MEDIA PRIMING OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN KENYA

By

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DECLARATION

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

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The project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Dr. Elias Mokua    Signature __________________Date __________
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband and children; Christine, Joe and Junior. Thank you so much for consistently encouraging, supporting and inspiring me. May God bless you.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DN – Daily Nation
KUJ – Kenya Union of Journalists
MCK – Media Council of Kenya
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
MOA – Media Owners’ Association
NGOs – Non-governmental Organizations
NMG – Nation Media Group
RTAs – Road Traffic Accidents
WHO – World Health Organization
ABSTRACT
This study examines how the print media in Kenya reports Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs). Using the priming theory, the study sought to identify the patterns of reporting of RTAs in the print media especially after the introduction of the ‘new traffic regulations’. This is because the cost of RTAs in Kenya to the economy is estimated at Ksh. 14 billion per year (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The study was a content analysis of two leading newspapers in Kenya—The Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers. Data was collected using an analysis of the stories contained in the leading newspapers, which related to RTAs. The content of 251 articles on RTAs was reviewed from January 2014 to June 2014 of The Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers. A thematic analysis was done on the data, which was then presented using simple tabular comparison of means, graphs, charts and text. It was found that newspapers play a significant role in passing on RTA information to the public, although a lot still needs to be done to address an obvious gap. Print media should improve its reportage of RTAs; the way it reports and primes it and the amount of space allocated to stories on RTAs. Therefore, more space needs to be allocated to road safety issues even as all stakeholders should be encouraged to share information and opinions regarding road safety through the media. Information on RTAs and associated issues need to be published in prime pages regularly and not only when reporting on road crashes. The main finding is that Kenyan print media does not give prominence to RTAs in their coverage. The media, being a business and profit concern, is mainly interested in profit making. As the study results show, print media will cover RTAs only and when the government intervenes by introducing stringent regulations to cover the transport sector. The media then becomes reactionary, instead of being proactive in setting the agenda.
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The United Nations has declared the years 2011 to 2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The objective of declaring a decade-long action plan is to arrest the escalating levels of fatalities and injuries thereby reducing the trend by half come 2015 (WHO, 2013).

Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) are an emerging public health problem worldwide with over 1.2 million deaths and 10 million injured or crippled annually. Globally, road traffic accidents are the ninth leading contributor to the burden of disease and the tenth leading cause of death by injury. Deaths from injuries are projected to rise up to 8.4 million worldwide by 2020. In developing countries, accidents are common and yet remain underreported mainly due to inaccurate statistics on road deaths. In Kenya, over 3,000 lives are lost and more than 3,000 are left with serious disabilities annually due to RTAs (Manyara, 2013).

RTAs are the leading cause of deaths in adolescents and young adults globally (Mohan and Romer, 1991). The World Bank (1993) estimates that of the 865,000 traffic deaths occurring annually worldwide (an extremely conservative estimate by some accounts), 74% are in developing countries. Furthermore, while RTA rates and related deaths and disabilities are decreasing in most industrialized countries, they are increasing rapidly in many Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Road traffic mortality increased by more than 200% in African countries and by 150% in Asian countries between 1968 and 1983, while they decreased by more than 20% in Europe over the same period (Ross, 1991). RTAs also exert a considerable economic burden on developing countries, estimated to cost 1-4% of a country’s GNP per annum (Zwi, 1993).

Developing countries bear a large share of the burden, accounting for 85% of annual deaths and 90% of the disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost because of road traffic
injuries. And since road traffic injuries affect mainly males (73% of deaths) and those between 15 and 44 years old, this burden is creating enormous economic hardship due to the loss of family breadwinners (Worley, 2006).

Kenya is no exception. Between 3,000 and 13,000 Kenyans lose their lives in road traffic crashes every year (WHO, 2014). The majority of these people are vulnerable road users – pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists. In addition, nearly one-third of the deaths are among passengers – many of whom are killed in unsafe forms of public transportation. According to the recently-published WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety, there are no laws for helmet wearing, blood alcohol concentration levels for drivers or child restraints in Kenya and where road safety laws do exist, they are poorly enforced. Kenya is one of the ten countries included in the WHO Road Safety in a 10 countries project, which will be conducted over five years by a consortium of six international partners.

Traffic safety is a serious problem in Kenya, with over 12,000 crashes occurring annually. Approximately 26,000 vehicle crashes are reportedly causing over 3,000 fatalities and 9,000 serious injuries. This translates to over 33 crashes and 8.5 fatalities daily (Roads Safety Network of Kenya, 2013). Statistics reveal that road traffic crashes in Kenya are the third cause of death after malaria and HIV/AIDS and present a challenge to overall health, morbidity and associated health care costs (MoTC, 2004). On average, 89% of road users in Kenya concede that they have been exposed to road safety communication. These include pedestrians, drivers, motorcyclists and cyclists. The question is: Why is it that with such awareness levels, road traffic crashes are still on the increase?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In developed countries, road traffic death rates have decreased since the 1960s because of successful interventions such as seatbelt safety laws, enforcement of speed limits, warnings about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol, and safer design and use of roads and vehicles. For example, road traffic fatalities declined by 27% in the United States of America and by 63% in Canada from 1975 to 1988. But traffic fatalities
increased in developing countries during the same period—by 44% in Malaysia and 243% in China, for instance (Worley, 2006).

The World Bank estimates that road traffic injuries cost 1-2% of the Gross National Product (GNP) of developing countries, or twice the total amount of development aid received worldwide by developing countries (Worley, 2006).

In Kenya, the cost to the economy from Road Transport Accidents (RTAs) is in excess of US$ 50 million exclusive of the actual loss of life. In the 1980s, the annual economic cost of road traffic accidents was 5% of the country’s GDP (Yerrel, 1984). In 2011, WHO estimated that Kenya lost US$ 4 billion annually due to road traffic fatalities. Given that the GDP in 2012 was US$ 37.23 billion that means the loss was approximately 11% of the GDP (WHO, 2011). This therefore means that that RTAs continue to wreck havoc on Kenya’s economy. As Kenya continues to grapple with the high rate of RTAs that threaten economic growth, focus should be on the way the media has relayed and set the agenda for the RTAs issue to the masses. How has the media in Kenya profiled RTAs? Has it been informative enough or what role has it played? What kind of information have Kenyans received from the print media on RTAs especially after the tough new transport rules and measures were put forth by the Government of Kenya?

1.2 Rationale and Justification

Road carnage continues to claim more and more lives of productive Kenyans, thereby wrecking havoc on its human productive resource. Recent steps by the Government of Kenya, like introducing the ‘alcoblow’ test on drivers to check their alcohol consumption levels and a ban on night travels for public service vehicles may be important steps. However, the way the media in Kenya reports and informs the public on RTAs is important as it can provide information to Kenyans which, in turn, may lead to decreased RTAs. This has an overall socio-economic impact. If and when the media plays an active and proactive role in reporting RTAs in an educative manner, it will help in galvanizing Kenyans to action.
This is because the media influences both the public and policy makers and shapers, through collective engagement in making everyone informed and taking the necessary steps to remedy the situation. Therefore, such a study can help illuminate the major issues and/or weaknesses that the media has shown with a view of recommending corrective measures.

1.3 The General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the media priming of Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs).

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

i. To identify the patterns of reporting of RTAs in the print media in Kenya.

ii. To find out how the print media in Kenya have reported the night travel ban imposed by the Government of Kenya to reduce RTAs in Kenya.

iii. To analyze reporting on RTAs in the print media in Kenya after the introduction of the new stringent traffic rules.

1.4 The Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

i. What are the patterns of the reporting of RTAs in the print media in Kenya?

ii. How has the print media reported the night travel ban imposed by the Government of Kenya to reduce RTAs in Kenya?

iii. What is the reporting on RTAs in the print media in Kenya after the introduction of the stringent traffic rules?
1.5 The Significance of the Study

Kenya ranks high among countries with the highest rate of road traffic crashes globally with an average of 3,000 RTAs-related deaths annually. The Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) have been accused of over-speeding, overloading of passengers, playing very loud music, reckless and careless driving, being rude to passengers and driving un-roadworthy vehicles, among others (Khayesi, 2004). The problem has not been due to lack of road safety regulations but their poor enforcement (Odero et al., 2003; Chitere and Kibua, 2004). Other challenges currently experienced in the road transport subsector include lack of automation leading to loss of revenue, proliferation of fake documents, disregard to traffic rules and inefficiency in service delivery (NTSA, 2014). The cost of such road accidents to the economy is estimated at Ksh. 14 billion per year (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

A change in road safety measures, implementation and enforcement affects the operation of any system. An analysis of effects of the change is currently lacking in literature. Some of the public transport related studies carried out after the implementation of the enforced regulations have focused on the institutional and organizational structure of public road transport (Akingo, 2004), the role of the matatu industry (Kimani et al., 2004, Chitere 2004) and public service vehicle drivers (Chitere, 2006). There was therefore need for further analysis of the effects of the ‘new’ regulations on PSVs. This study is a contribution towards filling this gap in literature.

The public transport industry plays a vital role in the Kenyan economy (Sang, E.K, 2009). The industry serves other sectors and hence affects their growth and performance. The matatu industry alone contributes more than Kshs. 2.9 billion to petrol stations per month in form of fuel consumption (Republic of Kenya, 2003a). In its Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation Programme (2003-2007), the Government of Kenya marked the transport sector as the third pillar of the economic recovery effort set to achieve an increase in GDP growth rate. According to this strategy, Kenya expects the transport sector to contribute to the reduction of poverty levels by the year 2015.
The findings of the study are therefore important to improve road usage and reduce RTAs in Kenya. The study also provides future researchers with information on the priming of RTAs in the Kenyan media.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to newspaper articles on RTAs in the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers over a six month period in 2014 (January-June, 2014). The study did not analyze any other reports from any other print media outlet in Kenya. This study did not analyze any other report from the same newspapers that was outside the study’s theme.
1.7 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

**NTSA** — National Transport Safety Authority.

**PSV Operators** — Refers to the driver, conductor and the owner of the PSV.

**Public Service Vehicles (PSVs)**—refer to any vehicles that are licensed to carry passengers for hire or reward. In this study, they include the 14-seater “Nissan” matatus, mini-buses and buses.

**Matatu** — The term matatu refers to small-scale public transport vehicles in Kenya. The term is derived from the Kikuyu word “mang’otore matatu”, which means thirty cents — the then standard charges for fare by these vehicle operators when they were licensed to operate (Aduwo, 1990).

**The ‘New’ Road Safety Regulations** — Regulations gazetted by the Government of Kenya in October 2003 (Government Legal Notice 219) and were implemented since February 1, 2014 and were perceived to be stringent than the famous Michuki laws. They contain stiffer penalties aimed at tackling high cases of road accidents. The regulations replaced laws introduced by the late John Michuki in 2004 when he served as Transport Minister. The aim was to improve the safety of commuters, PSV crew and the general public and bring sanity among the PSV operators. Most of the regulations were already in existence but due to poor enforcement and implementation, they had been ignored and neglected hence seemed new when the government enforced them in 2004. The night ban travel by public service vehicles was part of the regulations.

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

**Info-graphics** — Information graphics.

**Op-ed** — This is the editorial section of the papers where opinion and personal views are published.
**Placement** – The exact position of the article in the newspaper in relation to page number.

**Priming** – This is about how issues are made accessible to the audience by media.

**Prominence** – Is the size of the article in relation to other articles on the page.

**Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs)** – These are occurrences when a vehicle collides with another vehicle, pedestrian, animal, road debris, or other stationary obstruction, such as a tree or utility pole resulting in injury, death, vehicle damage, and/or property damage.

**Splash** – A lead story on the front page of a newspaper.

**Stand-alone photo** – A picture that does not accompany a story; i.e. on its own on a page.

**Theme** – Is the nerve centre of the story and brings out the focus of the story.

**Audience** – Final consumers of newspaper content.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the available literature and studies that have been previously carried out on RTAs. It looks at literature in the local context i.e. Kenya, as well as studies done from other countries in Africa and the world as a whole. The priming theory guiding the study is also discussed and how it guides and helps in understanding the subject.

2.1 Road Traffic Accidents

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

Although road traffic crashes kill more than 1.2 million people a year around the world, they are largely neglected as a health issue, perhaps because they are still viewed by many as events that are beyond our control. Some of the causes and risks of road crashes and related deaths and/or injuries are known; over-speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol, non-use of helmets, seatbelts and other restraints, poor road design, poor enforcement of road safety regulations, unsafe vehicle designs, and poor emergency health services (WHO, 2004).

RTAs are a perfect example of a ‘disease of development’, which is far more prevalent in developing countries than in developed ones. Road traffic-related morbidity and mortality
have traditionally been regarded as a problem primarily of industrialized countries (Soderlund and Zwi, 1995). There is, however, growing evidence of a strong negative relationship between economic development and exposure-adjusted traffic-related death rates. In other words, after adjusting for motor vehicle numbers, it appears that the poorest countries show the highest road traffic-related morbidity and mortality rates (Soderlund and Zwi, 1995).

Due to its perception as a ‘disease of development’, road traffic accidents and related injuries tend to be under-recognized as major health problems in developing countries (Zwi, 1993). However, the World Bank’s *World Development Report* (1993) and the World Health Organization’s *The Global Burden of Disease* (1996) both highlight the worldwide burden of traffic-related injuries and mortality, emphasizing their importance in less developed countries. WHO predicted that road traffic accidents would rise from the ninth leading ‘burden of disease’ in 1990 to the third leading in 2020 worldwide (Murray and Lopez, 1996). Among males in the economically active age group, motor vehicle injuries are considered to be the third most important cause of death in developing countries, the first two being tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (Soderlund and Zwi, 1995). Mortality from RTAs accounts for 10% of all deaths in the 5-44-year age group (Jacobs and Sayer, 1983).

### 2.2 Traffic Road Accidents in Africa

According to WHO, Africa is the deadliest region for road traffic deaths, with 24.1 fatalities per 100,000 people. That is more than twice the rate in Europe, where the figure is 10.3 deaths per 100,000, in spite of the fact that Europe has vastly more cars, trucks and buses.

A number of developing countries are currently experiencing a steady increase in the proportion and absolute number of fatalities from RTAs, while deaths from infectious diseases are on the decline (Soderlund and Zwi, 1995). In Nigeria and Kenya, for example, a five-fold increase in the numbers of RTA fatalities was observed over the last 30 years. When compared with European and North American countries, African and
Asian countries experience substantially higher fatality rates per 10,000 vehicles (Odero, 1995).

Between 1970 and 1975, over 25,000 persons died on Nigeria’s highways, while more than 100,000 people sustained injuries from traffic accidents (Oyebanji, 1984). In 1975 alone, an average of 463 persons were killed on the highways per month while nearly 1,700 others were injured. The socioeconomic cost of RTAs in Nigeria is immense. The direct cost of traffic casualties can perhaps best be understood in terms of the labor lost to the nation’s economy. It has been estimated that 8,000 out of the 20,132 persons injured in accidents on Nigeria’s highways and streets in 1975 did not participate in the economic mainstream and this amounted to a loss of about two million person-years to the nation (Oyebanji 1984).

Due to the increase in public and private transport, there has been an increase in road traffic accidents in Kenya. The accidents tripled from 3,578 in 1963 to 10,106 in 1989 and 11,785 in 1994 (Muyia, 1995). In these accidents, 2,014 persons were killed, 6,650 were seriously injured and 11,094 had minor injuries. The causes of the accidents included reckless driving, non-roadworthy vehicles and poor conditions of roads.

The International Transport Forum’s (ITF’s) latest Road Safety Annual Report ranked South Africa the worst, out of 36 others, when it came to the number of road fatalities.

Road fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants was at 27.6 deaths in 2011—a shocking statistic when compared to developed countries like North America with 10.4 or Australia with 5.6. But those developing countries included in the report did not exceed South Africa’s road death toll. Both Argentina and Colombia reached around 12, while Malaysia came off second worst with 23.8 (Alsop & Langley, 2001). The report also estimated the economic cost of South Africa’s road crashes; estimated to be R307 billions each year.
2.3 Road Traffic Accidents in Kenya

Odero, Khayesi and Heda (2003) observe that Kenya, with an average of 7 deaths from the 35 crashes that occur each day, has one of the highest road fatality rates in relation to vehicle ownership in the world. They add: “Nearly 3,000 people are killed on Kenyan roads annually. This translates to approximately 68 deaths per 1,000 registered vehicles, which is 30-40 times greater than in highly motorized countries. Road traffic crashes are the third leading cause of death after malaria and HIV/AIDS and present a major public health problem in terms of morbidity, disability and associated health care costs (Ibid).

Media framing provides a basis for examining newspaper content in terms of what the media typically include in their coverage of certain issues. In the case of road trauma, stories tend to be framed around which driver is at fault and the tragic stories of those that have been killed. Coleman and Perlmutter (2005) suggest that coverage generally focuses on the individual ‘act’ rather than issues of cause and prevention.

Other commentators (Connor and Wesolowski, 2004) have noted that newspapers presented fatal crashes as dramas with a victim/villain storyline. In keeping with this narrative strategy, newspapers were most likely to cover stories where a driver survived to take the blame. By highlighting crashes in a way that focuses on the assignment of blame to a single party, and failing to convey the message that preventive practices like seatbelt use increase odds for survival, newspapers remove crashes from a public health context and position them as individual issues.

Japanese motorcycle models, known as boda boda in Kenya, are simultaneously changing the face of taxi transport and helping many of Kenya’s unemployed earn some fast cash. But as drunk driving and motorcycle accidents become increasingly common, many doctors and advocates say there is a pressing need to regulate motorcycle transport.

According to a 2009 economic survey in Nairobi, the number of registered motorcycles increased from 4,136 in 2004 to 16,293 in 2007; a 400% rise in just three years. As
motorcycles are commonly being used for other transport needs, like taxi services and farm and market deliveries, there is also an increase in road accidents.

While the *boda boda* boom has benefitted many previously unemployed people in Kenya, new safety concerns have emerged as road accidents have drastically increased. In most cases, motorcycle drivers drive without helmets and do not give helmets to their passengers. As many as four passengers on one bike is not uncommon and drunk driving rates among drivers is high. In Kenya, road traffic injuries represent as much as 60% of all admissions to surgical wards (Nesoba, 2010).

According to the Police Department in Kenya, a total of 582 cases of motorcycle crashes were recorded in 2011, representing more than 7% of all road traffic crashes. The number of cases has continued to soar so high that several public hospitals have dedicated some wards to victims of *boda boda* accidents. For instance, recently, Kenyatta National Hospital’s wards 6A, C and D were converted into emergency wards to receive the swelling numbers of motorcycle victims. In 2012, the Head of Division of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Ministry of Health reported that between 7-10% of all those in surgical wards of public hospitals are injured in *boda boda* accidents (Xinhua, 2012).

Kenya has already taken steps as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies road safety initiative by starting a National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) to tackle the problem. Significant hurdles remain and many deadly accidents appear to go unreported. In the WHO’s Global Status Report on Road Safety Year, the official figure for road traffic deaths in Kenya was around 3,000. But the organization estimated that the actual figure was much higher, at nearly 8,500 deaths. One third of all fatalities are passengers, many of them killed in what is termed as unsafe forms of public transportation (WHO, 2013).

According to the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT, 2014) over 3,000 people are killed in Kenya from RTAs every year. More than twice as many are permanently disabled by their injuries. These statistics need to be seen in the context of
deep family tragedy, unimaginable grief and anguish and tremendous health and economic and disability costs. Huge sums of money are used in medical care: money that is desperately needed for preventative health care. With most people in Kenya employed in the informal sector and with no health or life insurance and no social security, involvement in a road traffic crash by a family member has consequences for the entire household.

If Kenya is to achieve its aspirations as stipulated in Vision 2030 in eradicating poverty, road safety must be given priority. Reduction of poverty cannot be a reality if billions of dollars are spent on the aftermath of road crashes. Despite the large social and economic costs, there has been a relatively small amount of investment in road safety research and development compared with other types of health losses.

Kenya has seen a sharp increase in the number of registered motor vehicles over the past 2 decades from 1.4 motor vehicles per 100 people in 1985 to 2.7 motor vehicles per 100 people in 2007 (Assum 1998; Odero1995; WHO 2009). Road usage has correspondingly also gone up for every type of vehicle (Assum 1998; Odero 1995). Studies by Odero and the World Bank in 1995 and 1998, respectively, found that over the 7-year period from 1983 to 1990, there was a 125% increase in kilometers driven by cars and light vehicles, a 123% increase in kilometers driven by buses and taxis, and a 91% increase in kilometers driven by lorries (Assum 1998; Odero 1995). By 2003, the number of matatus was estimated at 40,000 (Aisingo, 2004). In 2009, there were 1,221,083 vehicles registered in the country. The highest growth has been in personal cars and motorcycles. The number that is rising fastest is the rider motorized 2-wheelers (imported from India and China) mainly for bodaboda taxi operations. According to the Economic Survey of 2010, the registration of new vehicles had increased from 45,000 units in 2005 to 161, 000 units in 2009. Since 2005, the number of registered motorcycles in Kenya has increased almost 40 times, accounting for 70% of all newly registered vehicles in 2011 (Xinhua, 2012).

In addition to the mortality and disability burden, RTAs have a significant economic impact. In Kenya, a study revealed that as of 1991, RTAs were estimated to cost Kenyans
as much as US$ 3.8 billion annually, corresponding to 5% of the annual Gross National Product (GNP) (Odero et al. 2003). This is, however, thought to be a conservative estimate because it does not include costs associated with lost productivity and other related costs due to the years of life lost (Peden et al., 2004).

As it works towards achieving its Vision 2030, the Government of Kenya has recognized that transportation is one of the key pillars in achieving its developmental goals, and therefore the country has invested not only in improving physical road infrastructure but also in road safety. In 2012, the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) was founded as the lead authority in Kenya for road transport and safety (NTSA, 2013). In 2010, according to the Kenya Traffic Police Department, there were 3,055 road-traffic-related deaths in Kenya, though this is likely an underestimate. In the year 2013, the NTSA reported that 13,028 people were involved in road crashes. The social and economic costs to the country are huge: the NTSA estimates that RTAs cost Kenya’s economy about Kshs. 14 billion (approximately US$ 160 million ) annually, or 5% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (NTSA, 2013).

2.4 Causes of RTAs
Based on the Accident Cause Code Classification, Kenya Police reports reveal that 85.5% of crashes are caused by poor driver behavior, of which driver error represents 44.4%, pedestrians and passengers 33.9% and pedal cyclists 7.2% (Odero et al., 2003; Odero et al. 1997). Sometimes transport industry stakeholders blame the poor state of Kenyan roads as the leading cause of accidents. With the recent improvement of infrastructure in Kenya, however, fatal road accidents continue to be reported. This has resulted to a blame game between the operators of Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) and the Traffic Department of the Kenya Police, with the former blaming the poor state of Kenyan roads on accidents and the latter blaming PSV operators, especially drivers, for flouting laid down traffic regulations. PSV drivers have been blamed for careless driving, incompetence, over-speeding, drunk driving and a myriad of other vices that render them prone to causing accidents that could have been avoided in the first place.
The Kenyan Traffic Police, on the other hand, while charged with enforcing the Traffic Act, have on numerous occasions been caught on camera receiving bribes, and have featured in various corruption index reports as leading in the vice. In fact, while the Kenyan Police was reported as the most corrupt institution in Kenya by the *East African Bribery Index Report*, it’s the traffic arm of this institution that tops the list. According to the Kenya Roads Board (KRB, 2013); there are 160,886 km of public roads with 11,197 km (7%) having been tarmacked. This therefore means that most of the roads may not be easily motorable. However, many of the reported road accidents occur in the motorable sections with the three major highways—the Nairobi-Thika Road, the Nairobi-Mombasa Road, and the Nairobi-Nakuru-Eldoret Road reporting most of the accidents. Thika Road (50.4 km) and Mombasa Road (470 km) happen to be some of the busiest roads in Kenya; hence there has been a rigorous expansion plan in line with Vision 2030. There are approximately 80 documented black spots, with the majority being along these three highways.

In examining the distribution of the accidents by various parameters, attention was given to the years 2004 and 2007. This is mainly due to the fact that 2003 saw the enactment and enforcement of more stringent traffic rules by the then Minister for Transport, the late Hon. John Michuki, mainly targeting the PSVs. Passenger capacity for matatus was reduced to 13; speed limit set at 80kph and speed governors introduced, safety belts for all passengers were made mandatory as well as the vetting of drivers and conductors, who had to meet stricter guidelines.

Rapid growth in the use of motorized two-wheeled vehicles in many countries has been accompanied by increases in injuries and fatalities among their users. Motorcyclists comprise a third of all road traffic deaths in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions, and are also increasingly represented among deaths in Africa and the Americas, which are seeing rapid increases in motorcycle use.
2.5 Priming of RTAs in the Media

According to a survey carried out by the Nation Media Group (NMG) in 2006, about 7.6 million Kenyans read newspapers. The *Daily Nation* is the leading daily in the country in terms of readership, followed by *The Standard* (NMG, 2006).

Since 2000, a slight improvement has been noted for those who read newspapers daily. The research revealed that daily newspaper sales increased from 211,437 copies to 215,232 between 2000 and 2005. The survey concluded that most people (75%) consider the media as a source of credible information (Daily Nation, 2006).

Competition from the electronic media has resulted in newspapers moving towards the editorial and opinion business and away from the reporting business. Media organizations are also becoming more business orientated (Kirk, 2006) and the search for profit has impacted on the more costly forms of journalism such as investigative reporting with a significant decline in this area. The news media in Kenya has a tendency to over-report crash events as opposed to analyses of the factors that lead to crashes, remedies, trends or issues. This is because news values related to impact, proximity, prominence, relevance, and human interest are all important in determining how much significance a news story is accorded by a particular media (Morrison, 2006).

In the case of traffic incidents, the impact value is determined by the perceived magnitude and consequences of the accident; namely, the number of cars wrecked and the number of ‘innocent’ people injured, killed or maimed. The more people affected, the bigger the impact of the story. The proximity value is realized through reader association; namely, the closer the target reading audience is to the event, the greater its news value. The proximity value influences which page the story will be printed on. In terms of the prominence value, the media assume that the public cares more about celebrities than they do about people they do not know. Similarly, it is surmised that public transport commuters are more likely to be concerned about taxi-related crashes. So, for example, when celebrities die in a car accident their death is likely to be reported on the front page, just as taxi-related crashes are likely to be widely reported on. The relevance value is
signified when events such as traffic crashes affect the majority of Kenyans, albeit directly or indirectly. Lastly, an event is deemed to be newsworthy when it is associated with human interest. Even though a story itself may be weakly related to the other news values, it may be defined as news when, for instance, it gets people talking about the magnitude and serious consequences of crashes on a country’s roads, for instance, crashes on South Africa’s roads (Morrison, 2006).

Chartier and Gabler (2001) also observe that drama seems to be the mainstay of media coverage. The media tend to highlight existing concerns, uncertainties and conflicts, rarely question the legitimacy of any source, and present all sources on an equal footing. Information is provided to the public with little or no analysis of its technical accuracy.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Agenda setting theory

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

Agenda setting is the power to entice people into thinking about certain kinds of issues (Williams, 2003). One of the key aspects of the agenda setting theory is the ability of the media to highlight certain topics or aspects of issues through the processes of agenda setting (Hayes, 2007). By calling attention to some issues over others during the election cycle, the news media, theoretically at least, forms the public’s opinion about the most
important issues facing the country (Hayes, 2007). The hypothesis describes a process that is an extension of agenda setting. First, by emphasizing certain issues over others, the media influence the hierarchies of issues that the public recognizes as important or otherwise. This is done by making these certain salient issues more accessible in an individual’s memory (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). This is the agenda-setting part.

Priming asserts that media has the power to control how audiences interpret new information. This is because, first, the theory explains that humans filter new information through a filter formed partially from prior information. Second, individuals use those issues, which are most salient and accessible in their memory, to evaluate the performance of political actors. That is, by priming a certain issue, the media affects the criteria people use to evaluate political actors (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). If, for example, the issue of foreign affairs was primed, then people would judge the president’s performance by mostly evaluating his performance in the area of foreign affairs; whereas if the economy was primed, it would become the basis for evaluating the president’s performance (Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Pan & Kosicki, 1997).

Therefore, according to the agenda setting theory, the amount of time and space that media devote to an issue makes an audience receptive and alert to particular themes. Likewise, audience perception of events is impacted by the historical context with which they are familiar (through experience or through the media). In a given situation, how have the media primed their audiences on a particular issue of importance to an organization?

2.6.2 The priming theory

Agenda setting and priming are related to each other in that mass media affects people’s judgment (priming) by making some issues more salient than others (agenda setting), and both models are based on the media’s ability to increase accessibility (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) introduced the concept of priming to describe how the media could go beyond telling people what to think about and shape the
criteria used by individuals to judge the merits of their political leaders and the pressing political issues. Priming presumes that when evaluating political phenomena, people do not take into account all they know; and even if they wanted to, time often prevents them from doing so. Instead, people rely on what comes to mind, ‘those bits and pieces of political memory that are accessible.’ Iyenger and Kinder found evidence to support the claim that ‘television news was a powerful determinant of what springs to mind and what is forgotten or ignored.’ For Iyenger and Kinder (1987), the power of the media does not rest in persuasion but in ‘commanding the public’s attention (agenda setting) and defining criteria underlying the public’s judgments (priming)’ (Williams, 2003).

The concept of priming comes from cognitive psychology and means a cognitive situation in which a prior stimulus modifies the propriety and ease of recognition or processing of a later stimulus. It was introduced in political communication at the end of the 1980s in a now classic work by Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder. Priming was defined as communication criteria and standards used by recipients to evaluate political reality, which are issues most accessible in the media (most often and intensively reported).

The study was based on experiments concerning the consequences of watching news television programmes and making some aspects and issues more accessible by the media in the minds of viewers, with the use of priming as the key concept. The result was a visible priming effect, based on the idea that news programmes defined the criteria of evaluating issues and political figures. Analyzing relations between media and politics, the authors came to a conclusion that television news matters in the perception and judgment of political reality. Although through a historical perspective this was not a revealing conclusion, it ultimately proved what this meaning-influence interpreting in particular information which was perceived as unclear and ambiguous. Priming, thus, means activating information stored in long-term memory, which takes place after being exposed to a stimulus.
Priming would occur because the primed information is ‘fresh’ in memory (Higgins, 1996). In this scenario, the time gap between exposure and decision is crucial. The more time passes before the decision is actually made, the greater the possibility that the primed material fades to long-term memory, nullifying the priming effect.

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

Priming is often discussed in tandem with the agenda setting theory. The reason for this association is two-fold. First, both theories revolve around salient information recall, operating on the idea that people will use information that is most readily available when making decisions. Second, priming is the latter part of a two-fold process with agenda setting that takes place over time. Once agenda setting has made an issue salient, priming is the process by which “mass media can shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgments about political candidates or issues”.

The priming theory centers on the concept of planting an idea into the minds of people and allowing that idea to dominate within the public. Priming is believed to work because members of the public have limited knowledge about certain issues, and they tend to focus selectively on portions of what they do know when they make voting decisions. They base their decisions upon the information that is in the forefront in their minds. The same thing happens when the press begins spending time on an issue that might
ordinarily simmer on a back burner; once the issue becomes news, it tends to become relevant. For example, in spite of RTAs being a big problem on Kenyan roads for some time, what has the media done to foreground the issue so that it can have an impact on the opinions the public in Kenya forms about those at the center of the attention?

This question is important because those who subscribe to the priming theory believe that the media has the power to control how audiences interpret new information. Therefore, if the print media in Kenya has been emphasizing new traffic regulations and the ban on night travel as measures to counter the increasing RTAs on Kenyan roads, it may be able to determine which issues will have a bearing on the issue of RTAs in Kenya or not. If so, what is the situation?
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that will be used to carry out this study. It covers the following areas: research design, research population, sample and sampling techniques and research instruments. This study uses priming as the guiding theory. Validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis and presentation are also examined at the end of the chapter.

3.1. Research Design

This study will undertake content analysis as a method for examining the priming of RTAs by the leading newspapers in Kenya—the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers. This technique involves analyzing the content of documented materials including books, magazines, and newspapers and of other verbal materials that are either spoken or printed (Kothari, 2004). Content analysis was first used by Harold Laswell to analyze the content of Nazi propaganda to find out why the propaganda had such great impact on those who heard it (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995). Every article carrying RTA information was reviewed. A careful analysis of the stories as presented in the newspapers was also carried out.

3.2 Research Population

A population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2006:76). The research population entailed newspaper articles from both the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers published between January 2014 and June 2014.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The study entailed a sample size of all articles from the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers, which carried stories and information on RTAs from the period under
study—the period between January 1st and June 31st, 2014. This period was purposely sampled because the period saw various measures put into force by the Government of Kenya in an effort to curb road carnage. First, there was the introduction of the ‘alcoblow’, which measured drivers’ levels of alcohol in their bodies. At the same time, the Government of Kenya introduced a ban on night travel.

The study used textual content analysis to collect data. The study considered all the articles published in the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers. Under this approach, each and every item or unit constituting an article was selected for data collection. In this case, all newspapers that carried stories, articles and information on RTAs were considered for analysis. This was the most convenient approach for this study since in the six months period considered, not every paper may have carried a story on RTAs.

3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

This research analyzed articles on RTAs during the specified period (January 1st to June 31st, 2014) in Kenya appearing in the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers. In this respect, the following aspects were analyzed and coded accordingly. The study used content analysis to collect data for this study. First, the process involved selecting a sample of all copies of the Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers.

Once the study selected a representative sample from the population, the study embarked on perusing them while looking for stories on RTAs. The process involved identifying the stories; classifying them into their respective categories, for example, a news item, a feature story, an editorial, an advertising feature, news in brief, opinion, letter to the editor, among others; measuring the amount of space allocated for them in cubic centimeters; and determining the source of the story; the placement of the story in the newspaper; the number of stories in the newspaper; the main event; the intention of the story, and the origin; that is, whether local or international.

After collecting the data, the study presented it in different ways based on the type of interpretation that is intended to the audience. The study made use of tables and pie charts to present the data from the study. To meet the objectives of this study, the researcher
focused on some of the aspects from the findings in the process of analysis. The aspects which the researcher analyzed include: number and size of articles published every month of the year under the paper, type of article and its frequency of coverage during the period under the study, placement of the article in the newspaper, themes covered in the article, and sources of the stories in the articles.

The units of analysis were an individual story (news story, feature, editorial, letter to the editor or commentary, etc.) whose content was examined in terms of:

- Number of articles,
- Their size (in cm$^2$),
- Type (whether news item, opinion, feature, editorial, book review, letter to editor, or advertisement),
- Placement (front page, page 2, page 3, other inside pages, special feature/magazine section, or back page),
- Prominence (edition lead, page lead, main editorial, or special commentary),
- Stories on new traffic regulations, and
- Stories on the night travel ban.

The analyzed stories were then presented in tabular form (the main research instrument), which was designed in such a way as to ensure flawless entry of the data into a microcomputer for analysis. The subsequent data aggregation and analysis was done using the SPSS computer software and involved mainly charts to indicate associations and differences in the treatment of RTA stories by the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers.

### 3.5 Research Instrument

To aid in data collection, key words were used in locating relevant information on the priming of RTAs in Kenya’s print media including: crash, road safety, carnage, accident and traffic. A codesheet for analyzing the priming of RTAs by the *Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers in Kenya, between 1st January 2014 and 31st June 2014 was prepared (See Appendix 1).
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the two newspapers (the Daily Nation and the Standard) covering a period of six months i.e. January 1st 2014 to June 31st 2014. The data collected was specifically relating to priming of RTAs by the two newspapers. The study aimed at establishing the size, placement, frequency, focus, main actor in the stories, and the type of stories published.

4.1 Frequency of Articles on RTAs

The first attempt of this work was to analyze the frequency of RTAs as reported in the two newspapers—the Standard and the Daily Nation as the data is summarized below:

Table 1: Frequency of publishing road traffic accidents articles by the Standard newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the number of RTAs articles appearing in the Standard newspaper. Clearly, the month of January had the highest number of reports or articles, which can be explained by the fact that the new regulations were announced in late December, 2013.
During the same period, the *Daily Nation* reported the RTAs as summarized below:

**Table 2: Frequency of publishing RTAs articles by the *Daily Nation* newspaper**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows how the *Daily Nation* reported on RTAs. The highest reports were in January, 2014, just as happened in the *Standard* newspaper. The least reports were in May, 2014.

**Figure 2: The *Daily Nation* newspaper publication of RTAs articles**

![Graph showing Daily Nation newspaper publication of RTAs articles](image)

From the data above, it is clear that during the period under study, the highest numbers of articles touching on RTAs were published in the months of January and April for both newspapers with each accounting for 33% and 22% for the *Standard* and 31% and 39% for the *Daily Nation* respectively. The lowest cases were reported during the month of May in both newspapers. For the highest numbers in January, this could be because the new traffic regulations were put in place in December, 2013. Thereafter, there was coverage to educate the masses about the new traffic regulations. For the month of May, 2014, this could be attributed to the fact that on April 1, 2014, the High Court in Kenya had suspended the new traffic regulations, a fact that the newspapers gave considerable coverage. Overall, however, the coverage picture coming out of this data indicates that RTAs were not given adequate coverage or were given very little attention thereby the media role of setting the agenda did little to keep issues of RTAs in the public eye.
4.2 Placement of Articles

Under this analysis, sections of the newspapers where the articles were published were looked at. In order to manage this, the newspapers were divided into four major sections; namely; lead story (top story), pages 2-3, inside pages, and back page. Pages 1-3 and the back page of the newspaper are usually considered prime placement. This is because information published on these pages is easily accessible to readers.

Table 3: Placement of articles on road safety by the Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pics</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2 and 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside pages</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Placement of articles on RTAs by the Standard
According to the data from the *Standard* newspaper on placement of RTAs articles during this period, most articles were placed in the inside pages as 83% were placed in the inside pages while there was nothing in the front pages or even back page. Pictures constituted 13% of the space allocated in the *Standard* newspaper.

Table 4: Placement of articles on RTAs by the *Daily Nation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pics</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2 and 3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside pages</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of placement, the *Daily Nation* had more than the *Standard*. It had at least 3% coverage in the front page on RTAs. Like the *Standard*, most of the articles were also placed in the inside pages (73%) while the back page had 1% representation. Pictures took 14% of placement.

Figure 4: Placement of articles on RTAs by the *Daily Nation*
A comparative analysis of the two newspapers’ placements of articles shows that (Figures 3 and 4) many articles dealing with RTAs were published in the inside pages of both newspapers. This accounted for 73% and 83% for the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* respectively. In both newspapers, stories on RTAs were covered minimally at page one or front page. The *Standard* had 0% coverage as lead story of the newspaper during the study period while the *Daily Nation* managed a paltry 3% of the newspaper lead story. Turning to pages 2-3, the situation was the same as a minimal number of stories appeared on these pages with the *Standard* accounting for a mere 4% and 0% for its back page coverage.

The *Daily Nation* had 9% and 1% respectively for pages 2-3 and back page. The use of pictures to tell stories on RTAs in the sampled newspapers was no better. It is understood that photographs in journalism inform, educate and enlighten readers about current issues, enhance the credibility of the stories and depict reality apart from furnishing evidence to show the authenticity of a news story or give proof of an event that occurred. Photographs also have aesthetic values, which enable a photograph to serve as a tool to attract the reader’s attention and break the monotony of news content. Thus, photographs enhance and beautify the pages of a newspaper. This fact did not seem to play out in the newspapers under study during the period studied. While the *Standard* had 13% of coverage, the *Daily Nation* had 14% on that account. What this data means is that the articles published by the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers were mostly confined to the inside pages. Only those reporting on fatal crashes where the casualties were many made it to page 1. This impacted negatively on the accessibility of information on RTAs and public education on the same.

### 4.3 Space Allocated to RTAs Articles

The sizes of the articles were categorized depending on their length in cm$^2$. The sizes of the articles reflected some policy about the amount of space given to an item on RTAs and therefore some sense of editorial policy of the news organization on the subject.
According to the figure above, most of the RTAs articles in the two newspapers were small articles with January and April allocations in space leading in that order. As explained earlier, this could be due to the fact that new traffic regulations in Kenya were started in late December, 2013; meaning that the month that followed, the press was trying to set the agenda on that issue. The High Court in Kenya suspended the regulations in April, 2014; explaining why the month of April allocation in space went up.

Clearly, both newspapers gave the subject nearly the same space. Most of the stories in both newspapers were allocated between 10-20cm² (46%) while those which were allocated small spaces or were just fillers accounted for 36% of the space. Stories that had an allocation of space in both papers above 25cm² accounted for 18% of total newspaper space. The study therefore found out that stories on RTAs were not given enough space
by both newspapers. In competing for space with other stories, RTAs articles were edited to fit within the little space available.

4.4 Prominence of Articles
This relates to how the stories or articles were laid out on whichever page they finally appeared. This was determined by looking at different levels of headlines that were guided by font size. For the purpose of this study, stories were grouped into four categories: page lead, second story, third story and brief. The data mined is as follows:

Table 6: Prominence of the articles on RTAs by the Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page lead</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second lead</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third and fourth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Prominence of the articles on RTAs by the Standard
According to this data, prominence of stories in the *Standard* shows that most articles covered ended up as briefs (83%). In the pages they appeared, most stories were not prominent as only 13% of the stories appeared as the third top stories. Not a single article appeared as a page lead.

Table 7: Prominence of the articles on RTAs by the *Daily Nation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page lead</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second lead</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third and fourth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 7, the *Daily Nation* had the highest number of articles placed as briefs (73%) while second leads on pages was at 9%. At least the *Daily Nation* had page leads, which were at 3%.

Figure 7: Prominence of the articles on RTAs by the *Daily Nation*
Comparatively, as can be clearly seen from the tabulations and figures presented earlier, most of the articles on RTAs were briefs, having accounted for 83% and 73% respectively for the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* respectively. This means that the two newspapers never gave prominence to stories on RTAs thus did not adequately set the agenda for this issue effectively. Page leads came in at 0% for the *Standard* while the *Daily Nation* had 3% on this account. Stories or articles that are published as page 1 leads are easily noticed and picked out by a reader.

Prominence tends to diminish as headline font size reduces. A story that is published as a brief does not project itself clearly from the page and is therefore easily bypassed by a reader. From this data, it is clear that both the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* put little emphasis on RTAs, having treated most of the stories as briefs. This may have compromised the effectiveness of stories capturing the reader’s attention. Articles published as briefs do not reflect the seriousness of the subject. In this case, a reader is likely to ignore these stories and focus on those that are treated with big and bold headlines.

4.5: Types of Stories

There are various types of stories in a newspaper. For this study, stories were classified as news, features, editorials, opinion, and letters to the editor.

**Table 8: Types of articles on RTAs by the Standard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefs/Fillers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters to the Editors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 8, the types of articles that appeared on RTAs in the *Standard* were mostly news (77%) while opinions and editorials accounted for 17% and 3% respectively. Features were at 2% while there were no briefs.

**Figure 8: Types of articles on RTAs by the *Standard***

![Graph showing types of articles by the Standard](image)

**Table 9: Types of articles on RTAs by the *Daily Nation***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefs/Fillers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters to the Editors</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that the *Daily Nation* followed what the *Standard* did in terms of the type of articles on RTAs as news coverage took the lions share (65%) followed by letters to the editor, which covered 19% while features were at only 1%.
Comparatively, the data above on the type of stories carried by both newspapers is interesting. Both newspapers seem to have resorted to news as a way of informing the public about RTAs. This is clearly the point as the 108 articles analyzed from the Standard for this study, 77% were news items. This compares unfavorably as editorial has 3%, opinion on the matter, 17%, letters to the editor at 2% leveraging with features at the same percentage.

The Daily Nation was almost the same in all accounts save for the fact that the Daily Nation dedicated less space to news than the Standard. At the same time, the study shows that the Daily Nation gave quite some space to readers to react to the issue of RTAs through the letters to the editor section (19%) compared to the Standard, which had dedicated 2% of space.

This kind of coverage is worrying because it depicts the newspapers as only interested in reporting on RTAs but not analyzing or interpreting issues on RTAs for the public through other types of articles. Coverage of issues through different types of articles like
opinions, features and commentaries can have a greater impact on public education. This is the best way of agenda setting.

4.6 Stories on New Traffic Regulations

Kenya revised her traffic regulations to ensure safety on Kenyan roads. How has the media been reporting on these regulations? The data pattern of reporting on these regulations was as follows:

**Table 10: Stories on New Traffic Regulations by the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Daily Nation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10: Stories on New Traffic Regulations by the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation***

From this data, it is clear that the *Daily Nation* was more proactive in reporting on the new traffic regulations (77%) in Kenya compared with the *Standard* (23%). Even then, in the overall sense, the new traffic regulations did not receive adequate coverage because
only 22 articles were written on this subject in the two newspapers during the six-month study period.

4. 6.1 Stories on the Night Travel Ban
The night travel ban was issued by the Government of Kenya to work against the apparent increase in RTAs in Mid-December, 2013. Under the ban, which went into effect on December 17th, 2013, PSVs were prohibited from operating between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The following is how the newspapers covered the ban.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Daily Nation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data by the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers shows that there was an attempt to follow up and set the agenda for the night travel ban and inform the citizenry about the government’s ban on night travel by public service vehicles.
In total, there were 28 articles on the subject during the period of study. However, these articles are a very small fraction of coverage by both newspapers. In fact, to buttress the fact that these newspapers did not adequately attend to the issue of the night travel ban by the government, the data shows that that the ‘steam’ to report on this issue dried up immediately after the month of January with nothing recorded in the month of February as can be seen from the data.

4.6.2 Stories on the ‘Alcoblow’

The government introduced the use of the ‘alcoblow’ method to determine people fit to drive after alcohol consumption as a way of curbing the increase of road accidents on Kenyan roads. According to government, the method was introduced to curb drunken driving and subsequent road crashes. The *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers reported on this new traffic regulation as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Daily Nation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 indicates that stories on the ‘alcoblow’ were few in both newspapers (the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*) during the study period. Only 24 articles were published during this period. Out of this, the *Daily Nation* had 71% of the reporting compared to the *Standard’s* 29%.

4.7: Photographs in the News about RTAs

Photographs in a newspaper enhance the credibility of stories. As they depict reality, they also furnish evidence to show the authenticity of a news story or give proof of an event that occurred. In the study, photographs were analyzed as used: with stories, as photographs about RTAs on their own or stories without any photographs. In the analysis
of the data from the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation*, the following is the scenario that emerged on the use of photographs in the two dailies:

**Table 13: Photographs in the news about RTAs in the two dailies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Daily Nation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 shows the general picture about the use of photographs in the two dailies that was further scrutinized in the study to understand the use of the photographs within the news and the pattern emerged as follows:

**Table 14: The distribution of the photographs in the news in the two dailies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With story</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story without</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding of this study shows that out of the 40 photographs used in the two dailies within the period of study, 53% of the photographs were not supported with a story on RTAs. Only 15% of the photographs used were accompanied by a story while another 32% told the story on RTAs on their own. Although a photograph in a newspaper speaks more than a thousand words, it is more practical if the photos are accompanied by a story in order to give the otherwise detailed information about an RTA which in some cases a photo may not be able to inform.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction
This chapter records a summary of findings, recommendations and conclusions of the entire study.

5.1 Summary of Findings
Firstly, the study established that prominence of articles on RTAs was subdued in many ways than one. The Standard and the Daily Nation newspapers had most of articles on RTAs tucked in the inside pages of the newspapers. This, in most cases, did not serve the purpose of informing and educating the public on issues related to RTAs. Again, even in such a situation, many articles were reduced to small stories and briefs. Information on RTAs only made it to the prime pages when there was a major accident involving many deaths. For example, both newspapers placed many articles dealing with RTAs in the inside pages of the newspapers during the study period. This accounted for 73% and 83% respectively for the Standard and the Daily Nation. In both newspapers, stories on RTAs were covered minimally at page one or front page. The Standard had 0% coverage as lead story of the newspaper during the study period while the Daily Nation managed a paltry 3% of the newspaper lead stories on RTAs. In this case, both newspapers did not effectively play their role of setting the agenda. They downplayed their capacity to influence public opinion by failing to emphasize issues on road safety. The priming theory is about making certain issues most accessible in the media. Downplaying road safety issues by publishing articles as briefs and hidden in the inside pages does not help. Information must stand out and scream for attention. Therefore, proper attention ought to be given to the treatment of RTA information.

Secondly, the focus of articles was skewed in favor of reporting incidents of RTAs other than information factors that lead to crashes, remedies, trends or issues. This finding fits into what was pointed out in the literature review, where Wilson (2001), observes that
stories that arouse fear sell papers and journalists exploit this. This is why news was the type articles which were represented more than anything else. Out of a total of 108 articles analyzed from the *Standard* for this study, 77% were news items. This compares unfavorably as editorial has 3%, opinion on the matter, 17%, letters to the editor 2% and features at the same percentage. The *Daily Nation* had news coverage taking the lions share (65%) followed by letters to the editor, which covered 19% while features were at only 1%.

This kind of coverage is worrying because it depicts the newspapers as only interested in reporting on RTAs but not analyzing or interpreting issues on RTAs for the public through other types of articles. The study also established that the focus of articles was directed at reporting on accident occurrences than on issues on policy and educating the public. This fits well into what Morrison (2006) observes that news values related to impact, proximity, prominence, relevance and human interest are all important in determining how much significance a news story is accorded by a particular media. In the case of road safety, journalists and reporters tend to favor stories with perceived high magnitude and consequences in terms of deaths and serious injuries. This was confirmed by this study where only stories on fatal crashes were carried as splash. Even when most of the articles were just news items.

Thirdly, the frequency of articles published during the period under study also pointed at a unique trend. In the months of February, March, May and June, fewer articles on RTAs were published in the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation*. Reporting was high in January because the new regulations came to force in late December, 2013. Therefore, as usual, media reporting was in a reactionary manner in January. By February, the issue was no longer hot; explaining why there was a decline in the number of articles reporting on RTAs. Even on an issue like the ban on night travel, the media was not proactive enough in educating the public. Articles published on this issue during that period were just reports from stakeholders complaining or going to court over the new regulations.
Fourthly, another interesting issue that came out of the study is that most of the stories analyzed were reports from reporters. There was little analysis and interpretation of events or education for the public in most of the articles on RTAs. Both newspapers did not take time to analyze the factors that lead to, and how to avoid the accidents, causes, trends or issues. This finding fits into what Wilson (2001) observes that stories that arouse fear sell papers and journalists exploit this. The study also found out that most of the articles did not have supporting images either as photographs or otherwise. Very few photographs were published either accompanying stories or as standalone. Interestingly, the *Daily Nation* performed rather better compared to the *Standard* in giving a voice to readers to give their opinions (through letters to the editor) on the subject matter of RTAs. In so doing, to that extent, it gave a platform to readers to even educate each other on various issues concerning RTAs. This situation can be explained by the fact that advertising occupied most of the space leaving a small percentage of space for editorial content. This fits into what researchers feel about the subject when they assert that media organizations are becoming more business oriented (Kirk, 2006). This is because advertising acts as source of revenue and profits for running media organizations. Search for profits has impacted on the more costly form of journalism such as investigative reporting.

Most articles reported on the number of persons injured, and nearly every article indicated whether fatal injuries occurred. Articles rarely stated how victims were treated after the crashes. Few articles provided follow-up information on crash victims. There was little mention of other protective factors: divided roads, sidewalks, or securing vehicle loads. This kind of reporting makes newspapers an incomplete source from which to influence public perceptions and attitudes.

Fifthly, preventive steps were discussed in commentaries and editorials, but low coverage in crash reports represents a missed opportunity to link crash consequences with injury prevention. Commentaries were often written by the general public, some of whom are proficient in road safety. Editorials and informational pieces were written by editorial staff or national experts, often with experience covering public policy.
Reports on crashes and pedestrian injuries were more commonly written by on-the-ground reporters, with little formal background in injury prevention.

5.2 Conclusions

This study makes several conclusions. This study has analyzed how the print media in Kenya has primed RTAs. The study used the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers to give examples of how the print media in Kenya prime RTAs. First, the study established that the *Standard* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers do not give priority to RTAs issues. Most of the articles on RTAs were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers. Even in those pages where they are tucked in, they still have no prominence because they are placed as either third lead stories or as briefs. This means that media interests do not prioritize RTAs because as Altschull, H. (1997: 259) notes, “the content of the news media inevitably reflects the interests of those who pay the bills”. With too many media outlets, it is the media owners who pay the bill in order to profit from their other business interests in the wider economic sector.

Secondly, the aforementioned factor could be related to the fact that media organizations are also becoming more business orientated (Kirk, D. 2006) and the search for profit has impacted on the more costly forms of journalism such as investigative reporting with a significant decline in this area. The impact of the Internet as an information source and the emergence of other forms of information technology, like mobile phones, where images and voice ‘grabs’ can be captured by anyone, published on the Internet or sent to media outlets is impacting on the use of print media for road safety messaging.

Thirdly, the study also established that the focus of articles was directed at reporting on accidents other than on issues on policy and educating the public. As discussed earlier, in the case of RTAs, journalists and reporters tend to favour stories with perceived high magnitude and consequences in terms of deaths and serious injuries.

Additionally, the media primed RTAs when and if the government intervened by introducing tough regulations or guidelines to curb road carnage. For example, from the study, the highest coverage for RTAs came during the month of January because the
stringent road use regulations were introduced in December 2013. The *Daily Nation* had 39% of the stories carried in January while the *Standard* had 23%, which were the highest of the months for both newspapers.

This scenario explains why a majority of newspaper reports used episodic framing. The majority of reports included information on the type of crash, but characteristics about people and vehicles were rarely reported. There were four times as many motor vehicle crashes reported as pedestrian injuries.

This fits into what communication experts argue that the news media’s focus on stories of individual suffering and struggle has resulted in the public blaming individuals for their health problems as opposed to holding society, government or other institutions responsible when appropriate. An alternative approach involves viewing health problems and conditions as part of a broader context (Jiggins, 2008). This also fits into what Coleman and Perlmutter (2005) argue that (such) coverage generally focuses on the individual ‘act’ rather than issues of cause and prevention. Other commentators like Connor and Wesolowski (2004) have noted that newspapers presented fatal crashes as dramas with a victim/villain storyline. In keeping with this narrative strategy, papers were most likely to cover stories where a driver survived to take the blame.

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

In conclusion, this study highlighted that the Kenyan print media can play an important role in promoting safety on Kenyan roads. Increasing the media’s role in highlighting RTAs could be accomplished by improving dialogue between public health and media
practitioners, as well as by considering specific measures. Therefore, media could play a greater role in putting the government to account.

5.3 Recommendations

Road safety is a worldwide social problem; road traffic accidents cause economic losses of about 1% to 3% of total national GDP. Car ownership in China, for example, accounts for about 3% of the world, but the road traffic mortality rate is the highest in the world over the years. Safety is paramount to the welfare on any given society.

The finding showed a deficiency in projecting RTAs on prime pages of the print media in Kenya. Most of the stories were buried on the inside pages. A bigger percentage of the stories were published as briefs. A way should be found of priming this information so that the media acts as a public education forum on RTAs. This can be further enhanced with the use of more photographs. Additionally, the print media in Kenya should publish more articles touching on policy as opposed to focusing on road carnage incidents only. The media should strive to keep RTAs debates alive by constantly and regularly publishing this information i.e. setting the agenda for the public.

Being market leaders in Kenya, the Standard and the Daily Nation newspapers should take advantage of this position to disseminate RTAs to their audience. They must stamp their lead positions in the market by providing information as well educating people on ways of ensuring road carnage cases are reduced. The more balanced and detailed information in newspapers would provide an opportunity for the news print media to improve public perception about the impact of motor vehicle crashes on safety for all. Editors within the two leading media houses in Kenya can set standards for injury reporting, including regular identification of seatbelt use, alcohol consumption by drivers as well as pedestrians, and consideration of environmental risks.

5.3.1 Recommendations for further study

News media raise public awareness about health-related issues like RTAs and can influence agenda setting. Media monitoring is one tool to track what media sources are reporting about public health issues, the industry and stakeholders.
Influencing the quantity and quality of media coverage is critical to advancing healthy public policy, particularly when advocating for prevention strategies to be reported and acted upon. In this regard, there is need to understand how public attitudes and understanding of issues on RTAs and road safety messaging in general has been influenced by media coverage or vice-versa.
REFERENCES


Kenya Roads Board Website, 2014.


Stijn et al. (2010) Official reporting and newspaper coverage of road crashes: A Case study. *A journal by the Transportation research Institute.* USA.


### Appendix 1: A Codesheet for Analyzing the Priming of RTAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month/Year</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op-ed/ Editorial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion/Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to editor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Placement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splash</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg 2-3/ back pg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside pages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Size (Cm²)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25cm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Prominence on page</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page lead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second lead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief/Filler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Theme</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main event/occasion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop/conference/meet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence/Press briefing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Source/Voice/actor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Photo Story</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page appearance/size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo with story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo stand alone/deep caption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>