KBC editors/reporters and producers as gate keepers with normative responsibility.

3. To investigate the effect of citizen reporting on gate keeping process on KBC news and talk show programmes.

Instructions: Please tick appropriately and explain where requested.

Section A – General Information

1.Gender   a) Male   b) Female

2. Age   a) 18-24

       b) 25-31

       c) 32-38

       d) 39-45

       e) 46 and above

3. Educational level   a) Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

       b) Certificate

       c) Diploma

d) Graduate

e) Post-graduate

f) others (specify)……………………………

4. Department   in which you are employed:

a) Technical   b) Production   c) Newsroom   others (specify)……………..

5. Current Duties

a) news reporter   b) producer   c) presenter d) video editor e) news editor f) Camera person
g) web editor h) others specify……………………………………………………..

6. Have you heard of citizen journalism?   a) Yes   b) No

7. If your answer to 6 above is yes, explain what you understand by citizen journalism.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Instructions: Please tick appropriately and explain where requested.

SECTION B – Impact of citizen journalism on gate keeping

1. What elements of citizen journalism are contained in news ?

a) Blogs

b) Opinion polls

c) Short Message Services

d) Wikis e.g. wikipedia

e) Internet broadcasting e.g. YouTube, video streaming (specify)

………………………………………………………………………

f) Facebook

g) Twitter

h) Mobile camera pictures

i) Mail lists

j) News groups

k) chat rooms

l) Others (specify)…………………………………………………………..

2. What elements of citizen journalism are contained in Good Morning Kenya Specify…………………………………………………………………

3. What challenges manifest during the dissemination of the information from citizen reports? Explain……………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. Are any guidelines necessary in handling challenges? a) Yes   b) No

5. If your answer to question 4 is YES, explain the nature of guidelines.

……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Does KBC have guidelines on dissemination of information to the public? a) YES b) NO

Explain your answer…………………………………………….................................

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

7. To what extent do you think guidelines can affect dissemination of information to the public by KBC, given citizen journalism practices?

 Key: 1 - High   2 – Moderate   3 – Low . (circle the number corresponding with the key).

a) 1

b) 2

c) 3

Explain your answer…………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION C - Additional Information

1. Should citizen journalism reports/contributions be allowed in news and current affairs programmes such as talk shows?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not sure

Explain your answer…………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………..

……

2. Do you think citizen journalism should be a subject of study in journalism training schools?

a) Yes

b) No

Explain your answer.

………

………

………

Thank you for finding time to answer the questionnaire.