The Role of print media in the fight against corruption. A content analysis of the Nation Newspaper coverage of corruption related stories.

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate the role of print media in the fight against corruption in Kenya by focusing on coverage.

The objective of the study is to establish the prominence given to corruption related themes in the Nation Newspaper publications, together with the frequency of coverage of corruption related stories on the newspaper. It also seeks to explore how framing of such stories was done within the period of the study which covered four months from 1st April to 31st July 2013.

One of the findings of this study is that the Nation Newspaper plays a major role in sending corruption messages to the public who are the readers and this is generally done through publication of stories about corruption, giving them distinct prominence and a wide coverage. In the study, the Nation Newspaper makes an extra effort to expose corrupt incidences in government institutions and senior public officers are presented as the main culprits of corrupt practices. However, this portrayal by the research could be a result of bias on the part of the media practitioners who put more emphasis on corruption in government as opposed to also covering corrupt incidences
in the private sector, which is also portrayed as being involved in the vice though at a much lesser level.

In spite of such efforts to expose corruption, it is intriguing to note that they have not had any significant deterrent effect. Thus corruption in the country has not declined as reports on corrupt incidences continue to feature prominently in the news media. The question is what can the media do to serve as an instrument of deterring corruption in the society? This question requires a more elaborate study to determine the full extent of both private and public involvement and corresponding disincentives.

As shown in this study it is critical that both the corrupted and the corruptor are exposed by the media in equal measure with a view to dissuading public officers and private sector workers and owners from using corruption for personal gain or profit at the expense of tax payers and national development